REPRESENTATIONS OF THE OUTSIDER IN JOHN McGAHERN’S THE DARK, WILLIAM TREvor’S THE CHILDREN OF DYNMOUTH AND PATRICK McCABE’S THE BUTCHER BOY

Ph.D. Dissertation

Nusret ERSŐZ

Ankara-2019
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Acknowledgements

Firstly and most durably, I would like to express my immense debt and gratitude to my parents, Müzeyyen and Adil Ersöz, and to my wife, Reem Al Rachid (İrem Ersöz); my parents sacrificed their time and energy for my education and enlightened my way all over my life, and my wife has shown great patience and tolerance in coping with my decampments to my studies.

I am deeply grateful to my dear supervisor, Prof. Dr. Ufuk Ege Uygur, for her kind help and scholarly guidance that she showed me over the period of researching this study; her wholehearted and insightful support has substantially contributed to my academic outlook at large. I am thankful to the members of the monitoring committee of this thesis, Prof. Dr. Gülşev Pakkan and Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Zeren Atayurt-Fenge, for their fruitful advice. I am also grateful to Prof. Dr. Belgin Elbir and Prof. Dr. Nazan Tutaş for sparing their invaluable time to critiquing this study. I cordially extend my thanks to my sister, Gülden Esra Aydoğdu, my brother, Halil Ersöz, and all of my colleagues at Ankara University.

I dedicate this dissertation to Sibel Ersöz, my little daughter who has been the source of hope, relief and happiness for me for the last two years.
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INTRODUCTION

The image of outsider in literature has always been functional for writers to delve into individual psychology and to cogently divulge personal realities. Such a disclosure of the inner state of an individual who does not have a sense of belonging to the outer majority illustrates some social, cultural and even universal phenomena as well. Being employed as mostly the protagonist in literary works, the outsider experiences a marginalization which may occur in a diversity of ways. The outsider can be created as a figure stepping into a community whose language and culture are alien to her/him or feeling an existential estrangement from the outer world. The protagonist’s ethnical, sexual, ideological, physical or religious qualities can render her/him the outsider, as seen, among many others, in A Portrait of the Artist as A Young Man by James Joyce, 1984 by George Orwell, The Outsider by Richard Wright and The Buddha of Suburbia by Hanif Kureishi.

However, this thesis argues that some authors of contemporary (or of the post 1960s) Irish fiction forge a distinctive image of outsider in their novels; particularly, they explore the perpetual solitariness of young man and show that one could forcibly turn to be an outsider in her/his very native land essentially due to domestic/parental afflictions and in spite of struggling for social integration. In this respect, this thesis suggests that the protagonists in The Dark (1965) by John McGahern, The Children of Dynmouth (1976) by William Trevor and The Butcher Boy (1992) by Patrick McCabe are sui generis outsiders whose isolation and estrangement from their environment are triggered by detrimental circumstances in their own families. The thesis also postulates that the protagonists depicted in these novels can be identified as ‘Irish outsiders’ for the reason that the narratives of their exposition to domestic dysfunctionality and victimization by the communities engirding them are generated by Irish writers who reflect qualities of Irishness, albeit in varying degrees and ways.
Being among the leading writers of contemporary Irish fiction, McGahern, Trevor and McCabe present an exposition of human psychology in their works by bringing individual’s physical and emotional deprivations into focus. McGahern is distinguished by his impressive revelations of the essence of his characters’ feelings and thoughts; his novels are generally characterized by manifestations of individual melancholy and dejection as well as a realistic portrayal of rural Ireland. William Trevor’s deftness in his works is obvious in his characterization of lonely figures as well as his riveting narrative technique and use of irony, while his genius is mostly emphasized in writing short stories. And Patrick McCabe is considered among prominent contemporary Irish novelists particularly for his extraordinary depictions of provincial Ireland through darkly comic perspectives of his characters. Yet, despite their literary mastery, three of the novelists are relatively less studied Irish writers; therefore, this thesis attempts to contribute to the studies on McGahern, Trevor and McCabe, and, at large, on Irish fiction. The novels in discussion are selected for the reason that they are arguably the most profound works of their authors in terms of their in-depth manifestations of the protagonists’ innermost feelings. The fact that each of the novels concentrates on the protagonists’ detachment from society and coercion into the peripheries of social sphere entails a thorough analysis of their psychologies as outsiders as well as their relationship with the outer world. Therefore, this study aims to explore the experiences of isolation and exclusion of the protagonists in discussion via ideas and theories propounded by Freudian and neo/post-Freudian psychoanalysts.

Before going into the details of the ways in which representations of the outsider are going to be investigated in The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth and The Butcher Boy, the meanings of “outsider” as a word require to be clarified. Relevant meanings of outsider in Oxford English Dictionary (OED Third Edition, December 2004) are as follows:
a. A person who does not belong to a particular circle, community, profession, etc.; a person originating from elsewhere. Also: a person unconnected with a matter; a person lacking special knowledge of a subject.
b. A person positioned physically on the outside or fringe of a group or line; a person situated beyond a boundary.
c. A person who is isolated from or not integrated into conventional society, either by choice or through some social or other constraint; a misfit. Also: spec. the archetypal artist or intellectual seen as a person isolated from the rest of society. (OED)

Deducing from these definitions, it is possible to identify outsider as a person who remains in the outside of an organic unity of people due to being simply a foreigner, choosing a personal seclusion or being exposed to an external exclusion. As already mentioned, each of these experiences of detachment from or lack of connection with society is represented through fictional characters in literary works; for this reason, outsider, as a literary term or character type, is defined within literary lexicon as well. Neil and Sarah King, in *Dictionary of Literature in English*, state that outsider is “a term sometimes applied to writers” or characters “detached from the society that surrounds them. The concept gained currency through The Outsider (1956) by Colin Wilson” (123). In *The Penguin Dictionary of Literary Terms and Literary Theory*, J. A. Cuddon stresses on aesthetic and intellectual qualities in his definition of outsider; according to him, “an 'outsider' may be seen as a person (especially a creative artist) who is, in some respects, above and 'outside' the society in which he or she lives and perhaps even superior to it. There have always been the unconventional, the eccentric and the egregious; the outsider is all these” (626). In a more extensive way, Jean-Charles Seigneuret, in his *Dictionary of Literary Themes and Motifs A-J*, identifies the outsider as an “isolated and alienated protagonist” who “becomes one of the predominant types in fiction” especially in twentieth-century literature and “who refuses to conform to bourgeois restraints and is the bearer and symbol of an alternate vision” (40). In fact, it is precisely the nature of this “alternate vision” what designates the aspect of the outsider’s isolation. The outsider’s vision of an adventurer in a foreign land might let him be defined as a ‘picaro’, as
suggested by Edward Quinn in *A Dictionary of Literary and Thematic Terms* (322), while a vibrantly aesthetic vision may lead him to the introverted life of an artist. And it is precisely a vision damaged or completely destroyed by domestic circumstances and worsened by social/institutional hostilities what pushes the protagonists in *The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* into being outsiders cast at the peripheries of communal space.

Steven Otfinoski, in introduction to his *Outsider Fiction*, refers to the isolation experienced by outsiders as follows: “everyone has felt like an outsider at some time in his or her life. It might come about from the experience of moving to a new city or town. Or it could be more inclusive—like being gay or disabled in a seemingly “normal” world. The first experience is temporary and will change with time, while in the other cases a person could remain an outsider for a lifetime” (7). The outsiders portrayed by McGahern, Trevor and McCabe in their abovementioned works fit into this second sort of figures whose experience of solitariness and exclusion is more inclusive and continues for a lifetime. Their marginalization in society comes into existence as a result of the impairment on their psychologies and behaviour inflicted by parental ill-treatment.

Young Mahoney, McGahern’s outsider in *The Dark*, becomes prone to his father’s verbal and physical abuse since his early childhood. Death of his mother leaves him and his sisters alone with an abrasive and despotic father who brutally beats, insults and mentally oppresses his children. The impact of paternal tyranny on the protagonist is profound; he habitually gets immersed into his imaginary world, lacks senses of security, certainty and confidence, and above all, pathetically becomes dependent on an external ‘shelter’. His religious upbringing and education fosters in him an orientation to clerical life, a life which, he assumes, could provide him with an escape from the hegemony of his domineering father. Yet, he moves to the church only to confront with another atmosphere of ‘darkness’ where he is practically molested by a priest. Returning to his
father’s house in frustration, young Mahoney exerts himself with his studies, wins a scholarship and goes to the university. However, to his dismay, he finds himself in an environment of condescendence, indifference and pragmatism; besides, he lacks the necessary self-confidence and sociability to adjust to urban life. In the end, in yet another effort to attain a sense of belonging to a unity, he accepts a job offer from an institution in Dublin and decides to go there.

In a state of solitude and detachment similar to that of young Mahoney, Timothy Gedge, the preadolescent outsider in William Trevor’s *The Children of Dynmouth* is a figure forsaken by his father and reared up by his uncaring and insensitive mother. Timothy’s psychology is damaged by the humiliation and discrimination of his mother and sister against him. His deprivation of parental care, affection and protection as well as subjection to the disregarding and belittling treatment of his mother and sister undermine his mental health and interpersonal relations. He compulsively turns to his inner world of fantasies and becomes deluded with the idea of being a famous comedian by performing an unusual act at a local talent contest. Furthermore, his relationship with the people of Dynmouth, the seaside town where he resides, is impaired by his hankering for being connected to the outer world. He follows people in the neighbourhood and tries to garner their attention on himself in any way possible. However, the community’s treatment of the protagonist is characterized by a hypocritical hostility and despise. Even the town’s vicar avoids from talking to him due to the protagonist’s eccentric and overly intimate attitude. Timothy assumes that the only way for him to be accepted and appreciated by others is to perform his act; yet, he needs other people’s assistance to collect the necessary stuff for his performance. He visits them one by one to ask for what he needs but, in each case, he is rejected. His obsession about his performance leads him to threatening and blackmailing townspeople with revealing their embarrassing secrets, immoralities and perversities; thus, Timothy not only turns upside down the ordinary
façade of Dynmouth people’s lives by confronting them with their hidden side but gets from them what he needs as well. However, in the end, he is interrupted by the vicar, obliged to give all the stuff back to their owners and excluded from the contest.

A similar exclusion from society and its institutions is experienced by Francie Brady, Patrick McCabe’s schoolboy outsider in The Butcher Boy. Francie grows up with domestic disruption engendered by his father, who, as an alcoholic, traumatizes his wife and son with his violent ill-temper. The protagonist’s mother suffers a serious mental disorder which, ultimately, causes her to kill herself. Turbulent family environment entrenches in Francie senses of shame, inferiority and anger; he remains on his own to grapple with his inner anguish and becomes oversensitive to other people’s notion of himself and his family. In such a state of mind, he is once again traumatized by the insults of Mrs. Nugent, a middle-aged neighbour who abominates Francie and his family by calling them ‘pigs’. Then, Francie encounters a series of catastrophic incidents; he breaks into the Nugents’ house, is sent to industrial school\(^1\) where he is sexually abused by a priest; he loses his mother; Joe, his best friend, leaves him. Along with this flow of poignant incidents which exacerbate Francie’s mental collapse, the community of the small town where he lives hypocritically discriminates Francie and regards him as an unlovable and repulsive being. His father dies and he gets hospitalized for his mental problems; back from the hospital he continues to be delusional and suffer a severe psychosis. At the end, Francie, being taken over by his psychotic mind, brutally kills Mrs. Nugent and gets confined to a mental asylum for a life time.

Thus, the figures of outsider exhibited in three of the novels are creations of domestic agony, parental deprivations or ill-treatment, communal disregard and degradation. As children or preadolescents, they are not equipped with sufficient physical

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\(^1\) Industrial school system was introduced in Ireland in 1868 with Industrial Schools (Ireland) Act; the schools, run by priests and controlled by the Catholic Church in Ireland, aimed to give neglected, orphaned or abandoned juveniles practical training for employment (Confidential Committee, “History of” 36).
or mental capability to overcome the suffering engendered by their parents; as a result of the atmosphere of violence, oppression, indifference and humiliation they confront at ‘home’, their mental and behavioural development is subverted. As ways of self-defense, they are abnormally attached to imagination and then they strive to be connected with the outer world. Yet, their such personal issues as physical/mental weakness, deformed psychologies, undeveloped/damaged personalities inherited to them from their dysfunctional families and parental maltreatment cause them to take on a restricted and twisted view of life. And in the outside, they are surrounded by depraved communities whose outlook is based on hypocrisy, hostility, indifference, discrimination and condescension. Hence, existing within an inimical environment and with an already oppressed and injured state of mind, they remain as helpless, unsheltered and marginalized outsiders.

The perspectives of the outsiders in *The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* are confined to the attainment of a social milieu whereby they could share their experiences, express themselves and find companions/persons who treat them in a proper way. However, in spite of this confinement, the outsiders are able to have an outer and broader view of the clandestine realities of their social circle in that they can easily detect the follies, shortcomings and flaws of the world encircling them. In other words, their view of the flow of life, from which they are excluded, and their interaction with others function to reveal some adversities in the structure of society and public institutions. Therefore, to gain an insight on that score, a separate chapter in this thesis is dedicated to the social backgrounds of the novels in discussion; particularly, the main argument of the thesis in terms of the social contexts of the novels is that, by means of marginalized protagonists, McGahern, Trevor and McCabe shed light on some realities coming out of their personal memories and experiences but, at the same time, on some ‘unpleasant’ issues of Irish society and human beings at large.
There is no explicit reference to the exact date and location in which the events in *The Dark* take place (except that the protagonist goes to Galway for university towards the end of the novel); but, the content of the narrative as well as the fact the novel is heavily autobiographical suggest that the majority of the events take place in rural Ireland (probably Co. Roscommon or Leitrim, Ireland) and in the early 1950s. McGahern, through the inner turmoil and outer solitariness of young Mahoney, manifests the Catholic Church’s unquestionable hegemony on Irish people’s lives and the oppressively patriarchal structure of society in the 1950s, a time also distinguished by strict conservatism, agrarianism and poverty. William Trevor’s locale in *The Children of Dynmouth* is the fictional town of Dynmouth, which springs from the author’s memories in the seaside Sussex and Youghal, Ireland; and the events in the novel take place in the early 1970s. With an amalgamation of Irish sensibility and literary universality, Trevor explores oddities, flaws and failures in what seems to be familiar and common via Timothy Gedge’s external perspective. The events in *The Butcher Boy* happen in the early 1960s (probably 1962, the year when Cuban Missile Crisis erupted) and Patrick McCabe draws on his memories of his childhood in Clones, Ireland, which corresponds to the small town depicted in the novel. And he portrays Francie Brady as a peripheral figure to delineate the socio-economically transforming life in provincial Ireland in the 1960s with particular focus on communal and institutional degeneration. Hence, the ways in which social and cultural qualities of these places serve as backgrounds to the novels will be elaborately investigated to have an in-depth understanding of communal exclusion experienced by the protagonists.

In their novels in discussion, McGahern, Trevor and McCabe focus on the triangular relationship of individual-family-society and give an account of the ways in which domestic and social ill-treatment impinges on individual psychology and personality. Hence, for an insightful and thorough comprehension of the correlation
between the protagonists’ inner anguish and the aberrations they exhibit in their outer deeds, the arguments and theories of some pre-eminent figures specialized in the fields of psychoanalysis and human personality and behaviour will be explicated so as to establish a theoretical framework for the analysis of the outsider. In this respect, relevant ideas of Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, Carl Gustav Jung, Otto Rank, Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan and Jacques Lacan will be presented in connection with the protagonists’ experiences. After the chapters dealing with social background and theoretical framework, representations of the outsider in *The Dark*, *The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* will be discussed consecutively in separate chapters.
CHAPTER ONE

SOCIAL BACKGROUNDS of THE DARK, THE CHILDREN of DYNMOUTH and THE BUTCHER BOY

1.1. Ireland in the 1950s and McGahern’s The Dark

In The Dark, John McGahern depicts the isolated life of young Mahoney in the rural Ireland of the 1950s, a time which is imbued with, on one hand, religious conservatism and adherence to tradition and, on the other hand, poverty and mass emigration. To have a full grasp of the life and conditions in Ireland at that time, and thereby of the events and character psychologies portrayed by McGahern, it is necessary to comprehend two things essentially: the hold of the Catholic Church and the influence of Eamon de Valera’s ideology on Irish society.

In the 1950s, (and as had been for centuries), Irish culture and identity was in a state of solid integration with the ethos of the Catholic Church and Irish way of life was determined according to the Church’s doctrines. The Church’s dominant and commanding role on the lives of Irish people saliently existed through its long-time control over the country’s social and political institutions, which Hardiman and Whelan refer to as follows:

[…] the partnership between church and state in Ireland dates back to the middle of the nineteenth century, when the Church, in close co-operation with Catholic political movements, fought for control over Catholic schools, and developed a substantial role in the provision of hospital facilities. […] Institutional developments relating to education, healthcare, child services and farm inheritance contributed to the consolidation of the Catholic Church’s role in Irish society. The outcome of these processes in Ireland clearly represents a case of what might be termed ‘Catholic monopoly’. (Hardiman and Whelan 70-71)

This ‘monopoly’, representing the unquestionable hegemony of clerical perspective, moulded people’s understanding of life as well as placing them into a predesignated path of restrictions, principles and prohibitions. Rituals, at home and in the church, “evoked a
powerful emotional response and at the same time impressed and legitimated certain values, attitudes, customs and ideas” (Fuller 43). Religious obedience, self-sacrifice, faith and devotion, avoidance from sin and particularly repression of sexuality were crucial aspects which Irish people were expected (and forced) to possess. “Long queues for confession”, “fear of committing a mortal sin” and of “loss of eternal salvation”, “graphic images of hell-fire and damnation … etched into people’s consciousness”, and “loyalty to the practice of … religion” (Fuller 43) were all phenomena which indicated religion’s absolute domination over people’s mind and life in the 1950s.

The Catholic Church’s authority was supported and consolidated by Eamon de Valera, who was unarguably the most prominent political figure in the decades following the Irish War of Independence. De Valera served as the Prime Minister of Ireland (Taoiseach) for twenty-two years (between 1937-1959) and introduced a new constitution based on traditional, national and religious values. Throughout his rule, he “promoted the creation of an insular, self-sufficient society, thoroughly Catholic in culture and conscience” (State 247). As an aloof, pious, “tall and austere black-clad figure” (Garvin Ch. 2), de Valera had a rigid and protectionist outlook which favoured a conservative and agrarian country and “a less costly standard of living” (R. F. Foster 11); his ideology was welcomed and adapted by the majority of Irish people. However, his policy to reconstruct Ireland as a self-enclosed and self-sustaining country did not produce the expected prosperity and welfare; as Paul F. State puts it, “de Valera’s nationalism, centered on idealization of peasant rural life, was to a considerable extent more imagined than real” (264). Even though Ireland remained neutral in the Second World War, the country’s socio-economic situation in the post-war years as well as the 1950s critically worsened. Mary E. Daly refers to Ireland’s economic stagnation deeply felt in the last decade of de Valera’s rule as the Prime Minister as follows:
The decade or so after the end of the Second World War was the period when Ireland became most out of step with Western Europe. [...] At a time when other countries were enjoying full employment, a rapid rise in living standards, a post-war marriage boom and an expanding urban population, Ireland only experienced these forces vicariously, through the net emigration of over 500,000 young men and women to Britain [...] the nation was to survive in a world where international trade and economic integration were seen as pre-requisites for economic growth. With net emigration in the 1950s running at levels last seen in the depressed 1880s, it was evident that Irish citizens would not accept living standards that were significantly inferior to other Western nations. (Daly 2-4)

Hence, contrary to de Valera’s aspirations of creating an idyllic country, Ireland in the 1950s “was not a safe or happy place for the thousands of poor and disadvantaged people, forced to live in sub-standard housing with little or no access to good healthcare or education.” (Redmond “Ireland in”). In a way, de Valera’s unifying discourses of patriotism, nationalism and religious devotion did not erase the fact that Irish people were in a state of extreme poverty.

It is precisely this atmosphere of penury, strict Catholicism and conservatism what McGahern portrays in *The Dark*. The consequences of mass migration are directly reflected in the desolate setting of the novel. Living in an isolated rural village of Ireland, the nameless protagonist of the novel, young Mahoney, has no friends or relatives whom he can befriend with and take advice from about his choice of occupation. Mahoney, the father figure in the novel, represents de Valera’s adamant and conservative personality and traditional ideology to a great extent. He relies on a small potato farm to make a living; and to have extra money, he removes his daughter from school to send her out to work. He repeatedly and unjustly berates his children for not being extremely thrifty and careful in using money and other resources. He habitually and conventionally performs all the religious rituals and activities and he is in an unquestioning acceptance of the Church’s authority and regulations. His relationship with his children is characterized by his unemotional, austere, aggressive and oppressive nature and their fear, trepidation and anxiety. In other words, Mahoney is the embodiment of de Valera’s patriarchal,
agricultural, religious and conventional Ireland. Yet, his son, the protagonist who grows up to be an adolescent in the course of the novel, refuses to be an extension of this structure and, partly for this reason, he is left as an outsider in the domestic and social environment surrounding him.

Having been raised by his mother as a pious child and receiving a religion-based education at school, young Mahoney initially wants to be a priest. And yet, he hardly represses his sexual desires because his sexuality and fantasies are the only ways for him to escape from his father’s tyranny which he has been subjected to since his childhood. His acts of self-satisfaction make him feel guilty and question his future as a priest. Even though he feels an inner joy and relief after confessing his sins at the church, his father’s abrasive and degrading attitude dispirits him. Furthermore, his stay with Father Gerald, a country priest and remote cousin of his father, distances him from priesthood. He is almost abused by the priest who comes into his bed at night and asks him obscene questions. As a result, the image of the church as a secure shelter and of priesthood as a moral and dignified profession in young Mahoney’s mind is shattered. To move away from the ‘dark’ hegemony of his father, he studies hard, wins a scholarship and goes to the university; but this time, he is distressed by that he would be dependent on his father again if he lost his scholarship. In the end, he decides to go to Dublin and work there. Thus, *The Dark* can be construed as the narrative of young Mahoney’s struggle to detach himself mentally and physically from his father who personifies a condescending, parochial and outdated outlook. However, to his frustration, the places which he regards as shelters to take refuge in prove only other forms of this mentality; as a result, he remains as an ‘unsheltered’ and isolated figure whose sense of insecurity leads him to another quest.
1.2. Ireland in the 1960s and McCabe’s The Butcher Boy

The darkly conservative and Catholic world of Ireland in the 1950s experienced a radical change in the 1960s; and Patrick McCabe delineates this changed (inner and outer) world of Irish people in The Butcher Boy. In 1958, the First Programme for Economic Expansion was introduced by T.K. Whitaker and Sean Lemass; the programme is generally considered a turning point in Irish history because it initiated the conversion of the conservative, restrictive and traditional structure of Ireland into a more liberal, modern and outward-oriented one. The programme also heralded a significant change in the government of Ireland; Taoiseach Eamon de Valera was succeeded by Sean Lemass in 1959. Lemass’s more liberal and reformist understanding was obvious in that his economic programme hinged on encouraging free trade and attracting foreign investors; thereby, he aimed to minimize the problems of unemployment, inflation, economic stagnation and high rates of emigration to other countries.

In Understanding Contemporary Ireland: State, Class and Development in the Republic of Ireland, Richard Breen and his co-authors pay particular attention on the ways in which the programme for economic expansion reshaped Irish society. Breen et al. discuss the consequences of the programme as follows:

Economic expansion after 1958 produced a boom in opportunities for white collar and skilled manual employment, and accentuated the long-standing trends towards a declining agricultural labour force and the marginalization of smallholders. The underlying processes of class formation were sufficient to engineer a new class structure that was firmly implanted by the end of the 1960s. [...] From 1960 onwards, the dynamic elements in the society’s social structure were those characteristic of the advanced capitalist societies: industrialization and urbanization. (Breen et al. 5-7)

Hence, the first programme represented a shift from the protectionist, self-enclosed and assumedly self-sufficient Irish ideology to a more receptive and progressive one. The transition from rural life and agriculture towards industrialization and urbanization influenced the class structure and demography of the whole country as well. The efforts
to develop Ireland economically also served to give more wealth to the rich and more poverty to the poor. Breen et al. refer to this widening division between social classes as follows: “despite promises of general prosperity, the benefits of Ireland’s belated economic development have been very unevenly distributed, leading to a growing polarisation between social classes” (Breen et al. x).

Therefore, on one hand Ireland’s economy grew and the country was socially and economically modernised; and on the other, economic division between social classes influenced the way Irish people lived and thought. For example, as Mary E. Daly indicates, during the 1960s in Ireland, there was a significant “segregation by class” in terms of the schools children attended: “middle-class children generally attended private fee-paying elementary schools. Second-level schooling was determined by social class. Many children from poorer households only attended primary school” (126). This sort of a division between poor and rich families existed in all social spheres: opportunities such as “golf and tennis clubs were middle-class preserves” (Daly 126); and “health services often divided on the basis of social class. Middle-class women gave birth in private nursing homes” (Daly 127). The middle-class enjoyed the improvements in housing standards as well: unlike people of lower classes, they lived in “modern homes with running water, bathrooms, fitted kitchens, fridges, even central heating” (Daly 136). Shopping also “entailed a degree of social stratification”; while affluent people had the financial power to access to a variety of stuff in the supermarkets as well as electrical goods and motor cars, “families with more modest incomes” were restricted in spending money (Daly 134). Thus, regarding this escalation in the power of purchasing, “it would not be an overstatement to see the 1960s as marking the beginnings of an Irish consumer society – for good or ill” (Daly 136).

The emergence of a consumerist Irish society was accompanied with people’s changing attitude towards religion and traditional values. The formidable power and
control of the Catholic Church over Irish society began to decrease as the idea of secularisation, as an indispensable part of modernisation, developed within the mindset of Irish society. Referring to a number of social conditions which gave rise to the diffusion of secularisation and weakening of the Catholic Church’s dominance in Ireland in the 1960s, Louise Fuller asserts as follows:

The arrival of a new Irish television station in 1961, the deliberations of the Second Vatican Council held between 1962 and 1965, the extension of educational opportunity through the 1960s, the relaxation of the censorship laws and the development of the Women’s Liberation Movement in the late 1960s all contributed to a more liberal mood and a more open Irish society—which was set to undermine the Catholic cultural hegemony which had been consolidated since independence. (48)

Fuller’s remarks reveal that the consequences of the first economic programme were not limited with Ireland’s economy; on the contrary, a series of social modernisations were able to be carried out with the financial profit of the programme. Loosening of the ties between Irish society and the Catholic Church was one of the most important outcomes of modernisation in Ireland.

A phenomenon which had a role in the transformation of Irish society and the decline of the church’s power was the media; it “operated as a supplier of alternative value systems and also as an alternative way to pass time and socialise” (Share et al. 423) and thus had an influence on the decline of religion and public interest in the church. Newspapers, magazines and radio broadcasting became more pervasive and accessible to Irish people during the 1960s; but it was the arrival of television in 1961 that played a significant role in modernizing the country and changing the lifestyle of society. “By 1966, television had come into 85% of all Irish homes” (Sheehan 138) and TV programmes became an indispensable part of daily life and habits. Watching TV turned to be a way of relaxation which let people forget the burden of the real life for a while. In time, television’s place in daily life expanded and, inevitably, it contributed to the
acceleration of modernisation and secularisation. The replacement of the dominance of the Church by the media led by television was rapid and drastic. Regarding this change of the holder of power, Inglis states as follows:

The growth of the media brought enormous changes to family and community life. It is the media which symbolically dominate the lives of Irish people. The media and the Catholic Church have changed positions. People used to make a trip to read a newspaper, listen to the radio or, more recently, watch television. God, Christ, Our Lady, the saints, as well as their priestly representatives on earth, were more on their minds, in their hearts and on their lips than what was said by Gay Byrne, Gerry Ryan or other media gurus. Instead of going out to the church or kneeling down to say the rosary, Irish families now sit down and watch television. Many of the programmes portray rich, glossy American and British lifestyles in which priests and religion have little or no representation or influence. Television changed the nature of social discourse and practice in Ireland […] It was the development of television, film and magazines which were mainly responsible for loosening the censorship on sex. (Inglis 246)

As clearly indicated in the quotation, Irish people’s introduction to television not only influenced their perception of religion and the Church but altered their social and domestic life on a great scale as well. Television provided people with the chance to witness the way people around the world lived and thought. American and British TV shows, films and programmes, as signs of globalising world in the control of capitalism, presented Irish people a platform where they could enjoy the freedom of being immersed into new ideals, values, activities and lifestyles almost entirely different from their own. In this regard, television represented the emancipation of the Irish from religious and traditional restrictions while moving them away from the rural culture of Ireland towards an international territory with no boundaries. Hazelkorn refers to television’s impact on Irish society as follows: “over the decades it [TV] has powerfully challenged traditional cultural forms and vented the aspiration of an emergent middle class, whose allegiances are increasingly attuned to Continental Europe, undermining the primacy of the countryside in national life” (Hazelkorn 28). The impression made by TV and other media instruments on Irish society and their stimulation of absorbing Irish audiences into the
westernized section of the world accelerated the alteration in traditional Irish image. Tom Inglis, in his *Moral Monopoly: The Rise and Fall of the Catholic Church in Modern Ireland* describes this ‘vanishing’ Irishness as follows:

The traditional image of the Irish, which is sometimes denigrated but which many Irish like to live up to, is of an easy going, happy people who are outgoing and caring; who have a deep devotion to their family, community and Church; and who, compared with other Westerners, have a greater interest in the spirit of things — that is, in being social, cultural and artistic, rather than having a selfish concern for material success. This image is grounded in habitus, in an orientation to life and to people, which sometimes unintentionally, was fostered and developed by the Catholic Church and was, in part, a result of its symbolic domination of Irish life. (Inglis 243)

Adherence to or abandonment of this ‘traditional image of the Irish’ described above and the issues of social consumerism and materialism are exactly the issues which construct the social background of Patrick McCabe’s *The Butcher Boy*. Economic inequality, class division and TV’s appearance in homes and changing attitudes of the middle class are conspicuously reflected through the experiences of young Francie Brady, the protagonist of the novel. Francie’s state of an outsider, directly or indirectly, is related with the changed environment encircling him; and this environment is nothing but the fictionalization of the 1960s’ Ireland, particularly McCabe’s hometown Clones.

As the only son of a mentally distressed mother and an alcoholic father, Francie’s isolation from the outer world is generated by the injuries he receives on his psychology from the dysfunctionality of his family. And the miserable state of Francie’s parents is partly due to the stress of their penury. Francie’s father, Benny, plays trumpet at a pub and gains too little to provide a comfortable life for his family. In contrast to the Bradies, the middle-class Nugent family lead a peaceful and untroubled life; they are free from any kind of economic constraint. Having recently moved in the town after living in London for a long time, the Nugents are characterized by their wealth and materialism. They enjoy all the luxuries which the Bradies are deprived of. This symmetrical contrast
in the characteristics and living standards of the Bradies and the Nugents highlights the social polarisation that emerged as a result of unequal economic conditions undergone by Irish society in the 1960s. The economic discrepancies between the two families stand at a pivotal point within the plot of *The Butcher Boy*. The novel is structured on Francie’s tragic downfall which is accelerated by the Nugents’ scornful attitude mainly stemming from their economic superiority. This sense of superiority is shared by the community in general; their perception of others is formed according to class and wealth. Francie, on the other hand, as an outgoing and friendly boy loving nature, feeling shameful due to his family’s abject conditions, being fond of Irish ballads and having an ‘interest in the spirit of things’ fits into ‘the traditional image of the Irish’ on a great scale. Therefore, he discords with the changed mentality in the outside and gets excluded by the community whose outlook is westernized.

The solid and influential position of television in the centre of Irish lifestyle is traced in *The Butcher Boy* through the fact that there is a TV at the living room of each house in the small town where Francie resides. Francie’s fondness for television is mostly in the context of that the TV is a source of escape for the protagonist from domestic distress. His admiration for John Wayne not only implies his deprivation of a proper father figure to be identified with but shows the westernising Irish culture as well. But in the case of Francie and his family, this process of westernization is interrupted early in the novel; breakdown of the Bradies’ twenty-three-inch TV insinuates their decline in social strata and metaphorically foreshadows the tragic downfall they undergo throughout the novel. As for the community, the replacement of traditional phenomena with the external content delivered by television is accomplished. In the novel, television serves as a symbol of domestic comfort, cosiness and family welfare. Absence of television increases Francie’s sense of isolation from townspeople who are portrayed blissful with “the grey jumpy rays of television screens behind the curtains” (McCabe 75) of their houses.
Francie’s lack of parental/familial care and affection is intensified by his strong feelings of envy for physical entities epitomised by television, as evidently seen in that he delightedly watches ‘Voyage to The Bottom of The Sea’ on the Nugents’ television during his intrusion into their house. Besides, Francie endeavours to restore the past happy days of his family and, as a clear indication of this, he takes the broken television at his house out of the coalhouse and puts it in the living room, in the same place it used to be.

Hence, the social and economic situation of the Irish society during the 1960s is not only closely associated with the context of the novel but it provides a deeper understanding of the socio-economic circumstances in the novel which have an immediate influence on the characters as well. The changing outlook of Irish people is transported into the novel through the fictional community of a small town; and Francie, being in discordance with this community in many aspects, remains in the outside of social space.

1.3. Social Background of The Children of Dynmouth

William Trevor rarely conveys social realities in his fiction with a didactic aim to give messages; in an interview with Mira Stout, he describes himself as more of an “instinctive writer” who has “no messages or anything like that; I have no philosophy and I don’t impose on my characters anything more than the predicament they find themselves in” (“William Trevor, The Art”). In most of his works, Trevor’s focus is on human relationships as represented by his characters’ inner states of mind and the ways in which they achieve or fail in “coming to terms with things” (“William Trevor, The Art”). However, this does not mean that Trevor’s fiction is bereft of the characteristics of Irishness or Irish society. On the contrary, beneath the universality of Trevor’s writing lies his Irish identity and sensibility. He refers to his strong bond with Irishness, which is mostly hidden in his works, as follows:
I always call myself an Irish writer. I’m one of the few Irish writers who actually likes the phrase. Since I am an Irishman, I feel I belong to the Irish tradition. … What is important is to take Irish provincialism—which is what I happen to know about because it’s what I come from—and to make it universal. … If you are an Irishman, and if you have lived through this particular period in Irish history—the very recent period of Irish history—it’s bound to involve you. You reflect and dwell upon it a great deal. It will therefore creep into what you write whether you like it or not; and you just let it creep in where it seems to be right. (“William Trevor, The Art”)

This universalization of Irish provincialism and penetration of Irishness in Trevor’s fiction often occur via the writer’s utilization of his childhood memories; he states that his sense of tragedy and comedy, which frequently predominates his works, comes from his experiences and observations in his childhood (“William Trevor, The Art”). The Children of Dynmouth, in this respect, can be read as a work in which the ethos of Irish provincialism ‘creeps into’ the narrative through the covert infiltration of the socio-economic atmosphere of Trevor’s childhood Ireland in the 1930s and the early 1940s, a time described as “de Valera’s Ireland” (Ferriter 358). De Valera’s protectionist and strictly conservative policies as indicated by his dreams of creating “a moral community which was authentic, egalitarian, pious, static and intellectually homogeneous” engendered a socio-cultural and economic stagnation and dullness (Ferriter 359); this state of monotony and mundanity was also exacerbated by rapidly increased rates of mass emigration which further rendered Irish society deserted and relatively unpopulated. Besides, the outbreak of the Second World War in 1939 created an atmosphere of fear and anxiety as well as increasing official restrictions and censorship even though de Valera staunchly declared Ireland’s neutrality (Buckley, “Irish Examiner archives”). Thus, economic insecurity, emigration of especially the young and anti-modernist state policies made the Ireland of Trevor’s childhood “simply not an interesting place to live” (Ferriter 360). And it is precisely this uninteresting aspect of Trevor’s childhood environment what might be characterizing the uninspiring and tedious community
portrayed in *The Children of Dynmouth*. The setting of the novel, Dynmouth, is exhibited as a seaside town which is populated by mostly old and retired figures and described as a place of dullness, invariability and homogeneity; the novel, in a way, tells of the ways in which these qualities are turned upside down by an energetic youth, Timothy Gedge, who is bored with the ordinariness encircling him. Furthermore, Timothy’s concerns for his future and the fact that he would be obliged to work at a sandpaper factory, which, in fact, engenders his pertinacious insistence on performing his act, might be originating from the atmosphere of economic insufficiency of Ireland in Trevor’s childhood. For this reason, *The Children of Dynmouth* can be construed as a novel in which the aura of Ireland in the 1930s and the early 1940s implicitly and ambiguously echoes in terms of the humdrum and hermetic community depicted in the novel and the protagonist’s anxieties about his future.

Trevor’s usage of his childhood memories for literary inspiration in *The Children of Dynmouth* is more clearly manifested by the similarities between the characteristics of Youghal, the seaside town in County Cork, Ireland, where the writer spent a part of his childhood, and those of the fictional Dynmouth. As Dolores MacKenna argues, William Trevor “draws on his own memories of Youghal for details which become the texture of his fiction” (29); and a juxtaposition of Dynmouth, as depicted in the novel, and Youghal, as described in Trevor’s autobiographical work, *Excursions in The Real World*, support MacKenna’s view. Youghal is the town where Sir Walter Raleigh lived and, as a token of this, there is a Sir Walter Raleigh Park in Dynmouth. In both towns annual amusements are organized. “The flat ordinariness … stretches … in the estuary landscape of Youghal” (*Excursions* 4) and, similarly, the characteristic quality of Dynmouth is ordinariness. Both are seaside towns having a promenade along which residents stride. Besides, Trevor might be transporting some persons whom he knew in Youghal into his novel; Feather Ike rides his bike in Trevor’s Youghal just as Mr. Featherstone does in Dynmouth. Trevor
vividly remembers eavesdropping a secret love affair between a married doctor and a lady (*Excursions* 5), which might be transmitted in the novel as the secret affair between Dr. Greenslade and Miss Lavant. Such similarities reveal that, in the case of *The Children of Dynmouth*, Trevor, though heavily drawing on his imagination, also makes use of his memory to sparkle the inspiration for his work. His childhood in Youghal and Co. Cork in the 1930s and the early 1940s, in some way or the other, influence him so as to have an effect on his novel.

A notable experience of Trevor in his childhood Youghal is that, being a Protestant, he did not feel any difference from the mostly Catholic people of this town. As he puts it in his own words, “as one of the few Protestant children in that confident Catholic world I was treated fondly, and recall neither prejudice nor attempts at religious influence. … When my father was promoted, which meant moving to the West Cork town of Skibbereen and to a Protestant school, education was less pleasant” (*Excursions* xiv-xv). As a matter of fact, Trevor knew that he was originally coming from a Catholic family and this “awareness”, as Tom McAlindon indicates, “of being descended from dispossessed Catholic landowners who became Protestant in order to survive economically, together with his affection for Italy and Renaissance art, have combined to link his imagination inextricably to Catholic culture” (970). And though being a Protestant, he does not feel any affinity to the English in terms of identity and nationality. As he states, “born Irish, I observe the world through Irish sensibilities, take for granted an Irish way of doing things, am marked by small idiosyncrasies of behaviour and accent, and am reminded of familiarities of early environment when I'm separated from them” (*Excursions* xii). However, in spite of this sense of belonging to Ireland, Trevor experienced the state of being a stranger several times during his childhood; it is because his father’s job at a bank made his family move from one city to the other all the time and thus, “he often found himself as an outsider in the Irish towns where he grew up” (Smith
“William Trevor, eminent”). And in The Children of Dynmouth, Timothy Gedge borrows Trevor’s eye of an outsider; he closely observes the life in Dynmouth to which he is unable to belong.

Another time and place whose aspects reverberate in William Trevor’s The Children of Dynmouth is the East Sussex of the early 1970s. Visited by the author in the February of 1970 when it was out of season, the seaside Sussex emanates from Trevor’s memories and gets into the novel. There, with a keen sense of curiosity, Trevor watches and observes the old and retired among whom “courtesy and gentleness were still part of the condition of life” while “there was a tetchiness too” (Excursions 120) and, as usual, he eavesdrops their conversations, finding out their distinct aspects and penetrating into their lives to some extent. He talks to an old man who eagerly drinks cherry in the morning and has no child (Excursions 119), just as Mr. Abigail does in The Children of Dynmouth. He sees a funeral moved (120) and watches skinheads conversing at a café (121); the skinheads (as Dynmouth Hards) and the funeral (as an event frequently attended by Timothy) both have a place in the novel. He watches a child walking on a wall as a figure who contrasts with the dull and unhurried life at the town; possibly, the child, in Trevor’s world of fiction, is transfigured into Timothy Gedge in Dynmouth. Thus, The Children of Dynmouth can be regarded as an amalgamation of the vestiges of life at Youghal and the seaside of Sussex with Trevor’s immense imagination. Actuated by his literary motives, he re-enacts the scenes and conversations in his mind, and his imaginative faculties let him produce original and mostly eccentric personae out of the bits of what he witnessed, eavesdropped and observed in past. In the end, Trevor creates his own version of realities ingeniously extended and transformed by his artistry.
1.4. Projections of Child Abuse in *The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy*

A common point of the three novels in terms of their tie with social realities is that they implicitly or explicitly, elaborately or briefly mention sexual abuse of children. This disgraceful issue takes place in *The Dark* through the abusive acts of the protagonist’s father and a priest. In *The Butcher Boy*, the protagonist is molested by a clergyman at a church-run institution. And in *The Children of Dynmouth*, it is represented by an old paedophile.

One significant fact pertaining to the evil side of the Catholic Church in the Ireland of the 1950s and 1960s was children’s subjection to physical and sexual abuse by the clerics at the industrial or reformatory schools. Yet, this reality was not confronted by either families or state institutions at that time; in other words, 1960s was a time in which “there was a wider culture of tolerance towards physical punishment of children, and a silence with respect to the sexual abuse of children – whether it happened in institutions” or “within the family” (Daly 178). As the report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse proved much later, within such church-run institutions, there were appalling cases of physical and sexual child abuse committed by religious staff during not only the 1960s but previous decades as well. According to the report, there were 202 reports of physical abuse, 119 reports of sexual abuse of children at church-run male industrial and reformatory schools during the 1960s; in the decades prior to the 60s, there were 197 reports of physical abuse and 88 reports of sexual abuse of children in similar institutions (Confidential Committee, “Record of” 55-74). These scandalous actions, which were mostly covered up till the 1990s, not only traumatized a number of children and their families but destroyed their inner confidence in the Catholic Church and its clergymen though they still believed in the Christian values.
This agonizing reality stands at a critical point in the novels of McGahern and McCabe. Young Mahoney in *The Dark*, having to sleep with his father at nights, is subjected to his father’s inappropriate acts of fondling and caressing, which causes the protagonist to feel ashamed of himself and loathe his father. Furthermore, he is almost sexually abused by a priest who lies with him in his bed, strokes him and talks to him about his sexuality. This incident frustrates the protagonist and causes his faith in the church and idea of priesthood to be torn into pieces; and for this reason, it has a critical role in young Mahoney’s consequential isolation from society. Explicit narrative of sexual abuse, to the frustration of McGahern himself, caused his novel to be banned for ‘indecent content’ (and particularly for its portrayal of a perverted priest) by The Censorship of Publications Board soon after its publication in 1965\(^2\); “the book's use of the word 'fuck', together with its frank descriptions of masturbation and sexual frustration, had caused a stir in Ireland” (Drisceoil 155). The banning also brought about McGahern’s loss of his job at St. John the Baptist Boy’s National School.

In *The Butcher Boy*, Francie is sent to an industrial school after he intrudes in the Nugents’ house since he is under-age to be sent to prison. The school is run by priests and one of them, Father Sullivan, whom Francie calls ‘Tiddly’, abuses Francie sexually. Besides being a pervert, Father Sullivan has some serious mental problems; he believes in Francie’s lies that he sees visions of religious figures. Francie’s experiences at the industrial school, which are redolent of cases of child abuse at industrial and reformatory schools in the 1960s, intensifies his sense of inferiority in community as well as impairing his relationship with his best and only friend. Therefore, church-related hypocritical and

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\(^2\) The Censorship of Publications Board in Ireland, established in 1929 with the campaigns of Catholic Action groups, included clergymen and priests as committee members ((Drisceoil, 146). The Board prohibited a number of literary works for mostly moral reasons. However, as the Church began to weaken from 1960s onward, the censorship policy of the board turned to be more moderate. “The controversies generated by the banning of works by John McGahern and Edna O’Brien in the 1960s helped fuel the movement for reform, and in 1967 the censorship legislation was overhauled. This resulted in the gradual unbanning of the Irish books on the list over the next twelve years, and also marked the end of the censorship of Irish writers” (Drisceoil 146). Accordingly, the ban on *The Dark* was removed in 1970.
immoral conducts in *The Dark* and *The Butcher Boy*, as projections of such acts in reality, add to the protagonists’ abjection and drifts them into a more intense psychological collapse.

Child abuse stands at a more peripheral point in *The Children of Dynmouth*. Mr. Abigail, an old and retired man, hides the fact that he is a paedophile and homosexual and that he goes to the sea only to be satisfied by the vision of boy scouts. But, Timothy knows the truth about him and at one stage he tells about it to Mrs. Abigail, which ruins the ‘happy’ marriage of the old couple. Considering the fact that 1970s was a decade which witnessed world-wide movements against children’s sexual abuse (Bingham et al. 427), Timothy’s disclosure of Mr. Abigail’s perversity in a way that brings a sudden catastrophe to the old man’s life could be seen as a covert, authorial protest of paedophilic acts which became prevalent in the 1970s’ England (Bingham et al. 416).

To conclude, the social backgrounds and the authors’ personal memories or experiences provide an insight into the conditions and mentalities of characters in *The Dark*, *The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy*. This insight has an essential place in approaching to the figure of outsider in the novels from a broader perspective. Under the light of the social realities of Ireland in the 1950s, young Mahoney can be evaluated as a creation which represents McGahern’s defiant stance against patriarchal Ireland of de Valera which is run by the immoral and ineligible authorities of the church-state. Breakthrough changes in the Irish society of the 1960s with the introduction of the First Programme for Economic Expansion let such central issues as social inequality, class-consciousness and sense of superiority delineated in *The Butcher Boy* be evaluated in a more profound way. Life in Youghal and the East Sussex as Trevor experienced it reveals the unprecedented ways in which the author is able to turn a slight incident he witnesses or overhears into a literary masterpiece. Finally, while child or preadolescent characters’ subjection to sexual abuse in *The Dark* and *The Butcher Boy*, as a reflection of the reality
in the outer world, sheds light into the traumatic impact of this malignity on the victim, the ways in which disclosure of such a scandalous conduct shatters the life of victimizer is revealed in *The Children of Dynmouth*. Hence, considering the novels’ functioning as literary ‘mirrors’ reflecting the realities of some localities or of the world at large, they can be taken as social texts in varying degrees.
CHAPTER TWO
THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK: FREUD, ADLER, JUNG, RANK, HORENY, SULLIVAN and LACAN

Ideas and theories of some eminent figures of psychoanalysis are of considerable value to have an insightful understanding of the image of outsider in *The Dark*, *The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy*. In this regard, the assertions, formulations and definitions expounded in Freudian and Neo/Post-Freudian Psychoanalysis are indispensable to be unfolded and explicated; such an exposition will elucidate the inner states and psychological impairments of the outsiders in the relevant novels. The suggestions of the pioneers of psychoanalysis will also be of significance with regard to the proposition that the protagonists become outsiders due to their impotence in overcoming the impositions and inflictions of their domestic and social circle. Furthermore, arguments of especially neo/post-Freudian psychoanalysts, who accentuate the influence of interpersonal relations on human psychology, will help to reveal the role of the conflicts between the protagonists and society’s structure in catalyzing the protagonists’ isolation. Hence, theories of Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, Carl Gustav Jung, Otto Rank, Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan and Jacques Lacan will be analyzed in conjunction with the protagonists’ particular aspects. The interpretation deduced out of some works of these figures will effectively contribute to perceiving the ways in which the protagonists are detached from society, become inclined to mental breakdown and, consequently, act as outsiders.


Being the founder and most prominent figure of psychoanalysis, Sigmund Freud, in his *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), states that man, instinctually and essentially,
seeks for pleasure and aims to become happy throughout his life. Freud calls this innate urge to acquire and secure pleasure as “pleasure principle”, a phenomenon which “dominates the operation of the mental apparatus from the start” (Civilization 23). However, according to Freud, it is impossible to reach pure pleasure directly due to the painful realities of the external world. As he articulates, “there is no possibility at all of its [pleasure principle’s] being carried through; all the regulations of the universe run counter to it” (Civilization 23). For this reason, an adjustment of pleasure principle according to the antagonistic external realities is inevitably experienced in human psyche. Freud identifies this alteration as “reality principle”. This principle functions to provide man with pleasure not in an immediate way but by letting him avoid pain and unpleasure.

Freud, in his Introductory Lectures on Psychoanalysis, explains the interrelationship between the two principles as follows:

It is immediately obvious that the sexual instincts, from beginning to end of their development, work towards obtaining pleasure; they retain their original function unaltered. The other instincts, the ego instincts, have the same aim to start with. But under the influence of the instructress Necessity, they soon learn to replace the pleasure principle by a modification of it. For them the task of avoiding unpleasure turns out to be almost as important as that of obtaining pleasure. The ego discovers that it is inevitable for it to renounce immediate satisfaction, to postpone the obtaining of pleasure, to put up with a little unpleasure and to abandon certain sources of pleasure altogether. An ego thus educated has become ‘reasonable’; it no longer lets itself be governed by the pleasure principle, but obeys the reality principle, which also at bottom seeks to obtain pleasure, but pleasure which is assured through taking account of reality, even though it is pleasure postponed and diminished. (Introductory 357)

Hence, alteration of the pleasure principle is, in fact, a transformation of it into the reality principle because, ultimately, the reality principle has exactly the same objective with that of pleasure principle, namely to obtain pleasure. The “education” of pleasure principle occurs through postponement and renouncement of pleasure or avoidance and tolerance of unpleasure. As an individual internalizes reality principle as an inevitable mental apparatus, this principle becomes settled in mind and individual voluntarily postpones or
gives up transitory and brief pleasure for the sake of a long-term or infinite pleasure. As Freud points out in “Formulations on the Two Principles of Mental Functioning”, “actually the substitution of the reality principle for the pleasure principle implies no deposing of the pleasure principle, but only a safeguarding of it. A momentary pleasure, uncertain in its results, is given up, but only in order to gain along the new path an assured pleasure at a later time” (“Formulations” 223). In this way, renunciation of pleasure or toleration of unpleasure are adopted for the continuity and protection of pleasure. And, as will be elaborated later, it precisely a failure in tolerating and avoiding from pain what impairs the psychologies of the protagonists in the novels in discussion and causes them to be depended on unwelcoming societies for protection and, ultimately, remain as outsiders.

Freud categorizes the external forces which compel mind to make modifications on pleasure principle and menace man’s direct achievement of happiness through satisfaction of pleasure as follows: “we are threatened with suffering from three directions: from our own body, which is doomed to decay and dissolution and which cannot even do without pain and anxiety as warning signals; from the external world, which may rage against us with overwhelming and merciless forces of destruction; and finally from our relations to other men” (Civilization 24). Two of these forces can be regarded inevitable, because man’s body is doomed to decay and nature/external world has always had a destructive aspect as well as its beauty. However, the third source of suffering, namely the pain inflicted on individual by other individuals, is felt to be an extra distress which Freud elucidates as follows: “the suffering which comes from this last source is perhaps more painful to us than any other. We tend to regard it as a kind of gratuitous addition, although it cannot be any less fatefully inevitable than the suffering which comes from elsewhere” (Civilization 24).
Freud asserts that the suffering caused by other individuals is more painful and no less inevitable than the other two kinds of suffering, and yet, he does not bring any further explanation about why it is so. In fact, unlike the other two unpreventable sources of suffering (decay of human body and suffering caused by nature), the suffering caused by other individuals is more preventable because the source which engenders it, that is human beings, is supposed to be equal with the individual in pain in terms of physical and mental potential. In other words, individuals react against the suffering from other individuals in a more rebellious way, regard it intolerable and even resist against it because they do not consider themselves inferior to those who are the source of the suffering. For this reason, they think that this sort of suffering is, in Freud’s words, “more painful and a kind of gratuitous addition” because it is less inevitable than outer suffering.

Instead of simply obeying and taking in the suffering caused by others, individuals look for the ways to diminish or get rid of it. Freud postulates that, in this struggle, some people end up being alone and isolated even though they stay within a familiar circle such as a hometown or family. As a result of suffering caused by other people, individuals develop some defense mechanisms such as voluntary isolation or, quite the opposite, mingling with society and becoming a part of it. Regarding these two practices against unpleasure, Freud posits as follows:

Against the suffering which may come upon one from human relationships the readiest safeguard is voluntary isolation, keeping oneself aloof from other people. The happiness which can be achieved along this path is, as we see, the happiness of quietness. Against the dreaded external world one can only defend oneself by some kind of turning away from it, if one intends to solve the task by oneself. There is, indeed, another and better path: that of becoming a member of the human community, and, with the help of a technique guided by science, going over to the attack against nature and subjecting her to the human will. Then one is working with all for the good of all. (Civilization 24)

Thus, Freud thinks that man’s inclusion in human community is a better option than keeping himself isolated from society as a way of avoiding from pain caused by human
relationships. Even though Freud’s assertion seems to be paradoxical, it is clarified regarding his thoughts on group psychology. In his *Group Psychology and the Analysis of Ego*, Freud points out that an individual feels secured and powerful when he becomes the member of a group (10). Freud quotes and supports Gustave Le Bon’s following ideas on group psychology stated in Le Bon’s influential work titled *The Crowd: A Study of the Popular Mind*:

> The individual forming part of a group acquires … a sentiment of invincible power which allows him to yield to instincts which, had he been alone, he would perforce have kept under restraint. He will be the less disposed to check himself from the consideration that, a crowd being anonymous, and in consequence irresponsible, the sentiment of responsibility which always controls individuals disappears entirely. (*The Crowd* 6)

So, as clear in Le Bon’s indications, an individual steps into a group, shares the same ideals and system of belief with its members and identifies himself with its leader; he feels himself as a part of an invincibly powerful and untouchable mass and he supposes that if an evil or pain occurs it will not come upon him personally but on the group of people which he belongs to. For this reason, instead of being isolated and remaining prone to any kind of pain, man, according to Freud, chooses to join human community and act collectively.

According to Freud, another way of defending oneself against the unpleasure of external world is deliberate inclination to intellectual or artistic sphere. Freud explicated this method as follows: “the task, here is that of shifting the instinctual aims in such a way that they cannot come up against frustration from the external world. In this, sublimation of the instincts lends its assistance. One gains the most if one can sufficiently heighten the yield of pleasure from the sources of psychical and intellectual work. When that is so, fate can do little against one” (*Civilization* 26). Thus, an individual’s preoccupation with intellectual work as a guard against the anxieties of the outer space can be considered as a preliminary to voluntary isolation. While involving himself deeply
into an intellectual work, one “shows an intention of making oneself independent of the external world by seeking satisfaction in internal, psychical processes” (*Civilization* 27). The intellectual or artistic work functions as a bond between man’s internal realm and the external world because it is the tangible form of his “psychical processes” accessible to human community. In the presence of such a preoccupation, the isolated member of society shows a tendency to form a psychic space which is dominated by his imagination and where he is fully free from the distressing realities of external world. Thus, the imagination and fantasies of the isolated individual turn to substitute the real world, letting him get away from suffering.

In “Creative Writers and Day-Dreaming”, Freud focuses on the mental process in which frustrating external realities are effaced or transformed by phantasies in order to fulfill desired wishes and provide pleasure. He explains this mental activity as follows:

> The motive forces of phantasies are unsatisfied wishes, and every single phantasy is the fulfillment of a wish, a correlation of unsatisfying reality. These motivating wishes vary according to the sex, character and circumstances of the person who is having the phantasy; but they fall naturally into two main groups. They are either ambitious wishes, which serve to elevate the subject's personality; or they are erotic ones. … In young men egoistic and ambitious wishes come to the fore clearly enough alongside of erotic ones … If phantasies become over-luxuriant and over-powerful, the conditions are laid for an onset of neurosis or psychosis. (“Creative” 423-424)

As Freud indicates, man’s immersion in his imaginary world gradually and predominantly detaches him from the real world and makes him end up with a loss of touch with reality. Thus, while he “rearranges the things of his world in a new way which pleases him” (“Creative” 421), he comes closer to be mentally distressed. In *Delusion and Dream in Jensen’s Gradiva*, Freud exemplifies this kind of transition from intellectual preoccupation into the universe of pure phantasy through Wilhelm Jensen’s novella titled *Gradiva*. In the story, Norbert Hanold is depicted as a young archaeologist who loses his parents at a very early age. From his childhood onwards, he patterns his preoccupation
after that of his father, who was a professor at the university, and devotes his entire life to education and particularly his researches on archaeology. Hence, growing up in isolation, he compensates the lack of his parents with scientific work and gets fully absorbed by it. He moves away from the outer life and also, his intimate childhood relationship with Zoe Bertgang comes to an end. On a scientific visit to Rome, he discovers a bas-relief of a female figure which impresses him deeply. He takes a plaster cast of the relief to his home and, in time, his captivation by it becomes more immense. He turns to be detached from real life, becoming completely engrossed in his studies on the figure.

Hanold is attached to the figure in such an extreme way that he creates an imaginary name and story for it, which places him in manifold delusions. Regarding the ways in which Norbert Hanold convinces himself of the reality of his delusions, Freud asserts as follows: “he made up a story that she was no doubt the daughter of an aristocratic family, … and that she was on her way to the goddess’s temple. Then he found it hard to fit her quiet, calm nature into the busy life of a capital city. He convinced himself, rather, that she must be transported to Pompeii, and that somewhere there she was stepping across the curious stepping-stones which have been dug up …” (Delusion 7). His delusions and the imaginary stories related with the relief exert a direct influence on his actions in real life: he takes a journey to Pompeii and wanders around the historical site for several days. He comes across a woman and believes in the reality of that the woman whom he sees and talks to is Gradiva, the human form of the bas-relief. Yet, in the end, it becomes clear that the woman is Zoe Bertrang, Norbert’s youthful love.

Norbert Hanold’s experience obviously manifests that his delusions are related with what he lacked or repressed in his past, that is his affair with Zoe. As stated in the story, Hanold “felt that he was out of sorts because he lacked something without being able to explain what, and this ill-humor he took everywhere with him” (Jensen 29). His
deprivation pushes him into a delusionary state of mind and causes him to replace reality with his phantasies. His case illustrates the ways in which an individual, in his isolation from the external world, invents a psychic landscape where he recreates realities in the form of phantasies and behaves accordingly. Within this space, frustration, unpleasure and anxieties of real world are avoided and what lacks is self-sufficiently acquired. Such an immersion in delusions is what the protagonists in *The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Buthcer Boy* undergo in various ways and degrees.

In *The Dark*, young Mahoney’s lack of a sense of security and his urge for sexual satisfaction pushes him into a series of day-dreams. His delusions, though not as intense as those of Norbert Hanold, occupy his mind and direct his actions. His continuous acts of masturbation not only manifest his self-satisfaction through imagination but detach him from intimacy with women in reality as well. He also imagines that the church and then the university would provide him with protection against his father’s abusive and despotic oppression as well as enabling him to mingle with a particular community. Yet, his imagination misdirects him because he fails to foresee that the church would not endow him with social/physical protection while the university education would keep him still dependent on his father. For this reason, even though young Mahoney’s phantasies do not subdue realities completely, they have a strong hold on his actions and decisions, which hinders him to have a realistic attitude towards persons and incidents surrounding him.

In *The Children of Dynmouth*, Timothy Gedge’s phantasies of becoming a famous comedian via performing an act at a local contest control and restrict his thoughts and actions. Being an isolated, deprived and neglected teenage, Timothy is coerced into obtaining pleasure self-sufficiently and therefore he turns to his inner space. He is immersed in his imagination to such an extent that he convinces himself to believe in the reality of his delusions, as manifested in his attempts to manipulate the residents of
Dynmouth by blackmailing them and telling lies to them. In other words, he replaces reality with what he fantasizes and acts accordingly; he treats other people as figures who could help him achieve his delusions and, for this reason, he remains to be as an outsider who fails to fit into society.

In *The Butcher Boy*, Francie Brady is unable to cope with or tolerate social oppression (as represented by the Nugent’s humiliation) and parental distress (as illustrated by his mother’s suicide) and tends to be engrossed in his imagination as a way of escape. In time, as his immersion becomes more intense due to the tragic incidents he encounters, his phantasies prevail over realities and push him into a delusionary state of mind. He begins to believe in the reality of his phantasies especially about his relationship with his friend, Joe, and the Nugents. His intrusion into the Nugents’ house and substitution of himself with the Nugents’ son, Philip, not only reveals the dominance of his delusions over his actions but also shows that he behaves so due to what he lacks; that is, family comfort, parental love and economic welfare. Francie’s murder of Mrs. Nugent also reflects his delusional persuasion that she is the only one who is responsible with his mother’s suicide. Thus, Francie’s detachment from realities and immersion in his phantasies put him into further isolation and contribute to his presence in society as an outsider.

According to Freud, extreme social isolation and deep involvement in imagination and phantasies result with neurosis or psychosis. Individuals suffering from these mental disorders tend to avoid from realities by simply ignoring them. In “The Loss of Reality in Neurosis and Psychosis”, Freud defines the difference between neurosis and psychosis as follows:

Both neurosis and psychosis are thus the expression of a rebellion on the part of the id against the external world, of its unwillingness—or, if one prefers, its incapacity—to adapt itself to the exigencies of reality … in neurosis a piece of reality is avoided by a sort of flight, whereas in psychosis it is remodelled. …
neurosis does not disavow the reality, it only ignores it; psychosis disavows it and tries to replace it. … In a psychosis, the transforming of reality is carried out upon the psychical precipitates of former relations to it—that is, upon the memory-traces, ideas and judgments which have been previously derived from reality and by which reality was represented in the mind. (“The Loss” 185)

As Freud argues, in psychosis, replacement of reality takes place through pre-existing stores of memories and ideas while, in neurosis, there is no such replacement of reality. In other words, a psychotic individual strongly believes in and acts according to the reality of his phantasies; a neurotic is absorbed in his phantasies as a way of turning away from realities. Therefore, an individual’s isolation from society, which is precipitated by the operation of reality principle and as a defense against painful realities of the external world, may result with neurosis or psychosis.

A significant functioning of the reality principle which shapes an individual’s life and social relations appears in the ceasing of Oedipus complex. A boy’s realization that there is no way for him to take the place of his father who is much stronger than him is one of the first frustrations that man experiences. In *The Ego and the Id*, Freud refers to the external world’s restrictive influence, as represented by the figure of father, on the boy as follows:

> Its [superego’s] relation to the ego is not exhausted by the precept: ‘You ought to be like this (like your father).’ It also comprises the prohibition: ‘You may not be like this (like your father) - that is, you may not do all that he does; some things are his prerogative.’ This double aspect of the ego ideal derives from the fact that the ego ideal had the task of repressing the Oedipus complex. (*The Ego and The Id* 30)

The boy understands that he is prohibited to take the role of his father in terms of his father’s relationship with his mother; but he is allowed to act as his father does in many other aspects. The boy also learns that his sexual desire to his mother is also against the realities of the external world. For this reason, he has to rearrange his feelings of enmity
to his father and his sexual interest in his mother in order not to be exposed to unpleasure.

Freud explains this adjustment which engenders the end of Oedipus complex as below:

Along with the demolition of the Oedipus complex, the boy’s object-cathexis of his mother must be given up. Its place may be filled by one of two things: either an identification with his mother or an intensification of his identification with his father. We are accustomed to regard the latter outcome as the more normal; it permits the affectionate relation to the mother to be in a measure retained. In this way the dissolution of the Oedipus complex would consolidate the masculinity in a boy’s character. (*The Ego and The Id* 27)

Persuaded that his rivalry with his father and passion for his mother are unacceptable phenomena, a boy takes his father as his model and rearranges his feelings for his mother in the form of affection. Instead of being hostile to his father, the boy begins to respect, obey and imitate him considering that the only way to be accepted by his circle is to be like his father. He regards his father as the epitome of masculinity, physical strength, vigilance and wisdom. The only aspect of his father that the boy excludes to adopt is his father’s sexual affinity with his mother; in time, he directs his sexual feelings to other women. The identification with his father is transmitted to some other figures whom he willingly or coercively picks out while he mentally and physically grows up. In “The Economic Problem of Masochism”, Freud mentions this process of identifications as follows:

The course of childhood development leads to an ever increasing detachment from parents, and their personal significance for the super-ego recedes into the background. To the imagos they leave behind there are then linked the influences of teachers and authorities, self-chosen models and publicly recognized heroes, whose figures need no longer be introjected by an ego which has become more resistant. The last figure in the series that began with the parents is *The Dark power of Destiny* … (“The Economic” 281)

As Freud indicates, an individual identifies himself with a variety of personages, the first of whom being his father. The figure of father represents the qualities that a boy wishes to obtain; similarly, each of the subsequent figures, whom the boy admires and takes as his role-model in the course of his development into maturity, typifies the characteristics
which he lacks and desires to acquire. In “Some Reflections on Schoolboy Psychology”, Freud calls these role models as “imagos” and suggests that individuals replace their imagos throughout their lives (243).

Freud’s ideas on pleasure principle, reality principle, practices of defense against/avoidance from unpleasure, phantasies, neurosis, psychosis and the concepts of identification and imago shed considerable light on the ways in which characters in The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth and The Butcher Boy feel and behave as outsiders.

Freud’s concepts of ‘pleasure principle’ and ‘reality principle’ significantly contribute to delineating the behaviour and mental states of the outsiders in the novels. As befitting to the pleasure principle, each of the protagonists naturally wishes to attain a permanent delight and gratification within their lives. However, they are restrained to reach out pleasure directly due to the suffering inflicted on them by domestic and social circumstances. Hence, they compulsively make modifications on their seeking for pleasure, which brings out the reality principle. In accordance with the dynamics of the reality principle, their inclination to pure pleasure is replaced by their struggle for escape from suffering and anxiety.

In the case of young Mahoney, direct achievement of pleasure is blocked by the tyranny of his father, economic insufficiencies and ambiguity regarding his future. Hence, young Mahoney strives to obtain pleasure by avoiding the unpleasure caused by these realities. At first, he considers religion and the church as the appropriate means to achieve the pleasure of a secure life; yet he is frustrated to encounter further incidents of unpleasure within ecclesiastical space. He therefore turns to a more secular circle represented by university education; however, he is disappointed to realize that he would still be depended on his father and that the financial uncertainties surrounding his life would continue to exist. Thus, in a final effort to secure pleasure by averting unpleasure,
he accepts the job offer at the end of the novel assuming that working-life would provide him with physical and economic security, and ergo pleasure. Evidently, the pleasure and reality principles, as intertwined forces sharing a common purpose for pleasure, operate as the latent incentives in each of young Mahoney’s actions and decisions.

In *The Children of Dynmouth*, the principles of pleasure and reality actively function to lead Timothy Gedge into some certain ways of thinking and acting. Timothy’s immediate access to pleasure is hindered by the dismissive and aloof attitude of society as well as lack of parental intimacy. Both of these realities compel him into a suffering engendered by loneliness, isolation and exclusion. Hence, his innate urge for pleasure represented by pleasure principle is altered by the reality principle so as to enable him to acquire pleasure by a relief of unpleasure and anxiety. In this respect, Timothy’s intention to be a famous comedian and, as extension of it, all of his thoughts, feelings and behaviour (such as trespassing in private lives of people, lying and blackmailing them, inferring their words and attitudes falsely) ensue from the operation of the reality principle, as an ‘educated’ form of pleasure principle. In other words, Timothy, at any moment and with all of his mental and physical energy, endeavours to invent ways to obtain the pleasure of being rid of unpleasure (of solitariness and inferiority) and obtaining the pleasure of a proper integration into society.

In *The Butcher Boy*, Francie Brady’s attainment of pleasure is impeded by class-based structure of society and, as direct consequences of it, parental distress and estrangement of his friend, Joe. Belonging to a family of lower social class, Francie is constrained to adjust his orientation to pleasure as required by the reality principle. Accordingly, he tends to struggle against the figures and circumstances that cause him suffering, unpleasure and anxiety. He tries to make use of his uncle’s local reputation in order to make an impression on society, and especially the Nugents, an upper-class family. He attempts to maintain his friendship with Joe in various ways. Finally, he
regards the contemptuous attitude of the Nugents towards himself and his parents as the principal reason for his unpleasure; as a consequence, he adopts a hostile manner towards them, which ends up with his murder of Mrs. Nugent. Thus, all of Francie’s actions are directed by his yearning for pleasure which, being modified by the reality principle, corresponds to the annihilation of unpleasure.

Operations of the pleasure principle and the reality principle within the psyches of young Mahoney, Timothy and Francie remarkably manifest the ways in which these characters become outsiders. Even though each of the protagonists behave in a way as required by and in accordance with the reality principle, they fail to achieve pleasure by being unable to overcome the unpleasant state in which they are forced to exist. This failure, which recurrently and intensely pushes them into deep dejection, is the primary reason for their becoming outsiders.

The suffering and pressure undergone by the protagonists due to socio-economic circumstances and members of society (including their parents) is severe and unbearable to the extent that they move into an imaginary space where they hope to feel free of pain and find happiness. Young Mahoney, in *The Dark*, obtains sexual satisfaction and escape from the tyranny of his father in his day-dreams. In *The Children of Dynmouth*, Timothy is absorbed into his phantasies of becoming a comedian and gaining public appreciation and respect, which he has lacked all over his life. Francie, in *The Butcher Boy*, dreams of enjoying the affection of his parents and existing in an idyllic domestic atmosphere which he has long yearned for. Each of the characters faces with painful realities of external world, feels frustrated and withdraws to his mental space where he avoids from unpleasure, gets what he lacks and becomes what he wishes to be. The huge discrepancies between the real and the imagined/expected become insignificant in their phantasies.
The protagonists, and especially Timothy and Francie, become obsessive fantasists and turn to be mentally disordered or inclined to violence due to being excessively immersed into the world of phantasies. Being completely alone in the path to his future job and life, Young Mahoney draws on his imagination and phantasies in taking decisions and making choices. He rarely steps out of his imaginary space and, in each case, he encounters harsh realities, which are basically embodied by the repression of his sexuality and his father’s cold and perverted attitude. He decides to abnegate worldly pleasures for the sake of the “happiness of quietness” and protection against the outer threats surrounding him and chooses to dedicate his life to God in the service of the Church; yet, even there, he can not escape from painful realities which, in this case, appear in the abnormal and immoral behavior of Father Gerald. He moves to the city to study at the university as he dreams of becoming free to fulfill his sexual passion and socialize as a way of keeping himself safe against unpleasure; but he feels alienated and shy to adapt himself to the morally and sexually unrestrained life of university students. Hence, in each case of misery, Young Mahoney becomes more intensely immersed into the world of his phantasies and creates his own realities, which brings him closer to neurosis.

In *The Children of Dynmouth*, Timothy replaces external realities with his phantasies, which reveals his psychotic mental state. Society’s callous and unsympathetic attitude hinders Timothy’s inclusion in community and forces him to be isolated and absorbed in his inner space. His phantasy of becoming a famous comedian by means of acting in Spot the Talent competition controls his actions and directs him to threat the residents of Dynmouth. The motive behind Timothy’s behavior is his wish to avoid from unpleasure, which is manifested in the endless castigations he gets from other people, and to mingle with society as an appreciated and applauded figure.

Just like young Mahoney and Timothy, Francie, in *The Butcher Boy*, is propelled by external realities into his mental sphere dominated by his imagination and phantasies.
The facts that his father is an irritable alcoholic, his mother is mentally disordered and his poor family is degraded by the upper-class Nugents cause Francie to be isolated and pushed into creating phantasies in which all of these agonizing realities are reversed. In the course of the novel, and especially after his mother dies, Francie’s phantasies take the place of realities. His psychosis reaches its climax when he treats his father’s dead body as if he were alive and when he brutally kills Mrs. Nugent.

Thus, the protagonists in the novels are the paragons of individuals who are exposed to physical and mental suffering caused by figures around them. Even though they strive to prevent this suffering by attempting to be mingled with society, they fail to do so because of the class-bound and indifferent structure of society. As a result, they end up being isolated and introvert. Their isolation is not voluntary; on the contrary, it is enforced on them by their social and even domestic circle. Freud’s theories on the operation of human psychology are of considerable value and importance in understanding and explaining the characters’ psychical process and conditions that lead them to be outsiders.

With his revolutionary ideas and arguments, Freud had a huge impact on a great number of philosophers, theorists and sociologists. His theories enabled them to create new perspectives on understanding the nature of man. Alfred Adler and Carl Gustav Jung are two of these figures who worked with Freud for a while and then separated to establish their own standpoint.

2.2. Alfred Adler: Individual Psychology and Inferiority / Superiority Complexes

The ideas of Alfred Adler, who conceptualizes his theories as “Individual Psychology”, are considered to illustrate the typical aspects that manifest the ways in which the protagonists in The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth and The Butcher Boy act as
outsiders. Adler believes that an individual’s mental state can be understood thoroughly only if his/her relationship with the outside world is comprehended in depth. For this reason, Adler, in his psychological analyses, focuses on individuals’ interaction with their social circle including their parents, teacher, friends etc.

The concepts of inferiority complex and, as a way of overcoming it, compensation have a significant place in Adler’s theories on individual psychology. According to Adler, every individual experiences a feeling of inferiority in childhood due to his lower physical and mental capacity. Surrounded by such figures as parents, relatives and teachers who are bigger, more powerful, smarter and wiser than himself, the child feels weak, insufficient, lacking and struggles to compensate his deficiencies. In this struggle, he tries to attract the attention of his superiors and be recognized and praised by them for his physical or mental abilities, which mitigate his feeling of inferiority. In “The Feeling of Inferiority and the Striving for Recognition”, Adler accentuates the crucial function of inferiority feelings in the development of individual psychology as below:

We must remember that every child occupies an inferior position in life and were it not for a certain amount of social feeling on the part of his environment, would be incapable of independent existence. At the commencement of life, every child must experience a deep feeling of inferiority when he becomes conscious of his inability to cope single-handedly with the problems of existence. This feeling of inferiority is the driving force, the starting point from which every childish striving originates. It determines how an individual child acquires peace and security in life; it determines the very goal of his existence and prepares the path along which this goal may be reached. (“The Feeling” 12)

As indicated in the quote, Adler regards the sense of inferiority as a necessary phenomenon in mental development because it not only triggers the innate impetus in the child to direct his potential to achieve a certain goal but constitutes his future personality as well. According to Adler, as stated in The Individual Psychology of Alfred Adler: A Systematic Presentation in Selections from His Writings, the state of seeking to accomplish a purpose, “by the attainment of which we shall feel strong, superior, and
complete” (104) continues all over man’s life. He states that all individuals are “in a permanent mood of inferiority feeling, which constantly spurs them on to attain greater security. The pleasure or displeasure which accompany this striving are only aids and rewards received on this path” (*The Individual* 123).

The fact that the feelings of insufficiency, insecurity and incompleteness urge individuals to be in a better condition in physical and mental terms indicates the teleological aspect of inferiority. An individual has to feel the lacking of a certain phenomenon in order to be motivated to seek the ways of attaining it. Yet, this teleological operation can not be realized immediately because one can hardly fulfill a lacking the moment he wishes. For this reason, compensation of a deprivation and dissolution of inferiority are imagined in phantasies before being put into reality. The feelings of inferiority, though lessened with phantasies, continue to exist until the individual achieves the lacking. As Adler points out, “the feeling of insufficiency is a positive pain and, at the very least, lasts as long as a task has not been accomplished, a need relieved, or a tension released” (*The Individual* 123). The world of phantasies is the place where all the deficiencies engendering feelings of inferiority are replaced fictitiously with superior qualities. Adler uses the concept of “fictional goal” to mean the material of the phantasies which dominate the psychic space of individuals having a sense of inferiority. The desired and yet deprived objects, pleasures, mental and physical qualities, domestic/social environment with specific characteristics form the essence of fictional goal. Adler explicates the role of imaginary dissolution of inferiorities as a compensation as below:

The fiction is, so to speak, the marshall’s staff in the knapsack of the little soldier and thus a down payment demanded by the primitive feeling of insecurity. … In the fiction, disquieting inferiorities and inhibiting realities are set aside, as always happens when the psyche in its plight seeks a solution and security. The painful insecurity is reduced to its lowest possible, albeit apparently causal amount, and this is transformed into its very antithesis which in the form of the fictional goal is made the guiding point of all wishes, phantasies, and tendencies. Next this goal must be made concrete to become clearer. (*The Individual* 99)
Hence, Adler suggests that the relief from the painful realities which bring about inferiority feelings is only a fiction existing only in imagination as long as it is not achieved in reality. Achievement of the fictional goal means not only the end of inferiority feelings and having a sense of completion/security but the disappearance of phantasies related with that particular goal as well. For this reason, in case of inability to succeed in attaining the fictitious goal, individual’s attachment to imagination and phantasies is intensified.

The feeling of inferiority turns to be a complex and a pathological phenomenon when it is excessively increased in particular conditions and phantasies take the place of real achievements or compensations. Adler considers that, apart from children with organ inferiorities, “illegitimate or unwanted children” and children who exist in “unfavorable environments” where their relationship with their parents is harmed or broken develop a much greater and severe feeling of inferiority (*The Individual* 118-119). According to Adler, children in dysfunctional domestic space or social circle are more inclined to crime and introversion due to their sense of insufficiency and aggression (*The Individual* 118). As for unwanted or illegitimate children, “they feel curtailed and behave like enemies. They use their strength only if they are stronger, sometimes in a cruel manner against weaker persons or animals. … Their increased feeling of inferiority makes them suspicious and sly. It is difficult to win them and to develop social interest and courage to do useful work” (*The Individual* 118). Hence, in both cases, children’s feeling of inferiority, which, in normal conditions, would lead them to striving for superiority, causes them to be mentally distressed. Elaborating on what these sorts of child individuals lack and suffer from, Adler discusses that they should be approached as adults and presents some treatments as follows:
It is such children who become the criminals, problem children, neurotics, and suicides. They are lacking in social interest and therefore in courage and self-confidence. Their treatment and cure, as in the case of adult neurotics, would be for the psychotherapist to take on the double function of the mother [which she had not properly fulfilled]: (1) to join with the child and to give him the experience of a trustworthy fellow man, and (2) to increase and spread the social interest and thus to strengthen independence and courage. (*The Individual* 119)

Thus, Adler thinks that lack of a figure whom the child could get support from and befriend with and failure of socialization are the main reasons behind the inferiority complex of both children and adult individuals. He argues that, if not treated, children suffering from inferiority complex grow up as individuals who are deprived of self-confidence and self-sufficiency; remaining at an isolated and insecure position, they show a tendency to violence and crime over a period of time. In this respect, as will be detailed in the following chapters, the protagonists in *The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* suffer a profound sense of inferiority and worthlessness; they are compelled to overcome this suffering in the outer world. Yet, their suffering is exacerbated, rather than mitigated, by the indifference, disparagement and castigation of the figures in communal space.

Adler further argues that individuals who are unable to compensate their inferiorities and attain an achievement in reality due to their isolation from society and problematic family structure tend to be fixated upon their imaginary sphere (*The Individual* 218). Failing in their struggle to mingle with society and being ignored or hated by their parents, they turn to their inner space, which is the only way of escape for them from feelings of inferiority, and get immersed into their phantasies. In Adler’s perspective, phantasies may have a negative function on individuals by disconnecting them from the reality if they are “not rightly constituted” in a parallel with social interest. Referring to a child who “finds reality intolerable” and “flees to the magic of phantasy”, Adler states as follows: “where he feels the difficulty, fantasy helps to give him an illusory
view of the enhancement of his self-esteem, usually spurring him on at the same time. Certainly there are plenty of cases, however, where this latter incitement is lacking, where the fantasy, so to speak, is the compensation. Obviously such a situation is to be regarded as antisocial …” (The Individual 218). In other words, an individual’s divergence from reality towards devotion to phantasies (of superiority) can be considered as a result of his failure in struggling to annihilate his inferiority and achieve superiority in real life. According to Adler, this failure is precipitated by two main circumstances: a discordant family structure and a frustrating social circle. In both cases the individual feels alienated, isolated, weak, insufficient and incomplete because he can not overcome his sense of inferiority. As a result, he adopts the only possible way by which he expects to become exempt from his inferiority and achieve to reach his idealized self.

Adler’s arguments on inferiority complex and its consequences on individual psychology contribute to gaining a deeper insight into the inner states and outer actions of the outsiders in The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth and The Butcher Boy. All of the protagonists in the novels exhibit symptoms of suffering from abnormal feelings of inferiority due to which they are overly inclined to fantasizing.

In The Dark, young Mahoney’s self-esteem and self-confidence are repeatedly and intensely damaged by his father’s perversion and hostile attitude. He does not have any “trustworthy fellow man” in his social circle. He thinks he might have a chance with Father Gerald and ecclesiastical environment to demolish his sense of inferiority. Yet, he is exposed to Father Gerald’s queer and perverse action. He is frustrated not to attain feelings of superiority through university and urban life. As a result, he tends to develop a habit of imagining the fulfilment of his wishes in his phantasies. Gradually, his connection with real life and outer space is weakened.
In *The Children of Dynmouth*, Timothy is an unwanted and ignored child in his early adolescence who lives with his mother and sister and yet, has no communication or interaction with them. His solitariness at home does not disappear in the outside; residents of Dynmouth regard him as a lunatic and look down on him. Timothy thinks that he can put an end to his inferior status by performing a dramatic act in a local competition. His fictitious goal is to obtain people’s attention, admiration and respect through his performance. But his performance is prevented by the priest of the town who thinks the content of Timothy’s act is not appropriate for the public. Hence, he is unable to achieve his fictitious goal, get over his sense of inferiority and establish a compensation in reality. He becomes more immersed into his phantasies that enable him to be the admired figure which he imagines to be.

In *The Butcher Boy*, the whole plot is structured on Francie’s struggle to surmount his sense of inferiority which is inflicted on him basically by two circumstances. Firstly, the fact that his parents are mentally and economically distressed causes him to feel lacking and incomplete. Secondly, Francie loses his only friend, Joe, whose companionship alleviates his feeling of inferiority. Furthermore, the insulting attitude of the Nugent family as well as their superiority in terms of social status intensifies Francie’s inferiority. Thus, domestically and socially he remains on his own in striving to reduce his state of inferiority, which he is unable to achieve. In each case of frustration (such as his father’s antagonistic actions, death of his mother, loss of his friend etc.) Francie concentrates on his phantasies, which, in the course of the novel, take the place of reality and become the actual compensation for him. He reverses the incidents that increase his inferiority and equips himself with superior qualities in his imagination. In the end, he can not tolerate his inferiority and loses touch with reality; his failure in coping with his inferiority pushes him to commit a brutal murder.
Adler’s ideas and theories on individual psychology, inferiority complex, compensation and fictitious goal play a significant role in having an insightful perspective on the ways in which characters in *The Dark*, *The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* are outsiders. The protagonists in three novels, to varying extents, suffer from inferiority complex and fail in providing a compensation for their weaknesses and lacks. They are unable to realize their fictitious goals for parental and social reasons. The conditions in society and their family not only thwart their struggle to get out of their inferiority but turn their phantasies to be their sole compensation as well. Hence, their sense of inferiority is one of the most notable phenomenon which underlie their state of being outsiders.

2.3. Carl Gustav Jung: “The Extraverted” and “The Introverted” as Jungian Psychological Types

Personality traits and psychological states of the characters in *The Dark*, *The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* can be elucidated with Carl Gustav Jung’s ideas on types of personality which compose a significant part of his theory of analytical psychology. In his influential work titled *Psychological Types or The Psychology of Individuation*, Jung categorizes individuals basically into two types as the extraverted and introverted according to their personalities and attitude to the outer world. This classification is founded upon Jung’s medical experience with his nervous patients and his reflections on the history of mankind.

Jung’s division of human personality into the mechanisms of extraversion and introversion is established on definite individual qualifications that tangibly differ from each other. However, he suggests that individuals possess both of these mechanisms; it is only the extreme pre-eminence of one mechanism over the other that designates the class of type an individual belongs to. Regarding this possession of the qualities of both types and surpassing nature of the one, Jung asserts as follows:
Every human being possesses both mechanisms as an expression of his natural life-rhythm … A rhythmical alternation of both forms of psychic activity may correspond with the normal course of life. But the complicated external conditions under which we live, as well as the presumably even more complex conditions of our individual psychic disposition, seldom permit a completely undisturbed flow of our psychic activity. Outer circumstances and inner disposition frequently favour the one mechanism, and restrict or hinder the other; whereby a predominance of one mechanism naturally arises. If this condition becomes in any way chronic a type is produced, namely an habitual attitude, in which the one mechanism permanently dominates; not, of course, that the other can ever be completely suppressed, in as much as it also is an integral factor in psychic activity. Hence, there can never occur a pure type in the sense that he is entirely possessed of the one mechanism with a complete atrophy of the other. A typical attitude always signifies the merely relative predominance of one mechanism.

(Psychological Types 13)

Thus, outer circumstances surrounding an individual and his inherent mental qualities function as determinants of the direction in which an individual’s personality type proceeds. The fact that one mechanism surpasses the other does not mean that all the traces and influences of the subordinate mechanism are destroyed. In other words, an extraverted person whose personality is dominated by the traits of extraversion also possesses introverted characteristics, and vice versa. Hence, a change in the individual’s external conditions or mental disposition may move the surpassed mechanism upwards and push the individual to modify his attitude.

Jung’s definition of the extraverted and introverted character types clarifies the idiosyncratic aspects of both types. According to Jung, extraversion means an individual’s mental and behavioral state of being inclined to transmit all or most of his potential, interest and energy to an external entity. The extravert, for Jung, has relatively much less to do with his subjective feelings and thoughts; instead, he keeps an external object³, which exists as a separate phenomenon from himself, superior to his subjectivity. Instead of ruminating on his inner senses and judgement, which emanate from and belong

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³ By ‘object’ or ‘objective’, Jung indicates everything that has a presence outside individual’s subjectivity. In Jung’s perspective, any object, person, idea, value, action etc., which does not emanate from the individual’s inner psyche and which exists as a separate phenomenon from him is an object or has an objective quality.
to his own self, the extravert directs his focus and attention at an outer set of ideas, values, facts etc. generated or embodied by other individuals. Jung expounds the characteristics of the extraverted type as follows:

Now, when the orientation to the object and to objective facts is so predominant that the most frequent and essential decisions and actions are determined, not by subjective values but by objective relations, one speaks of an extraverted attitude. When this is habitual, one speaks of an extraverted type. If a man so thinks, feels, and acts, in a word so lives, as to correspond directly with objective conditions and their claims, whether in a good sense or ill, he is extraverted. … His entire consciousness looks outwards to the world, because the important and decisive determination always comes to him from without … Interest and attention follow objective happenings and, primarily, those of the immediate environment. Not only persons, but things, seize and rivet his interest. His actions, therefore, are also governed by the influence of persons and things. (Psychological Types 417-418)

As Jung indicates, the extravert feels the necessity of being in conformity with social assumptions and tries to fit himself into the conditions and standards of the community that surrounds him. For this reason, in the case of a conflict with the dynamics of the outer life, the extravert may become unable to adapt to social norms and circumstances, and fail to mingle with society and become a part of it. His desire to participate in the external flow of life is hindered by the fact that his demands from life are in contrast with the society’s expectation from him. In case of such a conflict, he faces the risk of becoming wholly absorbed by his external struggle, which, in the end, may annihilate every bit of his subjectivity and cause him to become completely assimilated by the impositions of the outside. His commitment to the object, in that case, is at such an enormous level that he may easily sacrifice his own subjectivity (i.e. his personal ideals, values, attitude etc.) for the sake of it. Jung refers to this risk of assimilation of the extravert’s personality as follows:

the object works like a magnet upon the tendencies of the subject; it is, therefore, an attraction that to a large extent determines the subject. It even alienates him from himself: his qualities may become so transformed, in the sense of assimilation to the object, that one could imagine the object to possess an extreme
and even decisive significance for the subject. It might almost seem as though it were an absolute determination, a special purpose of life or fate that he should abandon himself wholly to the object. (*Psychological Types* 11)

As underlined in the quote, the outer object’s penetrating influence on the individual can lead him to dismissing or ignoring his own identity and personality. Then, he situates this object at the center of his mental and physical activities; attributing a primary role to it in his life, he considers that the goal of attaining it has an utmost importance. According to Jung, the extravert’s immersion into such external influences is a dangerous threat for this type because, thereby he gets closer to losing his subjectivity altogether. He thinks that the extravert should take notice of his bodily needs and mental faculties and preserve the core of his subjectivity. Jung refers to the damage which the extravert’s self may be exposed to as a result of his over-adherence to outer entities as follows:

On the one hand, the extravert owes his normality to his ability to fit into existing conditions with relative ease. … He tries to do or to make just what his milieu momentarily needs and expects from him, and abstains from every innovation that is not entirely obvious, or that in any way exceeds the expectation of those around him. But on the other hand, his normality must also depend essentially upon whether the extravert takes into account the actuality of his subjective needs and requirements; and this is just his weak point, for the tendency of his type has such a strong outward direction that even the most obvious of all subjective facts, namely the condition of his own body, may quite easily receive inadequate consideration. … The body accordingly suffers, to say nothing of the soul. ... A too extraverted attitude may actually become so regardless of the subject that the latter is entirely sacrificed to so-called objective claims …

This is the extravert’s danger; he becomes caught up in objects, wholly losing himself in their toils. (*Psychological Types* 419-420)

As Jung mentions above, the extravert will have mental and physical suffering due to overexertion of himself in his struggle to direct all of his energy to the outside and attach himself to external personages, ideals or interests. In this case, he turns to be on the verge of being totally deprived of his subjective personality. This suffering may result with a hysteria in which the extravert imitates that he is on good terms with the circumstances of his environment. Accordingly, he ceaselessly tries to establish exaggeratedly close
relationships with his social circle and becomes excessively communicative (and, as will be scrutinized, this is exactly what Timothy Gedge struggles to do in *The Children of Dynmouth*). Jung explains the hysteria of the extraverted type as follows:

A constant tendency to appeal for interest and to produce impressions upon his [the extravert’s] milieu is a basic trait of the hysterical nature. A correlate to this is his proverbial suggestibility, his pliability to another person's influence. Unmistakable extraversion comes out in the communicativeness of the hysteric, which occasionally leads to the divulging of purely phantastic contents; whence arises the reproach of the hysterical lie. (*Psychological Types* 421)

Thus, the extraverted type is in an endlessly hysterical effort to keep his outward perspective stable, enhance his position in society and leave an impression on people surrounding him. His hysterical behavior is also related with his inclination to fictionality as a compensation for his assumed lack of extraversion. No matter how hard he struggles to accomplish his external objectives the hysterical extravert regards himself insufficient in the outer world and behaves in an immoderately (and disturbingly) intimate manner. Yet, his feeling of insufficiency has no end; he tries to compensate himself by telling lies and creating phantasies.

The extravert’s increasing tendency to phantasies by which he imaginarily fulfils his external ambition is the characteristic of the introverted type since he (the extravert) directs his outer attention and concentration to his inner space. Jung defines this alteration in the orientation of the extravert as a “compensatory reaction from the side of the unconscious … whereupon an introversion of psychic energy becomes unavoidable” (*Psychological Types* 421). He goes into further detail of the introvert nature of phantasies as follows: “through this reaction of the unconscious, another category of symptoms arises which have a more introverted character. A morbid intensification of phantasy activity belongs primarily to this category” (*Psychological Types* 421). Hence, deprived of external satisfaction due to incompatible or defective aspect of his relationship with society, the extravert exhibits some “compensatory reactions”, which reflect his hysterical
disorder. Jung suggests that, as a result of his failure in achieving his external objectives, the extraverted type reacts by either abandoning his outer interests and confining himself to his phantasies or intensifying his ambitions irrationally. Feeling bitter and frustrated, the extraverted type, in Jung’s words, “either no longer knows what he really wants and nothing any longer interests him, or he wants too much at once and has too keen an interest but in impossible things” (Psychological Types 425).

Jung’s formulation of the extraverted type and symptoms of the extravert’s hysteria shed significant light on the ways in which the protagonists in The Children of Dynmouth and The Butcher Boy act as outsiders. Values and judgements of their social circle affect their outlook on life on a great scale. They take some external figures as their idols and struggle to realize their wish of becoming that idol. Yet, their goal of attaining their expectations and enhancing their status in the external world is prevented by a variety of social or parental circumstances. In return, they overstrain themselves mentally and physically and, as a result, they get closer to suffer from hysterical disorder. They exhibit all the symptoms of the hysterically extraverted type; they act in an exaggeratedly intimate manner and become excessively eager to talk with other people; they do not refrain from telling lies about their personal issues; and, finally, they end up being fully engrossed in their phantasies.

In The Children of Dynmouth, Timothy, as an extraverted type, directs his whole energy and attention to one external objective: to participate in a local acting competition, which could enable him to become a famous comedian. In fact, the latent urge beneath his struggle is the wish to be accepted and appreciated by the outer world in which he is ostracized not only by his social circle but his mother and sister as well. He is completely alone and helpless in his effort to socialize. His extremely intimate and talkative manner with the residents of Dynmouth, which is a sign of his hysterical disorder, is related with people’s lack of sympathy and interest for him. His hysteria grows intense as he tells lies
and blackmails people in the neighborhood only to get service from them to perform his act in the competition. However, he is unable to fulfil his external interests and become a prominent member of the outer world in spite of his attempts. He feels empty when realizes that it is impossible for him to obtain a role in the outer world. In the end, he concentrates on his phantasies more intensely. His failure to maintain his extraverted personality in the outside reflects the fact that he is coerced into acting and existing in society as an outsider.

In *The Butcher Boy*, Francie Brady is an outward-oriented teenage as seen in that most of his attention is directed to objects, persons, ideas existing in the external world. Rather than reflecting on his subjective feelings and thoughts, he spends most of his time in the outside having an exhilarating time with his best friend, Joe. Yet, Francie’s initial rapport with his milieu as well as his extraverted personality and attitude is damaged by parental problems and his clash with the Nugents, which is originated by their hostile and contemptuous manner. Early in the novel, Francie taunts Philip and takes his comic books; even though he means no harm Mrs. Nugent calls on and insults Francie’s mother and his whole family venomously. This degradation, which leaves a tenacious feeling of inferiority on Francie, merges with the problems of his parents; his father is an alcoholic who is haunted by his bad childhood memories and his mother is mentally distressed. In consequence, Francie feels that he and his parents are regarded and treated by the whole community as lower and miserable persons; his actions are determined by these external assumptions. Hence, throughout the novel, he hopes and endeavors to promote his family’s social status since the society’s judgement is extremely significant for him. Accordingly, he expects that his uncle Alo, with his local fame in the neighborhood, may change people’s negative notion about himself and his parents. However, Francie witnesses his father’s poignant dispute with Alo, in which he scornfully reveals that Alo is a failure in his life in London. From this point on Francie’s extraverted attitude turns
to be hysterical as he develops a morbid tendency to talking to people around him in an excessive way and getting engrossed into his phantasies. His external perspective is totally replaced by his imagination when he learns about his mother’s death. Guided by his phantasies, he trespasses the Nugent’s home and acts as if he were Philip, and finally, he treats his father’s dead body as if it were alive. Hence, abnormal external circumstances, which Francie’s extraverted character is confronted with, impair his affinity with his surrounding and cause him to suffer from a hysterical disorder. As a result, he is compelled to be an outsider whose imaginary world is the only space where he can fulfil his object-related wishes.

As the opposite of the extravert, Jung presents the introverted character type, which fits in the personality traits of young Mahoney in *The Dark*, and argues that, in his feelings, thoughts and actions, the introvert focuses on his inner subjectivity instead of taking outer objects into consideration. Any idea, judgement or outlook on life that springs from an external source other than himself is of no or only a little importance for the introverted type. He is hardly influenced by the conditions of his surrounding or the assumptions of his social circle as he puts a great emphasis on his own feelings, ideals and values. All of his thoughts and emotions are shaped by his personal perspective; he acts and takes his decisions as his subjective senses or reasoning leads him. The introvert is not a type who has external ambitions such as being appreciated by other people, excelling in society, impressing his social circle with his mental or physical capacity. Instead, he contemplates on his innermost thoughts and beliefs. Jung’s description of the introverted type is as below:

… the subject is and remains the centre of every interest. It looks, one might say, as though all the life-energy were ultimately seeking the subject, thus offering a constant hindrance to any overpowering influence on the part of the object. It is as though energy were flowing away from the object, as if the subject were a magnet which would draw the object to itself …

Quite generally, one could describe the introverted standpoint as one that
under all circumstances sets the self and the subjective psychological process above the object and the objective process, or at any rate holds its ground against the object. This attitude, therefore, gives the subject a higher value than the object. *(Psychological Types)* 11-12

The introvert, as Jung points out, gives higher importance and attention to his individuality, personality and his characteristics that make him distinctive; the phenomena surrounding him in the outside are predominated by his subjectivity and situated at a place of secondary value. He prefers ruminating on his personal emotions and ideas rather than directing his energy and potential to external space; this act of rumination has a strong hold on his mind and actions. For this reason, he is inclined to solitude and personal independence, by which he can focus on his inner world more properly. His fondness for isolation causes him to have a “taciturn, impenetrable, often shy nature” *(Psychological Types)* 413. He is mostly unwilling to pay attention to other people’s ideas or advises; he gets disturbed and exasperated when outer figures from society or his family interfere in his life and actions. He tries to control his instinctual urges and desires, which, naturally, have an external aspect. Jung mentions the introvert’s inward-oriented nature about his libidinal energy as follows: “the introvert’s attitude to the object is an abstracting one; at bottom, he is always facing the problem of how libido can be withdrawn from the object, as though an attempted ascendancy on the part of the object had to be continually frustrated” *(Psychological Types)* 412. Hence, he frequently, restricts his wishes which require him to get into close contact with other people. He chooses to get pleasure by satisfying himself and leads his sexual drive to his phantasies. For this reason, he has a strong sense of imagination in not only libidinal matters but all the issues related with his life as well. For the introvert, the imaginary sphere takes the place of the real, external world; however, he is in the full control and authority of the first, while he is a weak and impotent figure in the latter.
The introverted character type has an unfavorable or even hostile viewpoint on the outside world in general. He feels it essential that he should be on guard against external threats and dangers all the time. As Jung clarifies, he has a firm tendency “to defend himself against external claims, to conserve himself from any expenditure of energy directly related to the object, thus consolidating for himself the most secure and impregnable position” (*Psychological Types* 414). This self-protective attitude exacerbates the introvert’s detachment from his social circle. His perturbed state of mind about external issues can be arising out of his presumption that his interest or attempt for an outer object will be condemned to failure, leaving him helpless and disappointed. In this case, he avoids the idea of making an effort to reconcile himself with the outside because he is conditioned that he will fail in the external space and his effort will be in vain. Even though outer objects appeal to him with their tempting promises (i.e. success, pleasure, respectability, wealth, happiness etc.), the introvert’s feeling of insecurity as well as anxiety prevails and leads him to keep his interest and energy inward. Jung explains the introvert’s anxiety about external objects as below:

… the introvert severs himself completely from the object, and either squanders his energy in defensive measures or makes fruitless attempts to impose his power upon the object and successfully assert himself. But these efforts are constantly being frustrated by the overwhelming impressions he receives from the object. It continually imposes itself upon him against his will; it provokes in him the most disagreeable and obstinate affects, persecuting him at every step. An immense, inner struggle is constantly required of him, in order to ‘keep going’. Hence psychoasthenia is his typical form of neurosis, a malady which is characterized on the one hand by an extreme sensitiveness, and on the other by a great liability to exhaustion and chronic fatigue. (*Psychological Types* 479)

Hence, the introvert’s mental exertions to keep himself away from exterior influences causes him to suffer from psychasthenia, a certain kind of neurosis which Jung borrowed from French psychotherapist Pierre Janet in order to define the anxiety disorder of the introvert. Psychasthenia, which is known as obsessive-compulsive disorder in modern usage, encompasses diverse symptoms such as mental manias, ruminations, tics, phobias,
anxiety and obsessions (Pitman, 291). Thus, Jung thinks that the introvert’s protective attitude against the ‘assaults’ of the outside not only results in physical exhaustion but brings about some mental disorders as well. Superior and predominant position of his subjectivity over external objects intensifies the introvert’s distrust and unrest in the outside; as he directs all of his life energy inwards, he gradually develops an obsessive fear of entities existing in the outer space. This fear is also related with the fact that the introvert hardly accepts any sort of radical change in his life as he assumes that new circumstances may affect his subjectivity negatively. As Jung suggests, for the introvert “strange, new objects excite fear and distrust, as though concealing unknown dangers; objects long rooted and blessed by tradition are attached to his soul as by invisible threads; every change has a disturbing, if not actually dangerous aspect …” (Psychological Types 480). Introversion and attachment to his subjectivity are the introvert’s lifelong patterns of behaviour and the nucleus of his identity. For this reason, his posture to new phenomenon contrasting with his introvert perspective (i.e. extravert lifestyle/outlook, outer figures, incidents and places etc.) is negative and guarded as he is both unfamiliar with them and he thinks that they could manipulate and alter his inclination to his inner world.

Jung suggests that a negative quality of the introverted type, may be his inability to make definite decisions and putting his thoughts into action (which is, as will be probed, the main characteristic of young Mahoney in The Dark). The introvert’s deep rumination on his personal thoughts and emotions surpasses and ignores the necessity of fulfilling them. In consequence, his perception of reality is threatened, which Jung explains as follows:

[The introvert subject] loses itself in the immense truth of the subjective factor. It creates theories for the sake of theories, apparently with a view to real or at least possible facts, yet always with a distinct tendency to go over from the world of ideas into mere imagery. Accordingly many intuitions of possibilities appear on the scene, none of which however achieve any reality, until finally images are
produced which no longer express anything externally real, being ‘merely’ symbols of the simply unknowable. (*Psychological Types* 482)

As the introvert’s main focus and essential attention are directed to his inner thoughts and feelings, he may easily get immersed into his subjective psychic space where he creates manifold ideas, theories, assumptions and beliefs. Yet, his eagerness to remain in this space hinders him to give his thoughts a concrete form and realize his theories. Fulfilment of a wish or idea in reality is intrinsically an outward conduct because it requires one’s full interest on an external and active operation, while the processes of feeling, thinking and theorizing favour immobility, tranquility and internality. Therefore, the introvert’s strong tendency to interiority engenders the risk of losing himself within his thoughts and failing in the world of realities.

Jung’s definition of the introverted character type and the set of typical personality traits which he attributes to the introvert are of substantial significance in gaining a deeper insight into young Mahoney’s way of acting, feeling and thinking as an outsider in *The Dark*. All over the novel, young Mahoney exhibits an explicit inclination to turn his mental, physical or sexual interests and energy inward. He acts in an uneasy and anxious way in the outside and especially at times which necessitate contact with other people. He has no sexual intercourse with anyone, which inevitably involves him to cross his border; instead he satisfies himself drawing on his imagination. He wishes to succeed in his studies and attend university both as ways of escape from the tyrannical and perverse despotism of his father. He does not have any academic or intellectual ambition to sway his social circle. In fact, he is withdrawn from society almost entirely; there are no figures other than his father, his sister and Father Mahoney surrounding him and when he goes to the university he chooses to isolate himself from the outer space. He is unable to modify his pre-determined way of living alone and mingle with the unfamiliar crowd in the
outside. His sudden crisis as he gets closer to the nightclub can be considered as a symptom of his anxiety disorder, or in Jungian terminology, the psychoasthenia.

Young Mahoney’s introversion is apparent in that he has developed a sense of self-protection and self-sufficiency; he has never had any affable companion to whom he could confide his feelings and thoughts. His subjective ideas and feelings stand at the center of his mental and physical activities. He continuously intends to move to a space where he would be free to concentrate on his inner space. In this regard, young Mahoney considers to lead a remote life in ecclesiastical seclusion but gets repulsed by Father Mahoney. At the end of the novel, young Mahoney quits his university education, as he is still dependent on his father economically, and accepts the job offer to achieve his personal emancipation. His introversion, which is also manifest in his fondness in imagination and phantasies, indicates his detachment from the outer world. In other words, young Mahoney’s introvert characteristics ascertain the idea that he acts as an outsider.

2.4. Otto Rank: “Trauma of Birth”, “Will / Counter will”, “Fear of Life” and “Fear of Death”
A significant figure of psychoanalytic theory whose ideas are considered to shed light on the individualities of the outsider characters in The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth and The Butcher Boy is Otto Rank, the Austrian psychoanalyst. Rank had been a close friend and the secretary of Freud before being expelled from Vienna Psychoanalytic Society for his controversial arguments in his famous book titled The Trauma of Birth. In his work, Rank differs from Freud essentially in that, in the place of Freud’s concepts of Oedipus Complex and the fear of castration, he situates the concept of birth trauma, that is the trauma every infant undergoes due to separation from the womb of mother. Rank further suggests that later anxieties and phobias can be considered “as the unconscious reproduction of the anxiety at birth” (The Trauma 12) because the impact of the birth
trauma continues to exist throughout man’s life and impinges on his psychical activities. In Rank’s words,

the primal anxiety-affect at birth, which remains operative through life, right up to the final separation from the outer world (gradually becomes a second mother) at death is from the very beginning not merely an expression of the new-born child’s physiological injuries (dyspnoea constriction—anxiety), but in consequence of the change from a highly pleasurable situation to an extremely painful one. (*The Trauma* 187)

Hence, Rank grounds his theory on the bond and relationship between mother and infant. As the infant unconsciously realizes that he exists as a separate being in an unfamiliar environment, the process of his adaptation to the outside and substitution of mother’s womb with the external space begins. However, this sort of an adaptation takes a long time, that is, “his whole childhood—in which to overcome this first intensive trauma in an approximately normal way” (*The Trauma* 11).

During the period between the birth and the end of the childhood, the child feels a “powerful tendency to re-establish the pleasurable situation just left” (*The Trauma* 187) and needs to be in a space identical to the womb as a secure, comfortable and warm place in order to successfully overcome the initial trauma of birth in his later life. The outer environment and conditions are supposed to be provided by parents and essentially by mother, whom the child depends on from the very beginning. Thus, the child gradually embraces the external sphere encircling him and mitigates the traumatic effect of his birth.

Rank suggests that individuals who are unable to prevail over the “primal affect” of the trauma of birth turn to be neurotic in adult life. He thinks that the fear and anxiety generated by the trauma “may continue into adult life in the case of certain individuals, the neurotics, who therefore remain infantile or are called infantile” (*The Trauma* 11). Rank gives the example of “dark room” to clarify the relation between infantile anxiety and birth trauma. He states that the situation of a child who is left alone in a dark room is
close to his case in the womb; *The Dark* room symbolically replaces the womb and the child fears that the birth trauma would repeat. The anxiety comes to an end with the arrival of someone beloved or familiar (*The Trauma* 12). Through this example Rank emphasizes “... the importance of the fact of being separated from the mother, and the calming “therapeutic” effect of the reunion with her ...” (*The Trauma* 12) or with a substitute of her. The lack of such a reunion and continuation of anxiety of birth trauma, in Rank’s point of view, plays a significant role in the formation of some mental disorders. In fact, as will be discussed in detail, the protagonists in the novels in discussion remain isolated and detached partly due to lacking such an attainment of reunion with a mother-like figure.

Regarding the case of the neurotics and psychotics, Rank refers to “phantasy formations” as “reproductions of the intrauterine state, or of birth” (*The Trauma* 50). The child or individual who lacks a womb-like environment directs his energy towards his inner space. Instead of the outer world, his psychic space and phantasies function as the source of security and substitute of mother. Rank explains this process as follows:

\[\text{\ldots in them [phantasy formations] it is a matter of “psychical conversions” - i.e., of reproductions of the primal situation in the psychical sphere—whereby the physical return to the mother is replaced by the mere introversion of the libido. Withdrawal from the outer world is represented by psychical isolation, which we see then materialized in psychoses”}. (The Trauma 50-51)\]

As the child is deprived of a motherly care and unable to compensate the anxieties of the birth trauma he hopes to attain them on an imaginary level; consequently, his neurotic state of mind turns to perceive phantasies as realities which indicates the psychosis.

Rank extends the range of his theories on the trauma of birth through the concepts of will, counter will, fear of life and fear of death. According to him, during the experience of the trauma the child also notices that, unlike his former state in the womb, now he has to make some reactions and wait for a while to get his demands satisfied (which makes
the outer world “painful” for him) (Stein 119). This awareness constitutes the concept of will which stands at a pivotal point in the origination and development of individual psychology and personality. In *Beyond Psychology*, Rank defines will as “an autonomous organizing force in the individual which ... constitutes the creative expression of the total personality and distinguishes one individual from another. This individual will, as the united and balancing force between impulses and inhibition, is the decisive psychological factor in human behaviour” (*Beyond* 50). Hence, in Rank’s point of view, the instrument that triggers man’s mental and physical action is will. However, will, by nature has a negative characteristic; it suggests a challenge to stagnation and passivity. Rank emphasizes the original, negative aspect of will through the concept of “counter will”. In *Will Therapy*, he refers to will and counter will as follows: “furthermore, willing itself is originally of a negative character, a “not wanting to” of the counter-will, which itself contains a denial. From this original denial are derived all later secondary denials which we know in general as thinking ...” (*Will* 46). Rank indicates that man creates his own individuality and personality by adhering to and following his will which opposes to the natural flow and dynamics of his environment. As W. Wadlington suggests in “Otto Rank 1884-1939”, “Rank based his approach on a belief in transformation and the possibility of change; he saw the human personality as a medium to be formed and modified in response to life’s changing demands” (281). Thus, an intervention in the outer circumstances to change the direction of life-flow in accordance with one’s personal will is significant to constitute and develop his personality. Rank argues that a normal person is the one who is able to handle life’s limitations. For him, “conformity to societal norms and expectations is the way to avoid internal conflict, and get on with one’s life. Rank considers this type of person well-adjusted, as able to adapt to external circumstances without feeling burdened or victimized” (Wadlington 281). On the other hand, a neurotic is the one who is unable to put his will into practice actively and effectively because he
either avoids or fails in his struggle against societal constraints. In other words, “neurotic individuals feel conflicted; they know what they could or should do, but feel constrained, inhibited, and unable to act” (Wadlington 281).

Rank associates his theory of will with two types of fear, that is fear of life and fear of death which, he argues, every individual possesses at the same time. The trauma and anxiety caused by birth underlie both fears. Rank defines fear of life and death as follows:

The fear in birth, which we have designated as fear of life, seems to me actually the fear of having to live as an isolated individual, and not the reverse, the fear of the loss of individuality (death fear). That would mean, however, that primary fear corresponds to a fear of separation from the whole, therefore a fear of individuation, on account of which I should like to call it fear of life, although it may appear later as fear of the loss of this dearly bought individuality, as fear of death, of being dissolved again into the whole. Between these two fear possibilities, these poles of fear, the individual is thrown back and forth all his life … (Will 124)

As Rank asserts in the quote, the initial fear of leaving the whole and becoming an outsider is the fear of life. In this case, the individual regards existing within human community as a symbolic womb and wishes to be a part of society rather than being an isolated individual in order to eschew any sort of external threats. His inclination to put himself into a bordered environment of safety, security and protection reveals not only his yearning for his pre-natal circumstances, but his wish not to have been born as well. For this reason, Rank defines man’s avoidance of solitude and individuation and effort to be accepted by a group as fear of life; that is fear of living as a single individual. As for the fear of death, Rank suggests that, as the individual overcomes the primary trauma of birth and becomes accustomed to the outer world, he concentrates on his individual needs, desires, ambitions etc. He keeps his existence superior to everything else and becomes concerned about any threat which would put his earthly existence into danger. The
foremost menace to his individuality is death. The fear of death and love of his own self lead him to self-absorption while isolating him from the outside.

Rank’s concepts of birth trauma, will, fear of life and fear of death illustrate the psychic states and behavioral traits of the outsiders in *The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy*. In *The Dark*, young Mahoney’s traumatic anxiety caused by birth continues to exist though his childhood is over and he is at the onset of his puberty. His mother’s early death leaves him bereft of motherly affection and protection, and, since then, he has been left unprotected against his father’s perversive and violent acts. Hence, during most of his childhood, young Mahoney lacks a womb-like environment which would furnish him with a sense of security and relief. In fact, the whole plot of the novel is structured on young Mahoney’s quest for such an environment. In the course of this quest, he is forced to lead his libido towards the inside; his phantasies of escape from the tyranny of his father and his frequent masturbations signal to his neurosis. The shelters which, in his opinion, could safeguard him against external threats are, respectively, the Church, university education and finally a pursuit of employment. His inclination to these ‘shelters’ testifies to his stimulus to step into a ‘womb-like’ community and mingle with it. In each case, he intends to obtain a safe space where he could act according to his own free will rather than impositions of his father. This tendency also indicates his fear of life, that is, his anxiety to live in an unsheltered, desolate and helpless way.

In *The Children of Dynmouth*, Timothy’s family pattern reveals that he has grown up in a domestic sphere where he got insufficient parental care, affection and protection. He has no communication or contact with his mother and sister and his father deserted the family when he was born. As a result of his failure in overcoming the trauma of birth, he still feels the anxiety of being in the outer world with no one to provide him with a safe environment and womb-like conditions which would substitute his pleasurable state
before birth. Thus, he focuses on his own imagination and creates phantasies of becoming a comedian. He regards achievement of this aim as the only way to acquire love, affection and protection. He has a strong will to realize his phantasies and change his status in society; in this regard, he threatens the people of Dynmouth with their moral/ethical faults in order to get their help. However, in the end, Timothy is stopped by the priest of the town and pushed into a state of what Rank calls ‘fear of life’. He is prevented from not only being integrated in a unity but compensating the womb-like atmosphere with outer conditions.

Francie, in *The Butcher Boy*, suffers from the trauma of birth in his childhood because he is deprived of a warm family environment due to his alcoholic father and mentally distressed mother. Initially, he has a strong bond with his mother and his friend, Joe, which gives him a sense of unity and protection and keeps him mentally stable. However, his father’s problematic state and the Nugents’ humiliation, which represents the hazardous and hostile nature of the outer space, damages Francie’s relatively sheltered environment. He hopes that the arrival of his Uncle Alo would reestablish the safe and warm atmosphere in his family. Yet, he is frustrated to witness the severe quarrel between his father and his uncle and to learn about the lower social status of his uncle. Demoralized and dispirited by the uneasiness in his family, he runs away from home and becomes more engrossed in his imagination as a substitute to his pre-natal situation. He is abandoned into complete anxiety with his mother’s suicide and loss of his friendship with Joe. Death of his mother can be considered a re-experience of the primal trauma of birth for Francie because it means a repetition of the separation from his mother and it leaves a deep impact on him which compels him into psychosis. Unable to bear the anxiety of being left unprotected in a space where he feels stranger, Francie gets fully absorbed in his phantasies which begin to replace realities. Beneath his mental crisis lies the fact that he
remains vulnerable to the trauma and anxieties of birth at a time when he is in need of convalescence and that he is in a deep fear of life.

Otto Rank’s ideas help to elucidate the anxiety of the outsiders in each of the novels. The protagonists think and act in a way which hints that they fail to get over the initial trauma of birth. They are in a continuous and persistent search for a secure environment because, as their family structure manifests, they are not provided with enough parental/motherly care and protection during their infancy and childhood. In consequence, their natal anxieties are prolonged into their late childhood and early adolescence and they exhibit an inclination to lead their energy into their inner space of imagination and phantasies. The limitation of external/societal forces precludes them from leading their life according to their own will. Even though they make an effort to be included in a community to reestablish their pre-natal state of comfort and protection, they are rejected, harassed or simply ignored. They are compelled to confront with a deep fear of life which is full of solitariness and menace.

2.5. Karen Horney: “The Basic Anxiety”, “Neurotic Trends” and “The Idealized Image”

A Neo-Freudian psychoanalyst whose ideas are fundamental to a profound understanding of the outsiders in The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth and The Butcher Boy is Karen Horney (1885-1952). Horney was born in Germany but became widely known through her works in the United States where she moved in 1932. She deviates from the legacy of Freud principally in regards with her ideas on feminine psychology and origins of personality disorders. As Irving Solomon indicates in Karen Horney and Character Disorder: A Guide for the Modern Practitioner, “by contrast to Freud, Horney did not emphasize the role of sexuality … Horney stressed the importance of the individual’s need for security and avoidance of fear. She emphasized that fear is not inborn but caused by a lack of acceptance by significant others” (108). Thus, rather than foregrounding
sexuality and instincts, Horney focuses on the influence of childhood environment and particularly the relationship between child and parents. She thinks that this relationship is essential in explicating and comprehending the concept of neurosis.

Horney, in *Our Inner Conflicts: A Constructive Theory of Neurosis,* accentuates the significance of relationships between individual and community. She states that these relationships, mainly in childhood, are able to “mold the qualities we develop, the goals we set for our values, the values we believe in” (*Our Inner 46*). For this reason, a severe breakdown in social/parental bonds may result with critical consequences. Horney conceptualizes the incompatibility between child and his social milieu including his family as “the basic conflict” (*Our Inner 36*). This conflict is the “dynamic center from which neuroses emanate” (*Our Inner 47*); it threatens the child’s sense of safety and disturbs him mentally. Horney specifies some of these circumstances in which the “basic conflict” may appear as follows:

A wide range of adverse factors in the environment can produce this insecurity in a child: direct or indirect domination, indifference, erratic behavior, lack of respect for the child’s individual needs, lack of real guidance, disparaging attitudes, too much admiration or the absence of it, lack of reliable warmth, having to take sides in parental disagreements, too much or too little responsibility, overprotection, isolation from other children, injustice, discrimination, unkept promises, hostile atmosphere, and so on and so on. (*Our Inner 41*)

Being severe and unbearably oppressive, these and similar negative conditions exert an intense force on the psychology of the child and, in consequence, bring about a deep sense of anxiety. Horney calls this fear of the child as “the basic anxiety”, that is, “the feeling a child has of being isolated and helpless in a potentially hostile world” (*Our Inner 41*). The child is constrained to develop one or several behavioral practices to cope with the basic anxiety. Even though he is not enthusiastic to adopt a particular way of behaving, he does so because he believes that, thereby, he can do away with the basic conflict and his feeling of anxiety. According to Horney, this sort of behaviour, being followed as
ways of defense and protection at the beginning, constitutes the neurotic personality disorder in the adult life. In this respect, as will be investigated in detail later, the protagonists in the novels in discussion remain too weak to cope with their basic anxieties and take on some attitudes to decrease their inner distress; however, these attitudes accelerate their mental collapse and exclusion from society rather than enhancing their position in the outer world.

Horney identifies the childhood conducts generated by an acute and frustrating conflict as “neurotic trends”. She refers to the process of the child’s developing neurotic trends as follows:

Harassed by these disturbing conditions, the child gropes for ways to keep going, ways to cope with this menacing world. Despite his own weakness and fears he unconsciously shapes his tactics to meet the particular forces operating in his environment. In doing so, he develops not only ad hoc strategies but lasting character trends which become part of his personality. I have called these “neurotic trends. (Our Inner 42)

The concept of “neurotic trends” is discussed and explained by Horney in her earlier work titled Self-Analysis, in which she points out that neurosis is a natural reaction of man’s psyche against life’s restraints. In her opinion, “… in the center of psychic disturbances are unconscious strivings developed in order to cope with life despite fears, helplessness, and isolation” (Self 40). These struggles, that is “neurotic trends”, “develop early in life through the combined effect of given temperamental and environmental influences” (Self 43) and, specifically, are generated by a problematic relationship between child and parents. Horney argues that neurotic trends are the ways in which a child attempts to overcome life’s enforcements. According to her, “…a child growing up under difficult conditions develops a set of attitudes toward life which are fundamentally neurotic trends…” (Self 46). She classifies these trends according to their main characteristics as follows:
1. The neurotic need for affection and approval … 2. The neurotic need for a "partner" who will take over one's life … 3. The neurotic need to restrict one's life within narrow borders … 4. The neurotic need for power … 5. The neurotic need to exploit others and by hook or crook get the better of them … 6. The neurotic need for social recognition or prestige … 7. The neurotic need for personal admiration … 8. The neurotic ambition for personal achievement … 9. The neurotic need for self-sufficiency and independence … 10. The neurotic need for perfection and unassailability. (Self 54-59)

Horney thinks that neurotic people, in their childhood, tend to struggle with the anxieties underlying their neurosis through fulfilling one or some of the needs stated above. In her point of view, “these trends are more than a mere strategy evolved as an effective defense against a difficult parent. They are, in view of all the factors developing within, the only possible way for the child to deal with life in general.” (Self 46). Hence, Horney suggests that children who have an impaired relationship with their parents or their social circle in the outer world strive to alleviate or completely remove their anxieties by developing certain behavioral trends which constitute their personalities in adult life. Yet, even though these trends and attitudes seem to be similar with those of normal individuals they represent a neurotic state of mind when they possess a compulsive and indiscriminate aspect and, in case of frustration, they reflect an overreaction of anxiety (Self 41-42). As Ellis and Abrams interpret in Personality Theories: Critical Perspectives, “… these needs become neurotic when their intensity is unrealistic, when the goals they reflect are regarded as more desirable than they really are, and, most of all, when one need overshadows all others to become an obsession that rules the neurotic’s life” (200). For this reason, neurotic struggles to get rid of anxiety are illusionary and futile as long as the source of anxiety and dejection, that is the child’s problem with his environment, is not eliminated. In Horney’s own analogy, “it is as if he [the neurotic child] were flying in an airplane which he believes he is piloting, while actually the plane is directed by remote control” (Self 63).
Horney details the outcomes of neurotic trends and refers to some specific symptoms exhibited by the child developing neurotic personality disorder. She states that neurotic individuals have a false perception of themselves because they “are markedly unstable in their self-evaluation, wavering between an inflated and a deflated image of themselves” (Self 63). They also fail to evaluate and judge other people in a proper way (Self 65). They are inhibited in their thoughts and actions; their psyche is restricted to function only according to the necessities of their neurotic struggle (Self 67). Each of these symptoms are caused by neurotic trends and may vary according to the neurotic trend the child adopts. Furthermore, Horney posits that adaption of adverse neurotic trends brings about inner conflicts in the individual and that “the neurotic "symptoms," such as phobias, depressions, alcoholism, ultimately result from these conflicts” (Self 69).

In *Our Inner Conflicts: A Constructive Theory of Neurosis*, Horney not only expounds the conflicts caused by neurotic trends but combines interrelated neurotic trends and categorizes them in three broader groups as well. She defines the neurotic needs for affection and a partner as “moving toward people” or “compliant” personality type. She gathers the neurotic needs for power, social recognition, personal admiration, personal achievement and to exploit others under the heading of “moving against people” or “aggressive” personality type. She creates the amalgam of “moving away from people” or “detached” personality type by bringing the neurotic needs for self-sufficiency, perfection and to restrict life together.

Horney suggests that an individual with compliant personality type struggles against aversion of the external world by moving toward people in a friendly manner, rather than in an antagonistic way. In *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*, she argues that a child, being helpless and vulnerable, needs more love and affection than an adult does in order to have a full sense of safety (*The Neurotic* 123-124). He feels a deep anxiety if he lacks a warm environment where he is loved and protected. In extreme levels of
insecurity and fear of being deserted, the child is coerced into making efforts to overcome his anxiety. In such a mental state, the child sacrifices his self (the only thing he has) for the sake of attaining love and affection. As Horney asserts, “the most common ways in which the price is paid are an attitude of compliance and an emotional dependence. The complying attitude may take the form of not daring to disagree with or criticizing the other person, of showing nothing but devotion, admiration and docility” (The Neurotic 119-120). In other words, the child knows that he is in an environment where he is under threat and, accordingly, he puts his self into a secondary position. He craves for being loved while he has a deep dread of desertion and of being alone (Self 55). His primary goals and needs turn, as Horney indicates, “to be liked, wanted, desired, loved; to feel accepted, welcomed, approved of, appreciated; to be needed, to be of importance to others, especially to one particular person; to be helped, protected, taken care of, guided” (Our Inner 51). He disregards his own personal thoughts and feelings and begins to adjust his conducts according to the expectations of others. If he fails to obtain the sympathy of people surrounding him, he becomes extremely disturbed and frustrated (Our Inner 52); he is led to “a feeling of being neglected, rejected, and humiliated whenever the excessive amount of affection or approval demanded is not forthcoming” (Our Inner 56).

The defense mechanism of accepting others as superior, trying to please them and living up to their expectations shapes the character and personality of the individual in time. He accepts himself as a weak and helpless person; he tends to subordinate himself and depends on others in all of his actions and decisions (Our Inner 53-54). The dominance of his compliance also means that he unconsciously represses opposite urges. As Horney argues, “when analysing the compliant type we find a variety of aggressive tendencies strongly repressed” (Our Inner 55). This act of repression does not suggest that the individual can “keep the repressed impulses from operating or asserting themselves. … Accumulated repressed hostility may also appear in explosions of greater
or less vehemence, ranging from occasional irritability to temper tantrums” (Our Inner 57). Hence, even though one follows a particular neurotic trend and represses other trends unconsciously, the adverse trends are covertly operative and they can emerge at the moments of unendurable exasperation.

In Horney’s formulation, the opposite of the compliant personality type is the aggressive one which is characterized by moving against people and regarding them as foes. The aggressive person seeks to have a control over other people in order to pursue his self-interest (Our Inner 64). Prestige, success, social recognition, public acceptance and admiration are the most significant phenomena for him because he believes that the only possible way to achieve safety in a hostile environment is to excel and become a respectable figure in society. As Horney indicates, the quest for power and prestige is another way of struggling against childhood anxiety, feelings of inferiority, insignificance and being unwanted; and “such a striving usually develops only when it has proved impossible to find reassurance for the underlying anxiety through affection” (The Neurotic 162-163). In this regard, the individual attempts to manipulate others in order to be an exceptional person in his social circle and “develops a stringent need to impress others, to be admired and respected. He will have fantasies of impressing others with beauty or intelligence or with some outstanding accomplishment” (The Neurotic 171). His mentality and mindset are founded on realistic grounds “of its kind” because “he feels justified in regarding himself as only realistic” (Our Inner 67) and this rationalization enables him to establish superiority over sentimental and naïve people. He does not consider his attitude abnormal since he “is consciously or semiconsciously convinced that everyone acts this way, and so what counts is to do it more efficiently than the rest” (Our Inner 65). For this reason, he has a steadfast notion that he is right in his actions; he does not even question the validity and rationality of his deeds.
Horney postulates that, apart from moving toward or against people, another way of reacting against the basic conflict is an act of moving away from people. Being oppressed and exhausted by the insufferable relationships with his environment, the individual detaches from the outer life and refuses to make any effort to eliminate the anxiety inflicted on him. As Horney argues, “in a society in which there is much hypocrisy, crookedness, envy, cruelty and greed, the integrity of a none too strong person easily suffers; keeping at a distance helps to maintain it” (Our Inner 90). The detachment becomes neurotic as it “is not a matter of choice but of inner compulsion, the only possible way of living” (Our Inner 89). Neurotic aspect of the detachment is also apparent in that it begins to determine and restrict the individual’s attitudes and personality. Horney explains the neurotic state of the detached individual as follows:

If the detached person is thrown into close contact with others he may very readily go to pieces or, to use the popular term, have a nervous breakdown. … the neurotic trends involved in detachment, like other neurotic trends, give the individual a feeling of security as long as they function, and that, conversely, anxiety is aroused when they fail to function. As long as the detached person can keep at a distance he feels comparatively safe; if for any reason the magic circle is penetrated, his security is threatened. This consideration brings us closer to an understanding of why the detached person becomes panicky if he can no longer safeguard his emotional distance from others—and we should add that the reason his panic is so great is that he has no technique for dealing with life. He can only keep aloof and avoid life, as it were. (Our Inner 91)

Thus, the detached individual feels a neurotic need to maintain his estrangement from people whom he regards as potential sources of anxiety. His tension and trepidation in case of an involvement with others signifies the intensity of his anxiety caused by impaired social/parental relations. His safe and secure space is his inner world where he could freely “weave fantasies of a future when he would accomplish exceptional things” (Our Inner 79). The gratification that he gets out of imagining testifies to his introvert personality.
A notable characteristic of neurotically detached persons is that they are capable of approaching themselves in an objective and critical way and are “excellent observers of the processes going on within them” (Our Inner 75). However, they lack a sense of confidence and absolute certainty about their subjective thoughts and feelings. They develop a self-estrangement, “that is, a numbness to emotional experience, an uncertainty as to what one is, what one loves, hates, desires, hopes, fears, resents, believes” (Our Inner 74). Hence, even though they can recognize their inner dilemma they are unable to solve it and have a firm idea regarding their emotional or intellectual subjectivity. Such a state of irresolution and self-doubt occurs because the detached person rejects any sort of external influence or advice and remains helpless in establishing his set of beliefs and judgements. His tendency to be independent, self-sufficient and to keep his privacy leads him to be isolated as well as resourceful (Our Inner 75-76). Horney refers to the neurotic nature of the detached person’s independence as follows:

His independence, like the whole phenomenon of detachment of which it is a part, has a negative orientation; it is aimed at not being influenced, coerced, tied, obligated. Like any other neurotic trend, the need for independence is compulsive and indiscriminate. It manifests itself in a hypersensitivity to everything in any way resembling coercion, influence, obligation, and so on. (Our Inner 77)

The extremity of neurotic need for independence is revealed especially in the detached person’s uneasy and rebellious attitude against outer/social expectations, rules, traditions etc. “He stubbornly rejects all conventional rules and standards” (Our Inner 78) as well as pre-established social values and assumptions because he feels trammelled by them. As the detached person’s seclusion and withdrawal from the outer life intensifies and his inner uncertainty disturbs him, the covertly operative need for affection and love may become an option for him. As Horney suggests, “he will be unable to stand solitude and may reach out frantically for affection and protection” (Our Inner 79). Such a change in his behavioral and emotional orientation will definitely cause a contradiction with his
primary attitude of detachment. In fact, “this play of forces” can be seen in the detached person in a sharper and more manifest way than in the other two types of personality (Our Inner 94). He exhibits the impact of this conflict through inconsistent thoughts and actions and “no real inner peace or freedom can ever be attained as long as the contradictory sets of values continue to exist” (Our Inner 95).

The traits of compliant, aggressive and detached personalities reflect a neurotic state of mind because, as Horney posits, “neither [none] of these patterns is freely chosen: each is compulsive and inflexible, determined by inner necessities” (Our Inner 71). Parents’ attitude towards the child and the social/domestic atmosphere in which the child grows up are crucial in determining these inner necessities. The child’s tendency to one particular neurotic trend is engendered by some certain relational and environmental insufficiencies or breakdowns which are at such extreme levels that the child is compelled to feel the need for a compensation or melioration in a neurotic way. If the source of his disturbance and conflict with the outer world is related with lack of love, approval and affection he gradually develops a compliant personality type. If he is ignored and treated with contempt he tends to be in an effort to prove himself in the eyes of his parents or society. And if he is in an insoluble conflict with his environment he keeps himself detached. In each case, he behaves in an unconscious, compulsive and indiscriminate way and the followed neurotic trend forms and regulates the personality of the neurotic individual.

Horney maintains that a common aspect of the three neurotic types is that they have a notion of their “idealized image”. Each of the types aspires to be the person who possesses all the characteristics they yearn to have and who is free of all the deficiencies and problems they wish to be rid of. Horney argues that, through the idealized image, the neurotic assumes to have “qualities that one does not have, or that one has potentially but not factually” (Our Inner 97). For this reason, the idealized image is an unrealistic and
even fantastic phenomenon; yet, it is real and possible to achieve for the neurotic as he idealizes the image unconsciously (*Our Inner* 97). The idealized image, generated by “real inner necessities” of the neurotic individual, may reflect his real potentialities and exerts a real influence on his personality (*Our Inner* 108). However, it is false and illusory in its essential nature, which “makes the person vulnerable and avid for outside affirmation and recognition” (*Our Inner* 97). If he perceives an external threat or attack against his idealized image he automatically tries to defend and justify it; otherwise, he feels weak, insignificant and even contemptible (*Our Inner* 109). Discrepancies between himself and his idealized image are central to the neurotic; he is in “incessant attempts to bridge the gap and whip himself into perfection” (*Our Inner* 98). Yet, in the case of the neurotic’s focus on his deficiencies and inabilities against his idealized image, he may deviate from the reality of his actual self and develop a false “despised image” (*Our Inner* 98). His neurosis approximates to be psychosis since he loses all of his connection with reality.

Horney thinks that one of the functions of the idealized image in neurotic state of mind is that it provides the neurotic with self-confidence and self-determination, which are feelings damaged or completely annihilated by the anxieties of the basic conflict. Horney explains the compensatory operation of the idealized image as follows:

A person who eventually becomes neurotic has little chance to build up initial self-confidence because of the crushing experiences he has been subjected to. … Neurotic trends impair self-determination because a person is then driven instead of being himself the driver. Moreover, the neurotic’s capacity to determine his own paths is continually weakened by his dependence upon people, whatever form this may have assumed—blind rebellion, blind craving to excel, and a blind need to keep away from others are all forms of dependence. … All of these factors make it nearly impossible for him to develop his own goals. … Being thus deprived of a substantial foundation, the neurotic must inflate his feeling of significance and power. That is why a belief in his omnipotence is a never-failing component of the idealized image. (*Our Inner* 100)
Thus, for the neurotic individual, idealization of an inner image is both a way of escape from anxiety and an indispensable shelter where he reestablishes his personality. In other words, the idealized image is the personification of the neurotic avoidance from outer realities, conflicts and anxieties and the gravitation towards imagination and inner fantasies. In opposite to his anguished state in his actual environment, the neurotic person feels safe, significant, integrated and appreciated in this imaginary sphere.

A significant aspect of the idealized image is its integrative function as a center which combines or adjusts contradictory neurotic trends operating concurrently. Since the idealized image exists in fantasies the neurotic individual is able to give it a form “in which opposites appear reconciled or in which, at any rate, they no longer appear as conflicts to the individual himself” (*Our Inner* 104). To clarify, an individual may be a predominantly detached type while he needs for love and affection; in that case, in reality, he will feel the anxiety and face the dilemma of moving away and, at the same time, toward people. He is therefore directed into his inner space and creates an imaginary figure of himself that possesses the characteristics of both trends exempt from any conflict or anxiety. Hence, having “the enormous subjective value of serving as a binder, of holding together a divided individual” (*Our Inner* 108), the idealized image plays a pivotal role in negating the mental distress of the neurotic.

Horney’s theoretical postulations regarding the basic conflict and anxiety, neurotic trends, neurotic personality types and the idealized image have a pivotal role in gaining a perspicacious and extensive insight into the outsider characters in *The Dark*, *The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy*. Each of the protagonists in the novels has problematic social/parental relationships, exists in a hostile environment, confronts with a basic conflict and, being weak and helpless, acts in a way determined by a predominant neurotic need. Even though the attitudes and tendencies that they follow in order to avoid from anxiety differ from each other, the anxiety and conflict they encounter
are generated by similar sources, that is the impositions, oppressions or indifference of people around them. Their reaction is neurotic because they are coerced into feeling, thinking and behaving in a particular way and are not allowed to develop a purely subjective personality. They feel nervous and disturbed if the behavioral pattern that they adopt is threatened. They are also forced to follow contradictory neurotic trends due to distressing external circumstances, which intensifies their neurosis to reach the level of psychosis in some instances. They, therefore, create an idealized image in their mind which imaginarily reconciles and unifies their conflicting trends and functions to protect them from anxiety.

In *The Dark*, young Mahoney grows up in an environment where he repeatedly encounters his father’s acts of violence and sexual abuse. He also witnesses the pervert attitude of Father Gerald and, later, the indifferent and inhospitable atmosphere at Galway and the university. Each of these circumstances attests to the fact that young Mahoney, since his early childhood, has existed in an environment crowded by malevolent and distant figures. Hence, having no chance to establish a proper relationship with anyone whom he could trust and befriend with, young Mahoney remains helpless and vulnerable to his father’s physical and mental assaults. As a way of overcoming his feeling of anxiety caused by the “basic conflict” with his domestic environment, he is compelled to detach himself from his environment and to develop the neurotic trends of a detached personality. He turns to be engrossed in his inner feelings and thoughts and over-sensitive to his independence and self-sufficiency, which influences most of his life-changing acts and decisions. However, on the other hand, he wishes to move away from his father’s tyranny by means of a social integration, that is, by moving toward people in the outside of his father’s house, which represents his need for love and affection. This conflict leads him to uncertainty, suspense and inability to be aware of his genuine wishes. In his imagination, he creates an idealized image who is a compliant as well as detached
character. He believes that he could achieve to become this figure by moving further away from his father and gaining his economic independence. In this regard, he accepts the job offered by Dublin Electricity Supply Board.

Timothy Gedge, in *The Children of Dynmouth*, exhibits the characteristics of an aggressive type who treats other people in an antagonistic way. Just as in the case of young Mahoney, Timothy's relationships with his family and other people surrounding him are impaired. His environment is characterized by the lack of a father figure and motherly affection which are combined with the indifferent and unsympathetic attitude of the people of Dynmouth. In his mind, he creates an imaginary figure with whom he idealizes and identifies. This image is the figure of a famous comedian who is a highly notable, appreciated and loved persona in society. Even though this image exists only in Timothy’s fantasies, throughout the novel, Timothy believes in its reality and wants everyone around him to believe it as well. In his struggle to become his idealized image, Timothy tries to exploit the help and service of other people by threatening them to expose their secrets. His aggressive trends are neurotic because, originally, they are created by outer circumstances which coerce him into anxiety. Hence, he moves against people as a reaction against their inhospitable, dismissive and even contemptuous attitude. Another neurotic aspect of his aggressive personality is the indiscriminate nature of his actions and his overreaction at any instance which threatens his achievement to be his idealized image. All of his actions and dialogues with other characters are related with and motivated by his effort to act his play and, in this way, to realize his fantasies of becoming a comedian. If his striving is hindered or his idealized image is attacked his aggressiveness is intensified as seen in his reactions of telling lies and blackmailing.

In *The Butcher Boy*, Francie’s bond with the outer world is damaged by his father’s alcoholism, his mother’s mental disorder, insolence of the Nugents and loss of his friendship with Joe. Being interconnected with each other, each of these external
factors undermines Francie’s safety and pushes him into anxiety. In consequence, he develops a neurotic need for love and affection especially in his relationship with his mother and Joe. He behaves in a way that would enable him to maintain his mother’s love and to moderate his father’s bad temper. In the outside, Joe is the only figure whom Francie depends on; in a way, he represents Francie’s “neurotic need for a partner”. In accordance with the characteristics of the compliant type, Francie’s basic fear is that of being all alone in an environment where he is too weak to strive for a living. For this reason, in his relationship with his parents and Joe, which is the source of love and protection for him, he acts to please them, accepts to be inferior to them and, at times, sacrifices himself for the sake of them. Yet, arrogance of the upper-class Nugents and dark childhood memories of Francie’s father mar Francie’s bonds of love and deprive him of protection and affection. Both of these factors deteriorate his mother’s mental disorder and cause Francie to confront his basic anxiety of being deserted and left alone. The fact that Francie runs away from home when he feels frustrated about his Uncle Alo is indicative of his tendency to detachment though it operates in a secondary and temporary way.

Loss of his friendship with Joe and death of his mother bring about a devastating impact on Francie’s mental state. Feeling severely attacked by external hostility, Francie turns to be aggressive and move against people as a way of struggling against the basic conflict and anxiety. In this regard, he becomes full of hatred against outer world, notably the Nugents. Actually, Francie’s initial teasing attitude to Philip Nugent manifests that aggressive type is latently and subordinately operative in Francie. However, aggressiveness exceeds and replaces Francie’s compliant personality when all the chances of being loved, cared and protected are taken away from him. In consequence, as befitting to the neurotic need for power of the aggressive type, he counter-attacks the source of his anxieties and murders Mrs. Nugent.
Thus, the neurotic trends which each of the protagonists in the three novels follows illustrate the presence of these characters in society as outsiders. These trends are the consequences of the enforcements, impositions, physical/mental assaults inflicted on them by the external world, where they are treated as strangers. The conditions of the environment surrounding them coerce them into particular ways of thinking, acting and feeling and they are unable to develop their subjective personality. Their neurotic struggles and sacrifices do not provide them with safety, affection or the disappearance of their anxiety because an actual solution to the basic conflict between them and other people is not presented.

2.6. Harry Stack Sullivan: Interpersonal Theory and Developmental Stages

An eminent figure whose ideas and theories are deemed to be necessary in elaborating the ways in which the protagonists in *The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* feel and act as outsiders is Harry Stack Sullivan. As an Irish-American Neo-Freudian psychoanalyst, Sullivan is considered to be a luminary figure who contributed to the fields of psychoanalysis and psychotherapy conspicuously with his “interpersonal theory”.

In *The Interpersonal Theory of Psychiatry*, Sullivan underlines the indispensable role of mutual interaction between people in the formation and development of human personality and psychology. He suggests that existence of human beings as well as of all the other living organisms is dependent on communal life, which is a biological principle he borrows from Seba Eldridge (The Interpersonal 31). In Sullivan’s perspective, “the principle of communal existence refers to the fact that the living cannot live when separated from what may be described as their necessary environment” (The Interpersonal 31). Sullivan asserts that, in the case of human beings, one’s relationship with other people is the continuous and main determinant of his mental state and particular personality traits which form his individuality. Hence, Sullivan explicates the
interpersonal processes in man’s life in order to elucidate human psychology and personality thoroughly. In this regard, he discusses the significance of interpersonal relations in the developmental stages of infancy, childhood, juvenile era, preadolescence, early adolescence and late adolescence.

Sullivan thinks that the two absolutes generated by interpersonal relations from early infancy through adulthood are euphoria and tension. While euphoria refers to “a state of utter well-being”, tension is “the maximum possible deviation from absolute euphoria” (The Interpersonal 34-35). Tensions are brought about by two main sources: the needs of infant and anxiety of mother, which Sullivan calls tension of needs and tension of anxiety. Sullivan also names the person who feeds, cares about and protects the infant as “the mothering one” (The Interpersonal 37). These activities which relieve the infant’s tension are called by Sullivan as tenderness (The Interpersonal 40). The tensions which engender anxiety in the infant are aroused by the mothering one’s own anxiety, which, in many ways, interrupts flow of tenderness (The Interpersonal 41). The anxiety induced by the mothering one causes the infant to be deprived of the feeling of security because the infant, being weak and helpless, is unable to remove the source of anxiety by its own. This tension, in Sullivan’s words, “can be said to be the need for interpersonal security, and it is very distinct from the need for interchange with the physicochemical environment” (The Interpersonal 56). Hence, being a critical phenomenon which serves as the nucleus of Sullivan’s theory, anxiety and its continuity exert an enormous influence on the physical and mental development in infancy as well as in the following heuristic stages.

Interpersonal relations are expanded in childhood and the juvenile era through communication skills and socialization. Even though the child still hinges on the mothering one on a great scale he has a social circle limited with his friends. The attitude of parents, and especially of the mothering one, toward the child is critical in childhood
because his personality is moulded according to the treatment he gets from them. His need for parental tenderness requires to be fulfilled in a healthy way, otherwise, he may develop personality disorders as he grows up. Sullivan discusses the ways in which a child is affected by lack or insufficiency of tenderness and by negative behaviour of parents as follows:

For a variety of reasons, many children have the experience that when they need tenderness, … they are not only denied tenderness, but they are treated in a fashion to provoke anxiety or even, in some cases, pain. … Under those circumstances, the developmental course changes to the point that the perceived need for tenderness brings a foresight of anxiety or pain. The child learns, you see, that it is highly disadvantageous to show any need for tender cooperation from the authoritative figures around him, in which case he shows something else; and that something else is the basic malevolent attitude, the attitude that one really lives among enemies—that is about what it amounts to. And on that basis, there come about the remarkable developments which are seen later in life, when the juvenile makes it practically impossible for anyone to feel tenderly toward him or to treat him kindly… (*The Interpersonal* 214)

As stated in the quote, Sullivan points out that parents’ indifferent, insensitive and antagonistic approach toward the child causes him to feel being in a conflict with his environment and coerces him into malevolence. He develops a hostile understanding of people around him and its consequential influences on his personality and mentality are seen more clearly through his conducts in the following stages of the juvenile era and preadolescence. Lacking the necessary tenderness of his parents, the juvenile becomes anxious to socialize and, in consequence, turns to be socially isolated or, as Sullivan calls it, becomes a “lonely child” (*The Interpersonal* 225). He concentrates on his inner world of imagination and has difficulties in discerning reality from fantasy. F. Barton Evans, in his *Harry Stack Sullivan: Interpersonal Theory and Psychotherapy*, discusses the outcomes of impairment in parental tenderness and socialization as follows:

The child with few playmates and limited opportunities to experience the world outside the family entered the juvenile era socially underdeveloped. The lonely child by necessity constructed a rich phantasy life in compensation for his or her lack of social interaction. By the end of childhood, there was a growing social necessity for the child to distinguish between the inner phantasy world and
socially agreed upon reality. … the lonely child’s rich phantasy life, which had not been subject to consensual validation, became the object of misunderstanding and ridicule by peers in the juvenile era. For Sullivan, this dilemma led the lonely child to a tentativeness with peers that even further contributed to a partial arrest in development. (107)

The juvenile humiliation, isolation and introversion are therefore primarily begotten by the negligence or antagonism of parents and cause the child to get immersed into his fantasies. And “to have a very fantastic personification of oneself is, actually, to be very definitely handicapped. In other words, it is a misfortune in development” (The Interpersonal 247-248). This experience, which is, as will be detailed in the following chapters, what the protagonists in The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth and The Butcher Boy undergo, compels the juvenile into further anxiety.

Sullivan posits that preadolescence is characterized by the preadolescent’s “need for interpersonal intimacy” with a person “of the same sex who becomes a chum or a close friend” (The Interpersonal 245). His intimate friendship and interaction with this figure represents “freedom from anxiety, or the diminution of anxiety” (The Interpersonal 245). Besides, such an intimacy not only provides the preadolescent with a “consensual validation of personal worth” (The Interpersonal 251) but functions as a surrogate source of tenderness and security for him as well (The Interpersonal 253). For this reason, lack of a close relationship with a peer in the course of preadolescence deprives the individual of the feeling of security and generates a life-long sense of being lonely and helpless. Referring to the preadolescent era in Sullivan’s interpersonal theory, Evans suggests that loneliness occurs as a result of “earlier childhood experiences arising from parental failures in providing appropriate tenderness and respect for the child’s uniqueness, as well as frustrations in the need for compeers during the juvenile era” (Harry Stack 117). In other words, the preadolescent becomes lonely or is inclined to loneliness due to parental and social defects which he experiences during the previous stages of development. As
Sullivan states, “loneliness reaches its full significance in the preadolescent era, and goes on relatively unchanged from thenceforth throughout life … the fact that loneliness will lead to integrations in the face of severe anxiety automatically means that loneliness in itself is more terrible than anxiety” (The Interpersonal 262). Hence, as critical consequences of the absence of a close companion, the preadolescent’s interpersonal relations and development are impaired and his strife within the community is aggravated.

In Sullivan’s interpersonal theory, preadolescence is followed by early adolescence, the developmental stage in which sexual interest arises. The early adolescent’s “lust dynamism” is in a conflict with his interpersonal security and need for intimacy due to socio-cultural assumptions and inhibitions (The Interpersonal 266). In other words, the individual is unable to obtain sexual satisfaction through a physical intercourse; and therefore, impulsive and uncontrollable concentration on sexual urges not only moves the individual away from intimacy with a chum but subjects him to social humiliation. In both cases, he is coerced into loneliness and develops an “autosexual behaviour”, that is masturbation, in order to satisfy himself and escape from anxiety. As Evans argues, “the isolated adolescent used reverie (daydreams, phantasies, and dreams) as a substitution for interpersonal experience. While such methods could be initially useful, the isolated adolescent could eventually retreat permanently into the safety of this method of need discharge” (Harry Stack 123). Hence, the early adolescent’s immoderate tendency to masturbation and phantasies as a way for sexual gratification and eschewal from anxiety deepens his isolation even though it provides him with a sense of relief. Besides, internalization of such an activity hinders interaction with other people, especially of the opposite sex.

Sullivan’s ideas regarding the function of interpersonal relations on the personality and psychology of individual during developmental epochs illuminate the behaviour and mental states of the outsiders in The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth and
The Butcher Boy. The protagonists in each of the novels have a variety of difficulties in their relationships with other persons including their parents, which push them to the peripheries of the life in the outside. Even though there is no or only a little account of their period of infancy and childhood, they exhibit the symptoms of having been deprived of the necessary affection and protection of a mothering one. Their actions and psychological characteristics also reflect that they lacked a proper atmosphere in their childhood which would enable them to develop their interpersonal relations and to gain a sense of interpersonal security.

In The Dark, the narrative is basically structured on young Mahoney’s ‘dark’ experiences during his transition from preadolescence to early adolescence. Having lost his mother long time ago, young Mahoney is raised by his father who oppresses and abuses him in every possible way. Obviously enough, he has lacked all the vital interpersonal relations in his developmental stages: the love and protection of a mothering one and an environment of amity during his childhood and juvenile era, and intimacy with a friend in his preadolescence. He has led an isolated and miserable life under the intimidation, violence and sexual abuse of his father. Hence, stepping into his early adolescence, he is unable to develop proper relationships with other persons due to his presumption that he would be exposed to anxiety. He develops a frequent habit of self-satisfaction through masturbation, which manifests his loneliness. Furthermore, his sexual urges cause him to confront with an inner conflict between his lust and need for security. Even though he wishes to have an intercourse with a woman, he is afraid to mingle with people due to his experiences in the earlier periods of his personal development. As a consequence, young Mahoney’s turbulent interpersonal relationships mould his psychology and personality in a way that would keep him outside the communal space.
In *The Children of Dynmouth*, Timothy, as a preadolescent, not only lacks a chum to fulfill his need for intimacy but he is deprived of any sort of parental affection as well. He is a destitute boy deserted by his father upon his birth and neglected by his mother who spends most of her time working. As the narrator makes it clear, Timothy, during his childhood and juvenile era, is left at his aunt’s house where he waits for his mother to come back from work; he does not like his aunt and, in fact, he is not wanted there. In other words, during the time before being a preadolescent, Timothy becomes deprived of protective and affectionate parents and a friendly environment where he could learn how to socialize; and therefore, he remains lonely and isolated. His preadolescent period, as reflected in the novel, bears the traces of this isolation and loneliness. He is at an age when he needs the intimacy of a close friend; however, he is unable to establish any kind of friendship with anyone because he is immersed into his fantasy of becoming a comedian. His excessive inclination to his imagination is explicable with his deprival of interpersonal relations and security throughout his life. He does not have any chance to be in a domestic or social space where he could get tenderness and feel secure by means of an external source such as a mothering one or playmates. In consequence, in his preadolescence, he does not seek for a chum who would abate his loneliness as he has already sequestered himself in his fantasies and created an imaginary figure of intimacy. He establishes his relationships and interaction with other people only on this imaginary dimension since he regards people around him as means that would help him realize his fantasies. Thus, Timothy’s isolation, loneliness and consequential preoccupation with his imagination are all related with that he grows up lacking critically necessary interpersonal relations.

In *The Butcher Boy*, Francie, as a twelve-year-old preadolescent, becomes deprived of the tenderness of a mothering one as a result of his mother’s mental breakdown, which brings about her suicide in the end. As a manifestation of the
impairment in his interpersonal relations, Francie’s father and other persons in the neighborhood treat him in a way that compels him into deeper anxiety and distress rather than providing him with motherly affection and protection. Furthermore, being at an age when intimacy with a chum is critical for his personal and psychological welfare, Francie becomes lonelier and more desolate when his friendship with Joe comes to an end. He has already been frustrated by his uncle Alo and, for him, Joe is the only and ultimate figure who could soothe his anxiety and provide him with a feeling of security through friendly interaction. Hence, Joe’s absence is a significant circumstance which causes Francie to become completely isolated from the outer world and to retreat into his fantasies which gradually take over his perception of reality.

The fact that the protagonists are devoid of a salubrious atmosphere in their families signals to that they remain undeveloped in interpersonal relations. Lack of parental tenderness, protection and interest during their infancy, childhood and juvenile era is the principal reason of their loneliness. They are unable to compensate this lack through intimacy with a friend and therefore, their isolation becomes bitter and deeper. Hence, Sullivan’s theory of interpersonal relations supplements comprehension of the outsiders in *The Dark*, *The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* with insight into and emphasis on individual’s relationships especially with his parents and friends.

2.7. Jacques Lacan: “Mirror Stage” and The Concept of “Imago”

French psychoanalyst Jacques Lacan’s theories and ideas bring a further insight into the concept of imago as well as Freud’s other theories. Lacan’s concept of “the mirror stage” is one of his most remarkable theoretical contributions to psychoanalysis which sheds light on the mental development of individual. In his work titled “The Mirror Stage as Formative of the Function of the I as Revealed in Psychoanalytic Experience”, Lacan maintains that the infant recognizes itself in the mirror as a whole unit (Gestalt) and identifies itself with the image in the mirror (“The Mirror” 2). This image, which Lacan
calls “imago”, is a more constitutive and unified body than the baby which is vulnerable and weak and whose movements are turbulent (“The Mirror” 2). Lacan asserts that the Gestalt reflection which the infant sees in the mirror leads it in a “fictional” direction. Even though the infant identifies itself with the image in the mirror, its perception is delusive because there is a clear discordance between its incomplete, asymmetric and turbulent form and the mirror-image which it perceives as an organized and meaningful whole (“The Mirror” 2).

Lacan articulates that infant’s quest for identification with an external imago which is superior to it goes on all over his life even though it initially occurs as a false identification. The infant’s admiration at the imago and its struggle to become it, which constitutes the nucleus of mirror stage, goes on to exist and shape individual’s mental state in his/her maturity. On the continuity of the mirror stage, Lacan states as follows:

The mirror stage is a drama whose internal thrust is precipitated from insufficiency to anticipation - and which manufactures for the subject, caught up in the lure of spatial identification, the succession of phantasies that extends from a fragmented body-image to a form of its totality that I shall call orthopaedic – and, lastly, to the assumption of the armour of an alienating identity, which will mark with its rigid structure the subject’s entire mental development. (“The Mirror” 3)

Imago has a pivotal role in Lacan’s theory because he regards “the function of the mirror-stage as a particular case of the function of the imago, which is to establish a relation between the organism and its reality— or, as they say, between the Innenwelt and the Umwelt” (“The Mirror” 3). As the infant matures, the mirror apparatus is disposed and “the imago of one's own body presents in hallucinations or dreams, whether it concerns its individual features, or even its infirmities, or its object-projections; or if we observe the role of the mirror apparatus in the appearances of the double, in which psychical realities, however heterogeneous, are manifested” (“The Mirror” 2). Lacan suggests that imago, which is created in the mirror apparatus in infancy, continues to exist within mental space in the form of imagination and phantasies. An individual establishes an
“ideal I”, in which he assumes to find completion, in his faculty of imagining. Reflections of this imagined/inner ideal self can be exported to outer world in the forms of idols, or other personages who are greatly admired and imitated. Dino Felluga, in "Modules on Lacan: On the Structure of the Psyche", explains mirror stage’s extension in adult life and its externalization as follows:

Once a child begins to recognize that its body is separate from the world and its mother, it begins to feel anxiety, which is caused by a sense of something lost. The demand of the child, then, is to make the other a part of itself, as it seemed to be in the child's now lost state of nature (the neo-natal months). … The mirror stage corresponds to this demand in so far as the child misrecognizes in its mirror image a stable, coherent, whole self, which, however, does not correspond to the real child (and is, therefore, impossible to realize). The image is a fantasy, one that the child sets up in order to compensate for its sense of lack or loss, what Lacan terms an "Ideal-I" or "ideal ego." That fantasy image of oneself can be filled in by others who we may want to emulate in our adult lives (role models, et cetera), anyone that we set up as a mirror for ourselves in what is, ultimately, a narcissistic relationship. What must be remembered is that for Lacan this imaginary realm continues to exert its influence throughout the life of the adult and is not merely superceded in the child's movement into the symbolic … (Felluga “Modules on Lacan”)

As Felluga indicates, a sense of insufficiency and incompleteness develops in individual from the very early months after his birth onwards. The mirror functions as a significant instrument which provides man with the idea that he can complete himself with an outer image separate from himself. This tendency to attain unity continues to exist all through one’s life in phantasies. The figures that an individual takes as his role model (such as father, teacher etc.) are reflections of the first imago, namely the infant’s own image in the mirror.

Lacan’s theory of the mirror stage and concept of imago give deep insight into the ways in which the characters in the novels to be studied act as outsiders. Each of the protagonists creates an imaginary persona, which can well be defined as an imago, and gains a sense of integration by identifying with him. They fail to realize the discrepancies between their lacking, deficient and problematic mental state / physical surrounding and
the complete, stable and serene state of their imago. In *The Dark*, young Mahoney creates the imago of a priest in his mind who leads a peaceful and quiet life away from the anxieties and sufferings of outer life and whose mind is strong and stable in religious issues. The imago of priest represents for young Mahoney the achievement of all what he lacks and yearns for (socio-economic security, avoidance from sin and an idyllic life) and disappearance of what he suffers from (his father’s sexual abuses as well as mean, spiteful and oppressive manner, his professional and social uncertainties and dilemmas). Young Mahoney sacrifices physical and sexual pleasures for the sake of becoming his imago; yet, his imago is devastated when he encounters Father Gerald’s overly intimate actions. He becomes aware of that he can not secure himself against external threats even if he achieves to become his imago; as a result, feeling betrayed and frustrated, he obliterates the imago of priest from his mind and decides to lead a secular life.

Timothy, in *The Children of Dynmouth*, creates the imago of a famous comedian in his *Innenwelt* where he tends to find completion. Timothy’s imago exists only in his phantasies and it is not externalized in any concrete form because Timothy does not have a chance to identify himself with an external figure. Being fatherless since his early infancy, Timothy does not have any relatives other than his unconcerned mother and sister; he does not have any friends among the residents of Dynmouth. Hence, he creates the imago of a TV celebrity in his mind that he admires and wishes to be. This imago bears all the personal characteristics that Timothy lacks in real life: he is a remarkable and popular figure in society; he entertains people with extraordinary jokes and gestures; he is esteemed and cherished by everyone.

As befitting to Lacan’s concept of false identity, there are clear discrepancies between Timothy’s mental and physical state in reality and the imago (of comedian) he sees in the mirror apparatus which is, in this case, his dreams and imaginations. Contrary to Timothy’s mentally and physically fragmented, unprotected and weak personage,
which is real, his imago is unified and has a stable and meaningful social status. Unlike Timothy, his imago of comedian is a strong figure who has a secure place in society.

Throughout the novel, Timothy is obsessively immersed into the struggle to complete himself by becoming his imago. He does not refrain from committing any unethical or even illegal acts to reach his goal. He intrudes into the lives of townspeople, witnesses their secrets and blackmails them to get their help in order to achieve his aim. In return, the social and domestic circle where Timothy exists ignores him considering that he is different from everyone else in an odd and freaky way and looks for a way to get rid of him in any encounter. Timothy, who has no communication with his mother and sister, is totally captured by the gestalt imago that he creates in his mind. As a result, a great gap occurs between his inner space (*Innenwelt*) and the outer world (*Umwelt*). His connection with outside is only through his imagined reflection in his mind because he regards everyone as a tool that has the potential to enable him to get closer to it; in other words, for Timothy, the *Umwelt* is represented by the imago instead of his family or the society. And it is precisely Timothy’s obsession with his imago what is the main reason of his remaining an outsider. Due to his fanatical imagination of becoming a famous comedian, he is unable to establish a proper and solid way of communication with other people. Instead, he adheres to his inner space where he freely becomes his imago.

In *The Butcher Boy*, the imago Francie creates in his mind and identifies with bears all the qualities which he lacks. Francie’s imago is appreciated and respected in his local circle; he is by no means inferior to any other persons; he is a successful figure in financial and occupational terms. Francie externalizes this imago in the character of his uncle Alo. He admires his uncle considering that he is a local hero who prospered in London. When he learns that his uncle will pay a visit to the town he dreams that, walking around with his uncle, he would get all the attention and sympathy of townspeople. He also imagines that Alo would put an end to the miserable and depressive domestic
atmosphere caused by the troubles of his parents. Francie regards Alo as a figure whose presence would gain him the affection, respectability, economic sufficiency which he longs for and bring a blissful mood in his family.

Alo’s posture as Francie’s imago is destroyed when Francie’s father loses his temper after being drunk and insults Alo. He reveals that Alo is just a mediocre watchman at a factory in London where he obeys the orders of his superiors. He also refers to their childhood when he and Alo were abandoned by their father and sent to an orphanage. Mortified by his brother’s bitter statements and hostile attitude, Alo leaves the town. Hence, Francie’s imago of his uncle is shattered and, consequently, he runs away from home. Being completely desolate and unable to create another imago with whom he can identify, Francie is fully absorbed into the world of his phantasies as a way of escape from the painful realities.

To sum up, the protagonists in *The Dark*, *The Children of Dymouth* and *The Butcher Boy* turn away from the distressing realities surrounding them and create imagos whom they identify with. They believe in the possibility that they can achieve to become their imagined figures, complete their lacks and dissipate the external anxieties imposed on them. The protagonists’ failure to become their imagos in reality forces them to be deeply immersed in an imaginary sphere, not to step out of its boundaries and remain as outsiders within their hometown. Their imagos function as links that could connect them with the outer world; therefore, loss of these imaginary figures not only make them frustrated and solitary but casts them adrift in their phantasies as well. As a result of this absorption, Young Mahoney suffers from a serious neurosis while Timothy and Francie turn out to be psychotics who become threats to their social circle with immoral, illegal and even violent acts.
To conclude, the theories which have been explicated and contextualized with regard to the outsiders and societies depicted in *The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* clarify human nature and man’s relationship with the social world, and therefore provide a complete understanding of and an insightful approach to the protagonists in the novels. While Freud’s arguments reveal the instinctual motives underlying individuals’ particular feelings and actions, Adler’s “Individual Psychology” sheds light on human mentality through the concepts of inferiority and superiority complexes. Jung’s analytical psychology and character types provide a perspective which enables to approach the protagonists in terms of introversion and extraversion. Rank’s assertions on “birth trauma” and man’s innate anxieties provide a profound understanding of the characters’ distress. Horney’s “neurotic trends” and Sullivan’s “Interpersonal Theory” elucidate human psychology and personality in terms of man’s relationship with his parents and society. Lacan’s “mirror stage” and concept of “imago” contribute to apprehending the ways in which the protagonists identify themselves with false self-images.

Thus, influential postulations of these psychoanalysts and psychiatrists widen the scope of the theoretical approach to the outsiders by illustrating their psychic states and the ways in which the outer world precipitates their mental anguish. Their ruminations on the significance of collective life and the individual adaptation to social strains help to comprehend the process in which the protagonists act as outsiders due to social circumstances. By virtue of the inspiration gained by the ideas of these leading figures of psychoanalysis, each of the protagonists and their interaction with their social circle can be dealt with from manifold points of view, as will be carried out in the following chapters.
CHAPTER THREE

THE OUTSIDER in JOHN MCGAHERN’S THE DARK

Being John McGahern’s second novel and published in 1965, *The Dark* foregrounds the inscape of the son of a ferociously oppressive father. It bears the typical qualities of the fiction of McGahern in regard to the “revealing insight into the relationships between family, the individual, the state, religion, and education, especially in Ireland” (Graham 683) as well as the sui generis focus on the protagonist’s psychology through multiple narrative voices. The novel was banned by The Censorship of Publications Board in Ireland for indecent content and from the removal of the ban in 1970 onwards it turned to be one of the most celebrated works of McGahern together with his such remarkable novels as *Amongst Women* (1990), which is accepted to be the author’s *magnum opus*, and *That They May Face the Rising Sun* (2002).

*The Dark* is generally classified as a Bildungsroman in which the coming-of-age of the protagonist is narrated; the novel mostly “explores the shaping forces, the conflicts and the changes in Mahoney’s [the protagonist’s] young life” (Malcolm 35). Through the relationship between the protagonist and the environment and persons encircling him, McGahern sheds light on the life and conditions in rural Ireland and also the realities of Irish society, particularly the hegemony of the Catholic church and religion. As a common characteristic of McGahern’s fiction, *The Dark* “portray[s] the evolution of a society from repression towards greater personal, political, and religious freedom” (Teisch 21). However, the characteristics of the interaction between the protagonist and the outer world indicate that McGahern, rather than intending to present a panoramic view of Irish society, gravitates to disclosing the infliction and oppression of the external world on individual psyche by leaving a young, helpless and perplexed figure alone within this world, which, he thinks, is “impossible to take a hopeful view of” (Cronin 430). Darkness
literally and metaphorically prevails the house where the protagonist is traumatized by his father’s tyranny, the church where he verges on being sexually abused and the room of the pension where he is deeply distressed by a sense of insecurity and uncertainty. The struggle of the protagonist as an inexperienced, oppressed and isolated person to reach a space of security and certainty (or, metaphorically, to move from darkness into the light) establishes the main narrative and thematic structure of *The Dark*. Yet, due to the antagonistic characteristics of society and some public institutions as well as the impact of his father’s long-time oppression and tyranny on his personality and psychology, he fails to mingle with the outer world in each of his attempts to attain conditions which would safeguard him. As a result, having no shelter to take refuge in, he is left as an outsider who solitarily and pathetically wanders at the peripheries of societal venues. In this part of the thesis, the ways in which young Mahoney, the protagonist of *The Dark*, becomes an outsider will be focused on. In this regard, after a short introduction of John McGahern’s literary background, the domestic environment where the protagonist is reared will be analysed with particular attention to father-son relationship. Then, the ways in which this relationship exerts an influence on the protagonist’s mentality, wisdom and personality will be explicated with references to his ‘pathological’ conducts and character traits. Finally, the protagonist’s experiences at the church and university will be expatiated on in order to expound the role of the negative qualities of these institutions in the formation of his posture as an outsider.

### 3.1. John McGahern and His Literary Background

With his poetic language and tone in his works as well as his treatment of his characters in a way which goes deep into their minds and hearts, John McGahern is one of few Irish writers who is taken as a “contemporary Joyce” by many critics. McGahern was born in 1934 in Dublin; yet, he grew up in County Leitrim and Roscommon, remote, rural parts of Ireland marked by their highly conservative and economically depressed environment,
which later provided the author with the material of especially his earlier novels. Apart from environmental detachment, moral/religious conservatism⁴ and economic insufficiency, two phenomena which characterized McGahern’s childhood and early adolescence as well as leaving a huge impact on his personality, psychology and thereby literary works were the love of his mother, whom he lost at a very early age, and the tyrannical despotism of his father. Regarding the early years of McGahern, Carol Brennan asserts as follows:

He was the first of seven children in his family, and was devoted to his mother, a former teacher, and devastated by her death ... The remainder of his youth was marked by hardship: For a time, he and his siblings lived with their brutish father, a police sergeant and veteran of Ireland’s 1919-21 War of Independence, in police barracks, and McGahern resisted his father’s determination to pull him out of school so that he might learn a trade. As a teenager, he bicycled seven miles daily to attend high school, and discovered a love of literature thanks to the kindness of a neighbor with a well-stocked library (496).

Brennan’s notes prove that McGahern directly draws on his own youth experiences in writing *The Dark* and that the novel bears highly autobiographical qualities. The protagonist represents young McGahern; the brutal father in the novel can be taken as the personification of McGahern’s father⁵; and the isolated house where the protagonist unhappily lives with his father and sisters and without motherly affection is the barracks of McGahern’s father in County Roscommon. McGahern’s primary education was based on religion and, as in the case of the protagonist in *The Dark*, his mother wanted him to be a priest (Sutherland 2006); such a pious way of upbringing of the author has its echoes in almost all of his novels mostly through the protagonists’ inner repentances, joys and dilemmas related with religious issues.⁶

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⁴ In *Memoir*, McGahern emphasizes the predominance of religion at home during his childhood by saying “religion and religious imagery were part of the air we breathed” (10).
⁵ McGahern describes his father as a “changeable”, “violent”, “self-absorbed” and “many-faced” person who is very hard to understand (*Memoir* 226). Each of these qualities is exhibited by young Mahoney’s father in *The Dark*.
⁶ In an interview with Linda Collinge and Emmanuel Vernadakis, McGahern refers to the sway of Catholicism and the Catholic Church in his childhood as follows: “Catholicism dominated everything. Heaven and Hell and Purgatory and Limbo were to us real places; the Church was the story that gave meaning to our lives over the whole course of the year – Christmas to Easter to Advent.” (7)
After graduating from teacher training college in 1954 McGahern took his degree from University College Dublin in 1957 while working as a teacher (Sutherland 2006). During this period, his interest in literature increased to an extent to write short stories and, in 1963, to publish his first novel titled *The Barracks*, which, being autobiographically “centered on the story of a policeman’s wife dying of breast cancer, was widely acclaimed for its sensitive handling both of the homelife of the barracks and, especially, of the suffering of Elizabeth, the main character” (Graham 683). Then, McGahern spent a year traveling England, France, where he met his Finnish-born wife, Annikki Laaksi, Spain and Finland. His next novel, *The Dark* (1965), which brought McGahern “some underground reputation as a poet of domestic violence” (*Memoir* 248), caused the young novelist to undergo a series of troubles due to its being banned by the Irish Censorship Board. The consequences of being banned and censorship on McGahern’s life and literary career is referred to as follows:

… this event [banning of *The Dark*] and McGahern’s subsequent dismissal from his teaching post at the behest of archbishop John Charles McQuaid, became a matter of huge public interest, featuring heavily in the national media for a time as well as been raised in the Dáil. McGahern left Ireland following his dismissal and would spend the next ten years in England, France, Spain and the United States. He has admitted that the banning of his book and subsequent dismissal left him "unable to write for three or four years after the business" and it wasn’t until 1970 that his next work was published, the collection of short stories *Nightlines* (“Introducing John McGahern”).

Thus, *The Dark*, and particularly the scenes in which the protagonist is almost molested by a priest who is implicitly depicted as a pervert, gave rise to the Church’s aversion and resulted in not only banning of the book but, in a way, the exile of the author as well. McGahern partially drew on the distresses and vagaries of his life related with the banning of *The Dark* in his third novel, *The Leavetaking* (1974), in which he implicitly referred to his personal experiences of dismissal due to the oppression of the Catholic Church. The novel hints that McGahern’s marriage with a foreigner was disapproved by the church
and it played a considerable role in his dismissal and further distress (Brennan 496). The Leavetaking also signals to a change in McGahern’s attitude towards the notion of “home” in his works, which is explicated by Colin Graham as follows: “what The Leavetaking suggests is the beginning, in McGahern’s novels, of a sharper sense of detachment from, of less unquestioning commitment to, the home and childhood than has previously been the case” (684). McGahern moved back to Ireland in 1974 with his second wife, Madeliene Green, an American photographer, and re-settled in County Leitrim where he “farmed, wrote, and took the occasional visiting professorship” (Brennan 496) till the end of his life. From this time onwards, (and by virtue of the relatively liberated and modernized Irish social/literary circles) McGahern concentrated on his works and in 1978, he published another collection of short stories, Getting Through, which was followed by his fourth novel, The Pornographer, published in 1979. In 1985, McGahern published his third collection of short stories, High Ground, and in 1990, his most celebrated novel, Amongst Women, was published. Being shortlisted for the Booker Prize and winning Irish Times-Aer Lingus fiction prize, Amongst Women “details the final years and recollections of a politically disillusioned former IRA soldier, who dominates his family on a small farm in the west of Ireland and has been described by John Banville as a "masterpiece" and Thomas Kilroy as "one of the most significant achievements in Irish fiction"” (“Introducing John McGahern”). His final novel, That They May Face the Rising Sun (2001) (published in the USA as By the Lake in 2002) was followed by his last work, Memoir (2005) (published in 2006 in the USA as All Will Be Well), an autobiography with references to McGahern’s childhood memories of the time with his mother.

Apart from his novels and short stories, by which he won many awards, John McGahern produced plays which were broadcasted on radio and television as well as being performed on the stage. In 2006, at the age of 71, McGahern died of cancer in
Dublin. His peculiar style, poetic language as well as realistic and absorbing treatment of the issues of family, rural life, church and being an isolated individual in Ireland are the chief ‘McGahernian’ characteristics of his works. His outstanding ability to capture especially the feelings and states of frustration, vexation and perplexity, generally engendered by a conflict between individual and his/her environment, lets his works be ranked among such Irish canons as those of Joyce and Beckett. Regarding their heavily autobiographical aspect, McGahern’s works can be considered as vividly embodied forms of his memories of principally his childhood and adolescence. McGahern, as a writer who “has always been something of an outsider in his country of birth” (Maher “Circles” 157), tends to reveal the ‘dark’ side of Irishness in almost all of his novels and short stories. Yet, ‘darkness’, in McGahern’s art, transcends sole representation of pessimism and loneliness; it becomes the phenomenon which prevails man’s external world as well as mind and soul, and in which McGahern’s protagonists struggle to find their path. Arguably, this struggle is most strikingly exhibited in The Dark, which is the reason for the novel’s being included in this study.

3.2. The Outsider in the Darkness of ‘Fatherland’

The psychical and physical world depicted in The Dark is distinguished by “disillusionment, broken faith, utter alienation, a sense of futility, loss, transience, pain, and death” (Malcolm 8) leading to a tedious life; and these aspects are all metaphorically resonated by the title of the novel. Within this world, John McGahern portrays young Mahoney as an isolated, forlorn and imaginative orphan who leads a pathetic life and develops an introverted personality under the ‘dark’ shadow of his father. Apart from the final scene of ostensible reconciliation, young Mahoney is in a deep hatred against his father who abuses his children and spoils their life in any way possible. Growing up with a lack of fatherly protection and motherly affection as well as confronting the privation of a populous locality, young Mahoney has no one whom he could identify with, get
support from or simply share his feelings with through a proper communication. Patriarchal authoritarianism, which unequivocally reflects the societal ethos of the 1950s Ireland, dominates his childhood and impinges on his psychological state profoundly. Thus, his individuality is typified by insecurity, anxiety, timidity and uncertainty\(^7\); all of his acts, feelings and thoughts are not only characterized by these aspects but embodied by his craving for replacing them with their positive opposites as well. In other words, he is in a perpetual effort to annihilate the outer circumstances which coerces him into an insecure, anxious, timid and hesitant state of mind. For this reason, he struggles to move away from his father, the figure who primarily operates as the source of unpleasure in his life, and to unite himself with society or a certain community. In fact, apart from the first three chapters, which depict the tragic childhood of the protagonist, the whole novel is based on young Mahoney’s strivings for this sort of a unification. Furthermore, he is detached from society in terms of locality as well because, as can be deduced from the narrator’s depiction, the claustrophobic house where young Mahoney lives is located at the peripheries of the town.

Hence, young Mahoney, being an outsider in terms of his innermost state as well as external space, tries to move inside the society and let himself be included by the community whose dynamics he is unfamiliar with. However, he fails in his attempts to mingle with society for a variety of reasons and, as a result, he remains in the outside of the social world which, he assumes, possesses the security, serenity and certainty he yearns for. His endeavours to achieve a safe position in society are represented by, respectively, his orientation to the church, university and finally employment. He is disappointed by the first two of these undertakings and, at the end of the novel, he prepares to take another journey for the third one. In order to get a full grasp of the ways

\(^7\) Insecurity is also the feeling that young McGahern deeply experienced after the death of his mother. In his *Memoir*, McGahern states that, in his childhood, while walking to school with his mother he used to be in a rare moment of an extraordinary sense of security and deep peace (4).
in which young Mahoney acts as an outsider throughout the novel, his experiences and inner state of mind are necessary to be explicated phase by phase. In this regard, the traumatic impact of his father’s tyranny on his psychology, sexuality and outer actions will be discussed in respect with the argument that the ‘dark shadow’ of the father figure plays a significant role in the protagonist’s being an outsider.

Mahoney’s deplorable treatment toward young Mahoney especially during his childhood and preadolescence is the essential phenomenon which coerces young Mahoney into being an isolated figure who is deprived of a sense of self-confidence and protection. As befitting to Dermot McCarthy’s description of “a farmer-patriarch of ogre-like monstrosity” (81), Mahoney inflicts his cruelty and tyranny on his son at the very beginning of the novel in medias res. He punishes his son for saying a bad word; he makes him completely naked and frightens him by acting as if he were to beat him with his belt in front of his sisters. Young Mahoney weeps, shouts, wets himself and shivers while waiting to be hit harshly by his father’s belt. The third person narrator reveals the protagonist’s feelings as follows: “No, Daddy, no. I didn’t mean,” he gave one last whimper but he had to lie in the chair, lie there and wait as a broken animal. Something in him snapped. He couldn’t control his water and it flowed from him over the leather of the seat. He’d never imagined horror such as this, waiting naked for the leather to come down on his flesh, …” (The Dark 9). This shocking scene, by which McGahern strikes the reader at the very beginning of the novel, clearly displays the brutality of Mahoney. Even though he hits the belt on the armrest and does not beat his son at that moment, he beats him and his other children severely in other further incidents. Misery and degradation in such an intense way is what young Mahoney and his sisters experience.

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8 Referring to his childhood memories in Memoir, McGahern states that his father was a distant person who “always sought to keep the world around him closed”; he also discouraged his children “from mixing with the villagers” (148).
frequently. Thus, “at an early age”, as Denis Sampson asserts, young Mahoney “has experienced the more real death-in-life of the destruction of self-esteem, and this death defines the quality of his efforts to recover personal integrity through the choices he makes from this time on” (Outstaring, Locations 1378-1380, Ch. 2). Even during some favourable events such as picnic or fishing, children of Mahoney are afraid of talking to their father, who displays a selfish solipsism, because they can not be sure about the way he would react. The fear of their father and the anxiety of being punished at any moment for no reason at all are always present in their life.

For young Mahoney, his father’s malignancy is not limited with verbal insults or physical violence; he is also sexually abused or molested by him. In the nights when his father “wanted love”, young Mahoney has to sleep with him in the same bed. The narrator exhibits young Mahoney’s detestation of his father in such nights as follows: “there was no hope of sleep, though soon the heavy breathing told that Mahoney had moved almost immediately into sleep. It was impossible to lie close. The loathing was too great. … Lunatic hatred rose choking against the restless sleeping bulk in the ball of blankets, the stupid bulk that had no care for anything except itself” (The Dark 21). Thus, on one hand young Mahoney is filled with hatred towards his father, on the other, being mentally and physically tormented by him, young Mahoney’s self-respect and self-confidence diminish. In fact, the fact that McGahern does not mention the first-name of young Mahoney’s father in the novel might be related with the pejorative meaning of the word “Mahoney” in Irish. For, as James M. Cahalan indicates, “the boy [young Mahoney] tries to distance himself from his father by hiding his feelings and calling him only “Mahoney”. It should be noted that “mahone” (mo thóin in Irish) means “my ass”” (123).

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9 The beatings, constant scoldings and sudden rages and punishments of young Mahoney’s father are all identical to what McGahern and his sisters suffered from during their childhood. McGahern reveals that one of the most serious consequences of such oppression and tyranny of their father was that they started to walk in their sleep (Memoir 159).

10 Young Mahoney’s exposure to his father’s sexual abuse mirrors McGahern’s childhood experience with his father, who comes to his bed, massages his belly and thighs and probably masturbates (Memoir 188).
And, by implicitly referring to an act of sexual abuse committed by a parent towards his child, McGahern points out a painful and unspoken social reality in the Ireland of the 1950s.

In young Mahoney’s early adolescence, his father’s brutal and lascivious inflictions are gradually substituted by his derogatory remarks, discouraging and demoralizing treatments as well as his attempts to control and intervene in his life. In fact, apart from “scenes of beating and psychological bullying” as Richard Robinson puts it, the novel reveals the “annulment and mortification of individuated selfhood” (48) through the relationship between the father and son. Self-centredly enough, Mahoney has his daughters leave the school and do housework; he discharges one of them, Joan, to work at the town in an ill-protected way, by which, he believes, he would both reduce the expenses at home and get her payments. But his imperious attitude towards young Mahoney is the most intense; he blatantly denigrates his son’s actions and thoughts as well as exerting an immense constraint on his life. For example, when Father Gerald asks young Mahoney about what he wishes to do in his future life, the latter answers “‘I don’t know, father. Whatever I’m let be I suppose.’” (McGahern, The Dark 24), upon which Mahoney, regarding himself as the single authority on his children, comments as follows: “‘That’s good truth out of your mouth for once,’” Mahoney asserted. “‘It’s not what you want to be, it’s what you’ll be let be. He’ll be like me I suppose. He’ll wear out his bones on the few acres round this house and be buried at the end of the road.’” (McGahern, The Dark 25). This conversation clearly shows that young Mahoney’s life has entirely been controlled and ruled by his father, who is concerned about only his own benefit in any case related with his children’s lives. In fact, one significant function of the

11 The distance between father and son and the selfishness of the latter can be detailed taking McGahern’s own relationship with his father into consideration. As McGahern states in Memoir, being a sergeant police-officer, his father continued to live at the police barracks even after marriage and having children. He enjoyed to be free and unburdened especially by the necessities of his children and therefore he spent very little time with his family. However, after the death of his wife, he had to live with his children and deal with all of their needs. For this reason, McGahern (and thereby young Mahoney) was one of the children who “were resented as unwanted mouths that had to be fed, the
protagonist’s namelessness is to emphasize that he is coerced into being a duplication of his father instead of having a subjective identity. Mahoney even directs his son’s idea of becoming a priest regarding his own good; he imagines leaning on his son and leading an easy life in the church. Hence, in a way, young Mahoney can not be free from his father even in his plans about his future life. He develops such an intense animosity towards his father that he even thinks about exterminating all the traces of his father’s hegemony and authority in his life by starting a family himself in future: “if you married you would plant a tree to deny and break finally your father’s power, completely supplant it by the graciousness and marvel of your life, but as a priest you’d remain just fruit of the cursed house gone to God” (McGahern, The Dark 84). Hence, even young Mahoney’s alienation from religion as well as inclination towards secular life and having a family and children is, on a great scale, shaped by his hatred towards his father. He abhors him so fiercely as to act in a way which is entirely opposite to his father's conducts; that is, to become an affectionate father and an attentive husband. He believes that, in this way, he could completely destroy the dark shadow of his father in his life and establish a life which is fully in his own control.

Throughout the novel, Mahoney keeps his son in subjection to his despotism, demeans him and causes a great distress and anxiety in him in any way possible. At one of such instances, being castigated and ridiculed by his father about his work in the potato field, young Mahoney feels dejected to the heart and his inner state is revealed as follows: “the only answer was a curse under the breath, and a turning to the room to change, to break into a fit of weeping, the hands gripping the brass railing of the bed going white. When he was calm enough to change and come down Mahoney was still nagging warily unpleasant and unavoidable results of desire” (Memoir 51). Lack of communication and proximity between young Mahoney and his father is the echo of father McGahern’s coldness with his son. 12 Michelle Kennedy suggests that the cruelty of father figures in the fiction of McGahern might be related with not only their latent powerlessness but “a narcissistic sense of self-importance, feelings of jealousy, and indeed a deeply rooted vulnerability” (208) as well.
in the kitchen” (McGahern, The Dark 29). Mahoney also spurns his son’s aspirations about his education and further career and forces him to work in the field instead of studying and going to the university. He explicitly states that his son’s studies and effort to get a scholarship for the university will be “all for nothing” (McGahern, The Dark 113). Believing that his son will not be able to find a good job even if he goes to the university, Mahoney even reprimands him for using extra fire to study in another room. Such an antagonistic, coarse and inconsiderate attitude of his father puts young Mahoney into a great distress and undermines his scholarly enthusiasm. In other words, young Mahoney, who is portrayed as a savant adolescent, is belittled by his father for his intellectual knowledge and scholarly endeavour. In this way McGahern juxtaposes the learned son with the ignorant and oblivious father and mirrors the contrast between older and younger generations in Ireland in terms of outlook on life. The narrator depicts young Mahoney’s exasperation and intense feelings of animosity towards his father as follows:

Violence had grown, steady eye on his throat and talking face, urge to smash him. Hate gave such strength that you felt you could break him, you didn’t care about anything any more, there was only this doghouse of the teeth at the throat. …
You were crying. No one else in the class had to put up with such as this. They’d be helped and encouraged to study, not this mess, with that bastard of a madman shouting and hammering and abusing away, and why had you to be given such a dog’s chance. (McGahern, The Dark 115)

Thus, even though he is in a profound depression and in spite of his father’s further taunts, young Mahoney does not give up his studies; he passes the exam and gets the scholarship to go to the university. However, in this case, he is nauseated with the hypocrisy of his father who behaves ostentatiously in order to impress people with the success of his son. His father’s ‘shadow’ continues to exert a domineering influence on young Mahoney even in his decision about the job offer he gets on the very first days of his university education. He takes into consideration the fact that he would still be depended on his father economically in case of a cut in his scholarship. Hence, he regards the job in Dublin as
the most certain way to shun proximity to his father and accepts the offer. The seeming pacification between the father and son at the end of the novel ornamented with mutual expressions of love and affection creates an ambiguity in the aspect of their further relationship. However, young Mahoney’s earlier experiences prove that his father’s hostility and outrage turns to be veiled by an artificial fatherly manner when he senses a possibility that he would have a benefit from his son. He behaves exactly in this way when he hears about young Mahoney’s idea of priesthood or the news that he got the scholarship. Hence, Mahoney’s final attempt to fix his relationship with his son upon learning that he will work and gain money could be considered as another form of his self-seeking and malignant attitude cunningly hidden by his hypocrisy.

The circumstances and environment in which young Mahoney grows up prove that he has lacked parental tenderness and a state of euphoria, the phenomena which Harry Stack Sullivan regards as the most crucial in terms of psychological and personal development during childhood and early adolescence. Sullivan also suggests that, having received no tenderness from the mothering one and being exposed to long-continued anxiety, the child develops a negative attitude towards the outer world; especially later in his life, he obsessively seeks for security since he feels that he “really lives among enemies” and under the threat from a diversity of sources (The Interpersonal 214). Accordingly, the hostile treatment young Mahoney gets from his father creates an intense sense of anxiety in him which continues to exist throughout his life. As a result, when he comes to an age to move away from his father’s house towards the world in the outside, he compulsively feels that he may be injured (mentally or physically) if he does not get in or belong to a certain community in society. And for this reason, the most essential phenomenon he seeks for turns to be security; he considers fulfilment of his personal security as the primary entity in his decisions and judgements. Having such a strong inclination and outlook based on security and social integration, young Mahoney becomes
devastated and remains as an outsider when he is unable to be included by society as represented by his failure to belong to the church and then the university.

Young Mahoney’s relationship with his father, which is characterized by hatred and the latter’s inimical oppression and abuse, acutely impairs the protagonist’s mental state. In Freudian perspective, for young Mahoney, his father corresponds to the third source of suffering, that is, the suffering engendered by other people or human relationships and which is taken by individual “as a kind of gratuitous addition” (Civilization 24) since it comes from another human being rather than an absolutely inescapable cause such as nature or one’s own body. Accordingly, young Mahoney’s reaction to his father, as the source of mental and physical anguish, is full of deep hatred and anger. Any phenomenon related with his father corresponds to unpleasure and anxiety for him. Thus, in order to avoid from unpleasure, young Mahoney compulsively seeks for an integration in the outer world, which is the path described by Freud as “that of becoming a member of the human community” (Civilization 24). In this way, by mingling with society or belonging to a particular community, young Mahoney instinctually feels that he could attain a sense of security and relief13.

The abject hegemony of Mahoney over his son’s life operates so extremely as to put the latter’s personality and individuality into a particular mould. As young Mahoney develops into adolescence and becomes old enough to have a more direct relationship with the outer life, he is unable to overcome the traumatic traces of his father’s maltreatment; he generally behaves timidly and with a sense of self-preservation. The major entity which he seeks to obtain through all of his actions and decisions is what his father divested him of, that is, security and freedom. The relentless punishments and

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13 Mingling with the outer world, for young McGahern also, meant security and freedom. In Memoir, he manifests the contrast between his father’s house and the external world as follows: “my father’s world went inwards to darkness and violence, lies and suppression: the school, the library, the river, the Church, all went outwards, to light and understanding, freedom and joy” (203).
loathsome and wanton sexual abuse acutely inflicted on him for years affect young Mahoney’s personality profoundly; he compulsively interiorizes the presupposition that he would be unprotected and vulnerable to some sort of perils if he could not attach himself to society. As the second person narrator recounts, “the world on your own was a cold place” where he has a deep loneliness and “longing to confide” (McGahern, *The Dark* 45) and therefore he pursues a space where he would be in what Otto Rank calls “the intrauterine state” (*The Trauma* 50); that is, a womb-like state which gives one the very authentic feeling of being protected and cared. He wishes to reach such a state by eluding ‘the darkness’ of Mahoney’s house and penetrating into a more erudite society through joining a particular communal space such as the church, university or employment. Thus, for him, integration into the external world represents not only his liberation from the despotism of his father but access to an environment of protection as well.

One significant phenomenon which renders young Mahoney’s connection to society inevitably necessary is the characteristics of the physical environment and milieu where he and his family exist. The small farmhouse where they reside is surrounded by potato fields and cattle as the sources of their livelihood, and located at a relatively less populated, remote region. This remoteness adds to young Mahoney’s detachment from the outer life. Contrary to people living in the town and having opportunities to socialize, as exampled by the daughters of the owner of the diaper’s shop where Joan works, young Mahoney, living at an isolated place, is mostly engaged with his studies or field work. The house, being crowded by Mahoney and the children, has almost no free space which could enable young Mahoney to have some privacy. He spends time in the dark lavatory which he regards as the only place of comfort and the “refuge of many evenings” (McGahern, *The Dark* 38). Furthermore, the inside of the house is mostly gloomy because it is inadequately illustrated by a lamplight. In such a meagre and confined place, which
the narrator describes as “no house for reasonableness” (McGahern, *The Dark* 111), young Mahoney feels constricted by the pressure of his father more intensely. The only thing he could do is to “be silent and bow to it with as much detachment as you could get” (McGahern, *The Dark* 111). At one stage in the novel, he feels suffocated by his father’s oppression and goes out of the darkness of the house, which he narrates from the first person point of view as follows: “the house grew impossible to endure, outside the glare was gone, a liquid yellow from the west pouring on the gates under the yew. I went by the orchard, the apples green and hard, the big rhubarb leaves crowding out of the wooden frame, the red stalk streaked with green when I lifted the leaves. … This place was at least green and real” (McGahern, *The Dark* 141). The colour symbolism, employed by McGahern frequently in the novel, suggests that, for young Mahoney, distancing himself from ‘darkness’ of the house towards outside represents his gravitation and accession to life embodied by colours. Such a departure corresponds to, in young Mahoney’s own words, “fight a way out” of the misery of the life and place which he has put up with for years. For this reason, young Mahoney considers combining with the outer world as an ultimate exigency due to the negative qualities of the environment surrounding him as well as his father’s tyranny.

The paternal and environmental impositions on young Mahoney seriously debilitating his personality and psychology. His father’s domineering and degrading attitude as well as insinuating interventions in his life undermine young Mahoney’s self-confidence and his mechanism of taking decisions. His consequential uncertain state especially about his future life and career can be interpreted as an outcome of the impairment in his willpower which, according to Otto Rank, establishes the entire personality and distinctive subjectivity of individual (*Beyond* 50) when it operates

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14 By creating such a mundane setting and keeping spatial depiction at a minimal level, McGahern puts the emphasis on the characters. Particularly, he lets the reader direct his/her full concentration on the protagonist’s experiences as well as his mental and spiritual situation as reflected by the narratives of his inner world.
effectively. Therefore, external constraints personified by his father disable young Mahoney to develop an intact, confident and sanguine personality which would facilitate his integration in society.

The conflict between young Mahoney and his father corresponds to what Karen Horney defines as “the basic conflict”, that is, the conflict created by parental or social oppression, indifference and hostility as well as lack of respect, warmth and sensibility in social/domestic environment (Our Inner 41). Horney argues that, as the most severe consequence of this conflict, a deep sense of anxiety, fear and insecurity predominates the inner world of the child and intensifies the child’s isolated and helpless state (Our Inner 41). The basic conflict and its consequences on individual are exactly what young Mahoney undergoes due to paternal despotism. As a result of his father’s brutal manners and in order to escape from anxiety and attain mental relief, young Mahoney develops some particular attitudes and tendencies, which fit into Horney’s conceptualization of “neurotic trends”. He compulsively feels “a neurotic need for self-sufficiency and independence” (Horney, Self 54-59) as a characteristic of the detached personality type that exhibits an inclination to move away from people. However, this neurotic trend of young Mahoney’s clashes with his neurotic need for affection, approval and a companion as embodied by his desire for a sense of belonging through integration in society or a particular community. In other words, his father’s pressure forces young Mahoney to develop two basic neurotic trends which are in conflict with each other. As an individual having been accustomed to detachment and self-sufficiency, young Mahoney struggles to move out of the boundaries of his father’s hegemony and mingle with society. Yet, his struggle is impeded by both his long-entrenched, detached personality as well as the antagonistic qualities of the outer environment as personified by Father Gerald and the agents of the university. Thus, being unable to tolerate staying together with his father
and also being callously disregarded by the external world at the same time, young Mahoney falls into an acute depression and acts as an unsheltered outsider.

The distressing domestic circumstances surrounding young Mahoney not only annihilate his self-assurance but impel him into two particular conducts: adherence to self-sexuality and immersion into imagination, both of which reveal the protagonist’s detached personality and gravitation to his inner space as well. Young Mahoney compulsively employs these practices as defence mechanisms; and yet, both of these tendencies erode his attempts to be embraced by a community and cause him to act as an outsider since he is abnormally and excessively involved with them due to the intense anxiety inflicted on him.

3.3. Self-Sexuality

McGahern characterizes his protagonist in *The Dark* as embodiment of senses of helplessness and solitude, which is most clearly indicated by young Mahoney’s morbid interest in self-sexuality. One of the obvious outcomes of Mahoney’s ruthless and derisive subjugation of his son and also of the bleak and detached environment is young Mahoney’s constant and habitual attachment to sexual phantasies as a means of avoiding anxiety of realities and achieving momentary relief. Stepping into early adolescence, a developmental stage which, as Harry S. Sullivan indicates, is dominated by “lust dynamism” (*The Interpersonal* 266), young Mahoney experiences a sexuality totally encompassed by his imagination and self-satisfaction. His excessively repeated acts of self-satisfaction upon phantasies of having sexual intercourse with women, whose pictures he cuts out of newspapers, turn to be a habitual practice in his life and affects his psychology negatively.

Young Mahoney’s inclination to masturbation might be construed as a normal consequence of his sexual urges which are relatively more vigorous in the early period of
adolescence. However, the fact that he satisfies himself sexually in an immoderate way and almost to the extent of addiction or obsession is directly related with his father’s pressure on him and the ill-nature of his environment. In other words, the distress of the circumstances surrounding him is so poignant as to precipitate in him a pathological adherence to self-sexuality as a way to escape from his depressed state of mind. Regarding the relationship between anxiety and masturbation, Freud, in “Sexuality in the Aetiology of the Neuroses” states that “the masturbator is accustomed, whenever something happens that depresses him, to return to his convenient form of satisfaction” (275). In a similar vein, Karen Horney suggests that “sexual activities may serve as the safety-valve through which anxiety can be released. It has long been known that compulsive masturbation may be provoked by anxiety” (The Neurotic 52). Hence, for young Mahoney, sexuality primarily operates to fulfil his hunger for a mental relief rather than being just a source of carnal pleasure. Accordingly, when he confronts with some agitating incidents other than the routine oppression of his father, he resorts to masturbation and tries to lower his tension.

At the first night at Father Gerald’s place, for example, he fills with fear and trepidation when Father Gerald enters into his bed and talks to him about obscene issues. When the priest leaves the room without any further attempt to molest him, young Mahoney masturbates only in an effort to recover himself from that shocking moment. He does not imagine any sensual figures of women nor has any intention to obtain sexual pleasure; he performs the action mechanically and without any passion. In a similar way, on the day before the exam, he feels unbearably nervous and tranquillisises himself by another act of self-satisfaction. This sort of a practice obviously manifests that self-sexuality is performed by young Mahoney in order to acquire mental and emotional support.
Young Mahoney’s adherence to self-sexuality also has a cultural dimension. The Church’s permeation through the whole social life restricted Irish people most visibly and sharply in terms of their sexuality. As McGahern notes in his Memoir, in the Irish culture and society of the mid-20th century, sex “was seen, officially, as unclean and sinful, allowable only when it too was licensed”¹⁵ (18). Being in such a society where any kind of phenomenon related with sexuality is harshly disapproved, young Mahoney is pushed into his own body and imaginary space by which he could attain sexual pleasure. As James M. Cahalan notes, young Mahoney “is conditioned by his culture to be able to enjoy eroticism only if his object is defiled, exploited, and confined to his imagination” (123).

Young Mahoney’s abnormal involvement with self-sexuality clearly demonstrates that he is totally deprived of a person or social circle that would provide him with affection, sympathy or simply understanding. In other words, he is adhered to masturbation in such an intense way because he has to cope with the ferocities of his father on his own; he is so isolated that he has no alternative other than his own body to diminish his suffering. His loneliness and consequential fixation on his own sexuality is therefore indirectly related with the lack of a mother figure who would understand his inner thoughts and feelings and protect him from the tyranny of his father in any way possible. Young Mahoney’s longing for his mother is revealed at some point in the novel as follows: “his mother had gone away years before and left him to this [the violence and ill-temper of his father]. Day of sunshine he’d picked wild strawberries for her on the railway she was dying” (McGahern, The Dark 10). In fact, McGahern projects his own feeling of deprivation of his mother through young Mahoney’s lack of a mother figure:

¹⁵ McGahern’s assertion can be validated regarding the social oeuvre only in rural Ireland because a notable liberation of men and women in sexual terms occurred from the late 1950s onwards in relatively crowded and vibrant cities such as Dublin and Galway. At such locations, as Eamon Maher states in his paper titled “Irish Sexuality in the 1960s and 70s”, “the authority of the Catholic Church over the private lives of Irish men and women was being openly challenged before the 1960s, but the 60s was the decade when it manifested itself most obviously” (49). Echoes of this “challenge” are seen in The Dark through young Mahoney’s experiences in Galway.
as Inés Praga points out, for McGahern (and his protagonist in *The Dark*) “there is suffering in the absence of what was in its day a loving, warm presence … the mother becomes the bridge between the boy and the man, providing continuity … in life” (132). Thus, the absence of his happy relationship with his mother leaves young Mahoney (and McGahern) alone and makes him prone to the brutality of his father.

In psychoanalytical terms, it is possible to suggest that young Mahoney fails to overcome Oedipus complex because, as Freud argues, a boy needs to give up the object-cathexis of the mother figure and identify with his father in order to get over this complex in a proper way (*The Ego and The Id* 27). Yet, in young Mahoney’s case, loss of his mother at a stage when he is still attached to her in any sense causes him to maintain his hatred and rivalry against his father. Paternal oppression, in this respect, exacerbates the protagonist’s feelings of animosity towards the father figure. For this reason, absence of his mother at a relatively early age not only leaves him in a pathetic state in which he feels forsaken and defenceless, but damages his psychosexual development as well; both circumstances handicap him in his effort to connect himself with the outer world. Aversion to his father leads him to seeking for an external source of identification and deprivation of motherly tenderness etches timidity into his personality, which injures his interpersonal relations.

In addition, lack of a mother figure deprives young Mahoney of what Adler calls “the double function of the mother”, that is, providing child with “the experience of a trustworthy fellow man” and operating as a source to “increase and spread the social interest and thus to strengthen independence and courage” (*The Individual* 119). Thus, his mother’s premature death not only leaves young Mahoney bereaved, diffident and insecure but has a pivotal role in his abnormal inclination to sexuality and imagination. Besides, in a parallel, lack of an intimate friend or a group of friends, with whom he could have a proper communication and spend time, also influences young Mahoney in the
same negative way and adds to his desolation. As a consequence of these parental and social deprivations, he turns to self-sexuality as the only possible way to alleviate his distress and tolerate his father and other afflictive circumstances.

Immoderate inclination to masturbation deteriorates young Mahoney’s mental state and damages his personality as well as relationship with other people. Regarding the negative influences of abnormal act of sexual self-satisfaction, Freud, in "Civilized' Sexual Morality and Modern Nervous Illness”, asserts that adherence to masturbation harms human psychology and character and also it weakens man’s touch with reality (“Civilized”). Similarly, Harry Stack Sullivan argues that an individual’s prolonged attachment to sexual self-satisfaction, which is seen especially in a highly repressive and isolated environment, damages his interpersonal relations and “contributes to the continued handicap for life of the person concerned (The Interpersonal 271). In this regard, Young Mahoney’s excessive sexual orientation, which he adopts for immediate gratification, impinges on him and takes a critical part in his remaining as an outsider basically in two ways: it erodes his religious perspective and impairs his interpersonal relationships.

Having been reared as a pious boy especially by his mother, to whom he had promised to be a priest before her death, young Mahoney repents of his self-abusive actions for religious reasons as well as due to a sense of betrayal to himself and his mother. Being in such a mood at one point after satisfying himself sexually, young Mahoney reveals his state of mind as follows: “… I’d promised her [his mother] that one day I’d say Mass for her. And all I did for her now was listen to Mahoney’s nagging and carry on private orgies of abuse. I’d never be a priest. I was as well to be honest. I’d never be anything. It was certain. There was little to do but sit at the fire and stare out at the vacancy of my life at sixteen.” (McGahern, The Dark 33) Thus, even though self-satisfaction allays young Mahoney’s anxiety and grants him direct pleasure for a while, it also gives
him an inner disturbance which puts him in a protracted state of depression and melancholy. He feels unworthy and debased because of his behaviour and ends up with a frustration which disrupts his struggle to leave his father’s absolute authority. Young Mahoney’s self-sexuality therefore multiplies his perturbation because of its religiously inappropriate nature. At another stage in the novel, a while after masturbating, he dolefully imagines how he would confess to a priest as follows:

Five sins already today, filthiness spilling five times, but did it matter, the first sin was as damning as a hundred and one, but five sins a day made thirty-five in a week, they’d not be easy to confess. “Bless me, father, for I have sinned. It’s a month since my last Confession. I committed one hundred and forty impure actions with myself. A shudder started at what the priest would say. “One hundred and forty impure actions with yourself, my child?” Flushed cheeks was all that was left to show what I had done … (McGahern, The Dark 31-32)

As illustrated in the quote, which also manifests the abnormal frequency of his acts of masturbation, young Mahoney’s religious perspective conflicts with his self-sexuality. This conflict also involves a futility which comprises young Mahoney’s distress caused by his father, his tendency to excessive self-satisfaction and his consequential anguish created by his sense of having committed a sin. As Eamon Maher argues, young Mahoney’s “attempts at finding solace through bouts of masturbation only serve to increase his guilt and feed his low self-esteem” (“Disintegration” 88), while, as Dermot McCarthy asserts, such an excessive act of self-abuse undermines “his sense of worthiness for priesthood” (106). Undergoing such an inner suffering, young Mahoney is pushed into a further quandary related with his uncertainty whether he should follow the religious path in his future life or diverge from it towards a secular way of living. The main reason underlying young Mahoney’s dilemma is the fact that his earlier appeal to priesthood, which is characterized by his innocent and pure religious interest, is negatively modified by his father’s clutches on him as well as his sexual desire. Even though he struggles to abandon his ‘sinful’ practices and opt in divine dominion, he is
unable to get away from his barren environment and subjection to his father’s ill-treatment, which pushes him into a deep distress resulting with his reversion to sexual indulgence. The second person narrator discloses young Mahoney’s inner struggle as follows: “you’d go weeks without committing any sin, in often ecstatic prayer and sense of God, again replaced by weeks of orgy sparked by a fit of simple boredom or unhappiness. The constant effort back to Confession, haunted by the repetitive hypocrisy of your life, anguish of the struggle towards repeated failure” (McGahern, The Dark 53-54). Thus, it is the unendurable feelings of ‘boredom’ and ‘unhappiness’, triggered by his father’s oppression, what wither young Mahoney’s religious faith and divert him into excessive self-sexuality. His father’s principle role in damaging young Mahoney’s religious orientation is made clear at a point in which the protagonist confesses all of his sins to a priest only with a great difficulty and goes out of the church with an immense relief and beatitude. And yet, the whole of his joyous mood is instantly destroyed when his father unexpectedly touches him and tells him he will be waiting in the outside. The scene is narrated as follows:

Such relief had come to you, fear and darkness gone, never would you sin again. The pleasures seemed so mean and grimy against the sheer delight of peace, pure as snow in the air. … Dazed, you got up, and pulled aside the curtain. The world was unreal. All your life had been gathered into the Confession, it had been lost, it was found. O God, how beautiful the world was. … There was such joy. You were forgiven, the world given back to you, washed clean as snow. You’d never sin again. The world was too beautiful a place to lose. You willed yourself to say the rosary, wanting new words that never were before. … You started with fright when your arm was touched, it was your father, and how in a moment one wave of violent hatred came choking over prayer and silence. “You can’t be long more. I’ll wait for you out at the gate,” lie leaned close to whisper. … What did he know whether you’d be long or short, you might pray all night yet, what did he know … There never had been understanding or anything. But he was troubled by the intensity of the hatred, they were commanded to love, though the nerves bristled with hate at every advance or contact. (McGahern, The Dark 42-43)

Young Mahoney’s genuine and heartfelt religious faith diminishes, as manifested in the quote, to be subdued by his feelings of hatred, indignation and desperation caused by his
relationship with his father. Even though his father seems to be a religious person who participates Masses and makes dining prayers, his relationship with religion is characterized by hypocrisy, pomposity and vanity. In fact, Mahoney senior, as a character originating from sergeant Frank McGahern, McGahern’s own father, has a great many personal and behavioural similarities with him especially in terms of his strictness, severity, stinginess and volatility. In Memoir, McGahern refers to his father’s corrupt religious attitude, which is identical to that of young Mahoney’s father, as follows: “he was religious too, but his religion was of outward show, of pomp and power, edicts and structures, enforcements and observances and all the exactions they demanded. In his shining uniform he always walked with slow steps to the head of the church to kneel in the front seat” (McGahern 47). Thus, contrary to his affectionate mother who was genuinely pious and fully devoted to God, McGahern’s father is deceitful and vicious in religious issues as well. McGahern directly carries such qualities of his parents onto the parents of young Mahoney in The Dark.

Just as McGahern experienced in reality, Young Mahoney is left alone with the death of his angel-like mother, who planted in him the seeds of goodness, kindness and piety, into the hands of his devilish father. Hence, gradually, the protagonist’s religious faith loosens and he develops a more self-centred attitude towards religion because he essentially focuses on the security and certainty provided by divine life rather than pure self-sacrifice and dedication to God. In other words, for young Mahoney, priesthood turns to represent his emancipation from the ‘dark’ domestic circle encompassing him rather than an idealistic and erudite choice of vocation made out of his purely intimate enthusiasm for the ethos of ecclesiastical life. This alteration in young Mahoney’s attitude towards religious life is manifested as follows: “you’d master it [his sexuality] as a priest. You’d give your life back to God, you’d serve, you’d go to death in God’s name and not your own. You’d choose your death, you’d give up desire ’ other than in God. You’d die
into God the day of your ordination. All your life would be a death in readiness for the last moment when you’d part with your flesh and leave. You’d be safe.” (McGahern, *The Dark* 56) Thus, as his sympathy and affinity with the church is weakened, he begins to regard priesthood as a sort of ‘death in life’ sacrificially chosen for the sake of safety. As the constraints and anxieties dominating his life and oppressing his mental state grow more intense, his adherence to sexuality is also toughened; and in turn, he finds it hard to immolate ‘pleasure’ for the sake of devotion to God. At one point, when a priest visits young Mahoney’s class at school to invite students to religious vocation, young Mahoney’s dilemma is exhibited as follows:

That was it simply, and you had set your face the other way from it [devotion to God], towards the bauble. You were heading out into an uncertain life, sacrificing the certainty of a life based on death; for what you didn’t know … There was a fierce drag to go down to the community room and give your life into that death, but no, you’d set your face another direction, and you knew if you did go down that the drag would be back to where you were now. … In the reality your life moved in the shade of a woman or death. (McGahern, *The Dark* 127)

Thus, the phenomena of sexuality and sexual satisfaction exert a crucial influence on young Mahoney’s psychology and outer decisions. He is accustomed to obtain relief and pleasure through sexual practices to such an extent that he equates the entire worldly life to it. For this reason, he feels perplexed because on one hand he considers that a life lacking sexuality would mean ‘death’ though it offers security and certainty; and on the other hand, he thinks that secular life would provide him with worldly pleasures but also bring about uncertainty. Furthermore, he is aware of that even if he decides to give up the idea of priesthood, his longing for protection would continue to exist. Being in such a delicate situation, young Mahoney relinquishes his idea of becoming a priest and decides to concentrate on his studies to go to the university. However, regarding the circumstances which precipitate young Mahoney’s transition from religious orientation to a worldly outlook embodied by sexuality, his decision can be defined as a coercion rather than a
completely subjective and solicitous choice. His father’s despotism, deprivation of his mother and an amicable social circle, and the bleak and isolated domestic atmosphere are all factors which put him into an intolerable state of distress and engender his excessive inclination to self-sexuality. As a result of this inclination, he becomes alienated from religion even though he is perplexed by the fact that religious life would enable him to be in safety. Young Mahoney’s failure of being integrated in ecclesiastical life can therefore be considered as an indirect outcome of a diversity of external forces led by his father’s oppression. Consequently, his access to security through priesthood is blocked and he is left in the outside of religious community. In this regard, one significant phenomenon having a vital role in young Mahoney’s retreat from religious direction is his relationship with Father Gerald, which will be discussed separately.

A crucial consequence of Young Mahoney’s anomalous self-sexuality, which plays a significant role in the formation of his posture as an outsider, is that it hinders him to have a proper integration into social life. His involvement with self-sexuality functions as an easy source of pleasure and mitigation of the ‘darkness’ encircling him; however, when he goes away from that darkness into the ‘colourful’ real life, it augments his isolation from the outer world and acts as an impediment to his mingling with society in reality. He interiorizes his sensual routine of fantasizing women to such an extent that, in real life, he can not abstain from regarding women as personifications of the figures in his phantasies. His habitual phantasies, in other words, impel him to develop an approach to women which is latently and compulsively characterized by sexuality. For example, when he goes to the diaper’s shop to see his sister, he sees through the window the daughters of Ryan, the owner of the shop, at the garden. They play tennis and wear swimsuits and young Mahoney, being tempted, gazes at them for a long while. The second person narrator depicts the way young Mahoney gets sexually stimulated as follows: “white wool of a new tennis ball hung in the air and a racket swung. Arm and straining
thigh flashed in the stroke, the body stiffening sheer nakedly in the apple-green swimsuit, and you had to pull your eyes away in fear. “Tempting?” Ryan smiled, and rage rushed again. You wanted to smash Ryan’s face in, to defile and slash the stripped girls in the garden ...”16 (McGahern, The Dark 92) Thus, young Mahoney’s failure to desist himself from identifying women with his sexual desire handicaps him in the outer life. It also puts extra pressure on him as he feels anxious that someone might sense what he feels.

Young Mahoney encounters a similar trouble on the first days when he moves to Galway for the university. Having been used to experience sexuality through his innermost imagination, young Mahoney is unable to adapt to an environment where university students of both sexes have in direct interaction with each other. The fact that he led all of his life at a much more conservative and detached space also has a role in his failure to adjust himself to an environment where, unlike his hometown, men and women can easily have intimacy. He feels nervous and behaves timidly especially in cases in which he would have a proximity to women. At one such point, when he is about to go into a night club he feels a “crazy fighting within” (The Dark 176) himself because he is not sure about how he would behave in a place full of women drinking and dancing. He questions himself whether he would be able to control his sexual impulses as follows: “would you be able to endure the white softness of her bare arm, the rustle of taffeta or the scent of lacquer when she leaned her hair close, without losing control and trying to crush her body to yours?” (McGahern, The Dark 175). In the end, he can not venture out into the club; he stands “on the pavement outside the lodge gates” (McGahern, The Dark 177) for a while and turns away to go to a cafe. Thus, young Mahoney’s indulgence in self-sexuality causes him to have a particular attitude towards women and results in his posture in the ‘outside’, as illustrated by the night club scene.

16 Regarding this scene in the novel, Peter Guy insightfully refers to “the garden, the ‘apple-green’ swimsuits, and the serpentine Ryan” as Biblical analogies employed by McGahern. (147)
Hence, Young Mahoney’s inclination to extreme self-sexuality causes him to remain as an outsider who is unable to enter in religious and social premises. But this inclination is only one of the several results of his father’s pressure over him and the bleakness of the space surrounding him; and it is only one of the factors which cause him to be an outsider by handicapping his movement into the world outside of his father’s house. Apart from self-sexuality, another phenomenon which exerts a similarly unfavourable influence on young Mahoney’s psychology and misdirects his outer actions is his adherence to imagination.

3.4. Immersion into Imagination

Young Mahoney’s over-adherence to self-sexuality and his immersion into imagination are closely related with each other because the reasons underlying both inclinations are the same; that is, Mahoney’s oppression and, combined with it, the desolate space which lacks any sort of friendly or sociable qualities and remains as indicative of the mass emigration from Ireland in the 1950s. Similar to his self-sexuality, young Mahoney’s phantasies function as means which temporarily take him away from the painful realities encircling him but also exert a negative influence on his actions. In most cases, especially when he is supposed to make a particular decision related with his future life, young Mahoney tends to envisioning circumstances in a way that would please him. He creates imaginary landscapes which are purified from the ‘darkness’ of his father’s shadow and where he would achieve security and freedom, the phenomena which he yearns for the most. Even though he has no authentic experience in the life outside the school and his father’s house, he re-establishes reality in a subjective way and visualizes the life and conditions at such particular environments as the church and university. His fervid longing for an elusion of the tyranny of his father engenders his day-dreams and causes him to overlook the realities of the outer life. His absorption in his imagination can therefore be defined as a pathological orientation; it customarily subverts his connection
with reality and thereby restrictively directs his actions and decisions. The negative influence of fantasizing on young Mahoney can be better understood through Freud’s suggestions on the issue of immersion into imagination and phantasies. According to him, phantasies are idealistically transformed or fulfilled forms of some wishes, lacks or problems which exist in the external world and disturb man’s psychology (“Creative” 423). However, even if one obtains mental relief and a sort of psychical satisfaction through phantasies, Freud argues that one’s absorption in his imagination and phantasies may cause him to detach from external realities and come closer to neurosis and even psychosis (“Creative” 423). Such an attenuation of the bond with real world is exactly what is experienced by young Mahoney: his father’s oppression forcefully pushes the protagonist into his inner world and this inclination gradually turns to be one of his basic personal aspects. In his phantasies, he creates some spaces such as the church and the university in a form laden with an atmosphere of happiness, relief, certainty and security; in other words, he imaginarily equips these spaces with the circumstances which he lacks in reality. Yet, confronting the painful realities of these spaces, young Mahoney feels deeply disappointed and turns to be in a state of depression.

Young Mahoney’s initial fancies evolve on priesthood. He considers that ecclesiastical life would not only endow him with physical security and spiritual purity but keep him away from his father as well. In other words, his dreams of being a priest, especially the ones which he has during his early adolescence, are related with his intention to move away from his father, who gives him mental and physical pain, and become a ‘Father’ himself who would represent benevolence and kindness unlike his father. In that case, he would also be under the affectionate protection of God and be provided with His spiritual solace. Such dreams of young Mahoney are narrated as follows: “he’d not be like his father if he could. He’d be a priest if he got the chance, and there were dreams of wooden pulpits and silence of churches, walking between yew and
laurel paths in prayer, an old house with ivy and a garden, orchards behind. He’d walk that way through life towards the un-namable heaven of joy, not his father’s path. He’d go free in God’s name” (McGahern, *The Dark* 25). Thus, young Mahoney gets lost in his imagination of attaining serenity through the life at the church. The ‘dark’ atmosphere surrounding him exerts such an intense pressure on him that he gets preoccupied with his dreams, which causes him to be conditioned to concentrate on only assumedly favourable façade of divine life. The strong hold of imagination about priesthood on him makes him perceive only the safeguarding and determinative aspect of ecclesiastical life and fail to recognize the humdrum atmosphere of the church as well as his own worldly inclination. Only when he visits Father Gerald he apprehends that his imagination of priesthood and life at the church is not what they are in reality. In other words, he becomes ‘blinded’ by his imagination and fails to realize that the church is not the appropriate ‘shelter’ which he seeks for. And when he faces with the realities about his personal expectations and of religious life, which are mostly embodied by the personality of Father Gerald as well as the mundane environment at the church, he feels deeply confused. Acknowledging the illusive nature of his imagination and facing the discordance between his inclination to a worldly lifestyle embodied by his sexuality and the ecclesiastical life structured on spiritual purity and full devotion to God, young Mahoney finds himself in a helpless and pathetic state of emptiness. Thus, as a result of his immersion into imagination about religious matters and failure to see realities about both his own characteristics as well as that of the church, young Mahoney acts as an outsider who wishes to attain security in his life through priesthood but ends up with being unable to fit himself into religious life.

Young Mahoney’s absorption into his phantasies of becoming a priest can be explicated with Karen Horney’s concept of “idealized image” and Lacan’s arguments on the mirror stage and the concept of imago. According to Horney, a neurotic individual under oppression and feeling anxious tends to develop an inner image to identify with.
This image is in an ideal form for the individual because it is exempt from any unfavourable, distressing qualities. The idealized image has a significant place in Horney’s formulation because, as Horney asserts, “if it were not that his endeavor to be his self-created idol gave a kind of meaning to his life he would feel wholly without purpose. This becomes particularly apparent in the course of analysis, when the undermining of his idealized image gives him for a time the feeling of being quite lost” (Our Inner 102). Lack of an idealized image is therefore able to engender a sense of loss and futility in the neurotic person. In a parallel way, Lacan argues that, starting from the mirror stage, every individual identifies himself with an imago, that is, an imaginary persona that represents perfection and completeness. Having a crucial role in the development of individual psychology, the imago can be personified by some external figures whom the individual takes as an idol and imitates. Obviously enough, young Mahoney’s idealized image / imago of a priest is undermined and distorted by his self-sexuality as well as Father Gerald and the atmosphere at the church. The fact that young Mahoney had promised his mother to be a priest a long time ago shows that he has identified himself with the image of a priest since his childhood. However, his Father’s tyranny exerts such an intense pressure on him that the only way of relief for him turns to be his self-sexuality to which he develops an excessive addiction. His acts of masturbation and abnormal tendency to self-sexuality create a sense of guilt in young Mahoney, because, as Freud asserts, “masturbation represents the executive agency of the whole of infantile sexuality and is, therefore, able to take over the sense of guilt attaching to it” (Three Essays 189). Young Mahoney also feels shameful due to immoral and irreligious characteristics of his masturbatory acts which impair his imago of priest on a great scale. Furthermore, Father Gerald’s apathetic, coarse and quasi perverted behaviour and the cold and lifeless atmosphere at the church also destroys the ideal image of priest in young Mahoney’s mind. As a result, he feels frustrated to realize the falsehood of his
imago; he becomes utterly desperate and purposeless because, being unable to actualize his idealized image, he also fails to attain certainty and security which he associated with his imago.

Being distanced from religion and priesthood, young Mahoney gravitates towards secular life and tries to find consolation by being immersed into his imagination of the gratifications of a felicitous relationship with a wife. He is lost in his dreams as follows:

Dream of peace and loveliness, charm of security: picture of one woman, the sound of wife, a house with a garden and trees near the bend of a river. She your love waiting at a wooden gate in the evening, her black hair brushed high, a mustard-coloured dress of corduroy or whipcord low from the throat, a boy and a girl, the girl with a blue ribbon in her hair, playing on the grass. You’d lift and kiss them, girl and boy. Then softly kiss her, your wife and love, secrets in eyes. Picnics down the river Sunday afternoons, playing and laughing on the river-bank, a white cloth spread on the grass. Winter evenings with slippers and a book, in the firelight she is playing the piano. In the mirror you’d watch her comb her black hair, so long, the even brush strokes. The long nights together, making love so gently it lingered for hours, your lips kissing, “I love you. I love you, my darling, I am so happy.” A Christmas of rejoicing and feasting. (McGahern, The Dark 82-83)

Young Mahoney’s imagination of a happy and married life, as depicted in the quote, evinces his pathetic need for such emotions as love, affection, sympathy and sensibility in his life. His absorption, which, as Dennis Sampson asserts, can be considered as a Shakespearean “interior monologue” 17 (Young John McGahern 11), crucially functions to lessen the pressure of all the anxieties and uncertainties encompassing him. It also obviously indicates his longing for a socialized life, to which, in this case, he has access through a blissful family. The fact that he gets absorbed by his vivid visualization of the instants of his imaginary relationship shows that young Mahoney, being forced in a poignant state of isolation, wishes to overcome the constraints of his miserable life and move into a cordial and restful outer space. For this reason, his rapt state of mind and

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17 Denis Sampson, in his Young John McGahern: Becoming a Novelist, argues that McGahern was influenced by Shakespeare and particularly Hamlet and King Lear in utilizing “interior monologue as a technique for dramatizing character”. Sampson further asserts that McGahern’s novels are “fictions of consciousness, the drama being, like drama in Shakespeare, a poetic expansion of the felt inner life of the characters” (11).
tendency to day-dreams of mingling with a community manifest young Mahoney’s posture at the peripheries of society as an outsider.

Upon his frustration to not actualize his dreams on religion and priesthood, young Mahoney turns to his studies to get the scholarship; but this time, he becomes engrossed in his imagination on the way his life would go on at the university. He dreams that his life would be completely different as a university student living at the city. As he does in his dreams on priesthood, he replaces realities with what he longs for in his fancies of university as well. The second person narrator conveys young Mahoney’s preoccupation with his dreams of going to the university as follows:

The University would be different, you’d seen pictures, all stone with turrets surrounded by trees, walks between the lawns and trees, long golden evenings in the boats on the Corrib. You’d be initiated into mystery. If you went for medicine, the parts of the body you’d know, the functions, the structure of the mystery. All day you could pore over the marvel and delight of the books of the world if you chose the arts. You could walk under trees and talk with men and women who were initiates with you too, men your own age, and walk with a girl of your own who was studying the same as you. (McGahern, The Dark 124)

Hence, he imagines himself being independent of his father’s hegemony and away from the ‘darkness’ of the detached house where he endured any sort of mental pressure and physical violence. Another phenomenon which he dreams of attaining is freedom; he assumes that he would be entirely free to choose whatever subject he likes and enjoy mastering it without any constraint. Furthermore, he sets up an imaginary environment of campus which is exempt from any distressing realities and where he is well-integrated in society by being a part of a group of friends with whom he can have a chance to ‘confide’ and spend time together. Finally, he imaginarily compensates his deprivation of interaction with the opposite sex by furnishing his dreams with a woman who seems to have the potential to be his wife in future. Thus, being the only authority in his imaginary landscape, young Mahoney envisions circumstances in a way which lets him escape from unpleasure and achieve what he lacks in reality. In his imagination, scholarly and sociable
atmosphere of the university corresponds to the ending of his isolated state as well as the removal of all the oppression of his father. His extreme craving for such a circumvention of the troubles encircling him conduces to his engrossment in imagination. The fact that he describes his dreams in detail and by referring to such particular issues as course subjects, circle of friends, physical environment etc. testifies to the vividness of his mental picture and also reflects the intensity of his absorption in his fictitious space. However, Young Mahoney’s figments of imagination on the life at the university form his presumptions and expectations in reality and therefore lead him into an illusory direction. In other words, his deep absorption into fabulous daydreams of a picturesque environment at the university disables him from having a rational and realistic contemplation on the actualities of his current and future life. Consequently, when he confronts with some besetting realities of the conditions at the university which stand in a friction with what he imagined, he feels disappointed, as he had done in his attempt to be a priest, and again turns to be in a despond of isolation. Thus, misled by his commitment to his imagination, young Mahoney realizes that what he imagines proves a mirage, which pushes him towards the outside of academic community.

The way in which young Mahoney’s immersion into imagination influences his conduct and restricts his actions is exhibited at the point in which he moves to Galway for university and he is about to enter a night club. He feels nervous and hesitant to go into the club since he assumes that he would act awkwardly and be humiliated by the mass of young people entertaining in the club. He envisions the difficult situation he would be in and the derisive reception of other people as follows:

What would it be like, the band, the music, the dances, the women? Would you be scorned by these women? Because you couldn’t dance. Were you good-looking enough, would they look at you with revulsion? Would you by watching pick up the steps and rhythms of the dance? Would you have courage to ask a girl to dance? Would you find yourself on the floor trampling on her feet, not able to dance, saying, “I’m sorry. I’m not able to dance, I’m only learning,” and would she leave you in the middle, “You’d better pick someone else to learn on,” or
would she endure you in stony silence? … Would you be the one leper in the hall at Ladies Choice, flinching as every woman in the place casually inspected and rejected you, their favour falling on who was beside you, the other men melting like snow about you until you stood a rejected laughing stock out on the floor in the way of the dancers, no woman would be seen with you? (McGahern, *The Dark* 175)

Thus, young Mahoney feels anxious and under pressure because of the fact that his religious and conservative way of upbringing and outlook conflicts with the dynamics of modern urban life. In order to escape from anxiety, he compulsively wishes to move away from the night club and gets absorbed into his inner space. He creates some fictitious dialogues and incidents which function to rationalize his idea of distancing himself from the club. The figments of his intense imagination predominate his mind and reinforce his assumption that he would be treated as a stranger at the club. Hence, young Mahoney tends to keep himself safe and secure outside the club and, in this regard, his imagination operates as means to situate his intention on justified grounds. However, the primary obstacle preventing young Mahoney from socializing is his background experiences related with his isolated hometown as well as the tyranny of his father; both of these circumstances deprive him of developing a self-confident, self-assured and extravert personality. In other words, as Denis Sampson asserts, young Mahoney is one of McGahern’s characters “who were victims of the most squalid and repressive aspects of Irish rural life” (*Outstaring*, Location 227-244, Introduction). For this reason, even though he covets the pleasure and recreation of his peers, he can not overcome his fear of being excluded and alienated as manifested by his imagination and therefore remains at the outside of their community as an outsider.

An instance revealing the strong hold of young Mahoney’s imagination on his decisions appears towards the end of the novel. Being already distressed by the formidable atmosphere at the university and the uncertainties regarding his choice of
subject, young Mahoney gets a letter from E.S.B.\textsuperscript{18} in Dublin which offers him a position as a clerk. He immediately envisions a life in Dublin as follows: “it’d be pleasant to walk to work on a fine morning through the streets of Dublin, to have pay coming at the end of each week, to be free for ever from dependence on Mahoney, to be able to go to Croke Park Sunday afternoons, and to be free. Chained to a desk all day would be the worst part, but there was money for it, and freedom.” (McGahern, \textit{The Dark} 178-179) Thus, being charmed by the advantages of employment, young Mahoney decides to take the job without any deliberation, which demonstrates his inclination to believe in the actuality of his imagination and act accordingly. Even though his immersion into imagination disillusions him in his engagement with the church and the university, he habitually resorts to an inner visualisation of the probable characteristics of working-life. Such a tendency of young Mahoney towards imagination in all of his vital decisions, which occurs almost in a compulsive way, is not only an outcome of his posture as an outsider but a factor which keeps him as an outsider by moving him away from the realities of the outer world.

As displayed and exemplified through specific scenes from the novel, Young Mahoney’s abnormal involvement with self-sexuality and imagination impinges on his personality and behaviour. The hostile environment where he feels distressed chiefly by paternal tyranny forces him to seek for a space where his anxiety and unpleasure are diminished. His initial gravitation, in this regard, is his own body and mind, that is, his self-sexuality and imagination. His attachment to sexuality and immersion into imagination are therefore the results of his pathetic loneliness and isolation. Furthermore, both of these ‘springs’ of joy and relief are intermingled with each other since he makes use of his phantasies to satisfy himself sexually. The intensity of the oppression over him aggravates young Mahoney’s entrapment in these conducts and turn them into entrenched

\textsuperscript{18} E.S.B. (Electricity Supply Board) is a company founded by Irish government in 1927 in order to supply electricity.
attitudes from which he hardly detaches himself even when he relatively moves away from the hegemony of his father towards the life in the outside. The inimical functioning of these attitudes is clearly seen when young Mahoney intends to obtain security and avoid from anxiety through outer shelters rather than his own body and mind. His self-sexuality handicaps him in his attempt to engage with the church by distorting his religious faith and also undermines his interpersonal relationships. His frequent immersion into his imaginary landscape distances him from the realities of the outer life and causes him to ignore the factual characteristics of the church and university. For this reason, even though these two orientations endow young Mahoney with immediate and yet transitory pleasure, they operate in a way which hinders his integration in society as a whole as well as in some particular communities in it. The fact that he clings to these tendencies as the only available ways of abating his distress and attaining relief from the antagonistic outer circumstances signals to his deprivation of a figure who might act as an ‘imago’ for him and therefore his posture as an outsider from the beginning.

Though engendered by outer conditions, Young Mahoney’s fixation with self-sexuality and immersion into imagination are his personal inclinations which have a crucial role in his being an outsider. However, being regarded by young Mahoney as the external ‘refuges’ to procure safety, the church and university stand as the public institutions which escalate his sense of isolation with their particular characteristics and agents. Actually, in a sense, via young Mahoney’s imagination, McGahern exhibits expected forms of abusive and hurtful social and institutional structures; he implicitly emphasizes that a university, in proper conditions is supposed to provide one with a scholarly atmosphere and intellectual figures and, similarly, the church is expected to enhance one mentally and spiritually. In this respect Young Mahoney’s imagination and his eventual frustration related with his experiences in the outside functions as indicative of the adverse realities of these public institutions. Through the incidents and persons
young Mahoney encounters, McGahern makes it evident that both institutions are bereft of the qualities which could let a lonely figure needing emotional support fit into the outer world. Hence, an elaboration of the discrepancies between young Mahoney’s expectations and the peculiar qualities of the church and university will shed light on the ways in which he acts as an outsider due to these institutions’ inappropriate operation.

3.5. The Catholic Church and Religion in ‘The Dark’

Young Mahoney’s religious cultivation provided by his mother and his education at school induce his orientation towards priesthood and the church\(^\text{19}\). In his point of view, the ecclesiastical circle corresponds to “remote areas of pure silence to pray and wander in eternally” (McGahern, The Dark 43); that is, a flawless and authentic space where one is granted with spiritual freedom and protection through devotion to God. However, such pious feelings of young Mahoney are vitiated by his father and self-sexuality; he turns to be uncertain about whether he would repress his sexual desires by adapting to the numinous atmosphere of the church. Yet, his father’s sexual and physical abuses exert such an intense oppression on him that he regards the church as a safeguarded institution which would put an end to the misery and anxiety in his life and enable him to possess security and protection. In this state of mind, young Mahoney visits Father Gerald to spend the summer with him at the church and to see whether he would overcome his inner dilemma and put his life into a certain order by opting in the holy dominion.

The image of the church and priesthood in young Mahoney’s mind is characterized by dignity and gravity as well as purification from any banalities or sinful acts. The church, in his assumption, is a space where one is provided with inner relief,

\[^19\] In his essay titled “The Church and Its Spire”, McGahern refers to the role of strict religious education and social/familial environment in placing the “pressure to enter the priesthood, not from the decent Brothers but from within oneself” (142) in boys at very early ages. He also states that priesthood, as a vocation, represented “the comfort of giving all the turmoil and confusion of adolescence into the safekeeping of an idea” (142) for the male youth in his time. Young Mahoney’s inclination to priesthood is therefore related with both the religious quality of his upbringing and the security and certainty provided by ecclesiastical life.
comfort and bliss. However, contrary to what young Mahoney expects and imagines, the church and, as the agent of it, Father Gerald exasperates him by exacerbating his confusion about priesthood as well as intensifying his anxieties about his future. During the time young Mahoney stays at Father Gerald’s place, the latter acts in a way which shatters the image of a ‘fatherly’ and esteemed priest in young Mahoney’s mind. At the first night at Father Gerald’s place, young Mahoney is astonished to see him behaving in a coarse and improper manner. When the priest shows him his bare stomach, young Mahoney is appalled as follows:

It was shocking to see a priest without his collar for the first time. The neck was chafed red. The priest looked human and frail … He yawned and in the same sleepy movement began to unbutton his trousers. He drew up the shirt and vest to show his naked stomach, criss-crossed by two long scars, the blue toothmarks of the stitches clear. He showed the pattern of the operation with a finger spelling it out on the shocking white flesh. (McGahern, The Dark 65)

Even though Father Gerald is supposed to act in a solemn and scrupulous way as befitting to a priest, his manner reveals that he regards such an abnormal intimacy as a normal behaviour. Besides, the oddity and vulgarity of the priest’s manner is apparent in that he hardly knows young Mahoney and does not have such a close relationship with him as to take his clothes off in front of him and show bare parts of his body to him. Also, as Stanley van der Ziel indicates, the relationship between Father Gerald and his young male housekeeper is “possibly untoward” (John McGahern 116), which signals to the priest’s abnormality in sexual terms. Father Gerald’s bizarre manners, which strike young Mahoney from the very beginning of his visit, come to a state of perversion when he enters the room where young Mahoney is about to sleep at midnight; the priest takes liberties to go into young Mahoney’s bed, lie with him and talk to him about sexual issues. Young Mahoney feels shocked and terrified to the act of the priest as follows:

The bodies lay side by side in the single bed. … and you stiffened when his arm went about your shoulder, was this to be another of the midnight horrors with your father. His hand closed on your arm. You wanted to curse or wrench yourself free
but you had to lie stiff as a board, stare straight ahead at the wall, afraid before anything of meeting the eyes you knew were searching your face. ... His hand was moving on your shoulder. You could think of nothing to say. The roving fingers touched your throat. You couldn’t do or say anything. (McGahern, *The Dark* 70-71)

Hence, it becomes clear that Father Gerald’s initial abnormal intimacy originates from his perversion rather than simply his lack of a sense of privacy. The priest’s anomalous conduct, which hints his homosexual inclination, reproduces young Mahoney’s traumatic experiences with his father and therefore, a parallel is drawn between the two ‘fathers’. In other words, as Eve Patten indicates, “the vulnerability of the adolescent protagonist to sexual and physical abuse at the hands of his widower father parallels his susceptibility to the indoctrination of the priest, Father Gerald” (66). Hence, striving to elude the tyranny of his father by moving into the boundaries of the church, young Mahoney is frustrated to find himself in a similarly ‘dark’ space where he confronts the threat of being molested, ironically enough, by the cousin of his father. The semantic parallelism between Mahoney and the priest can also be elaborated through some similarities between the ways in which they intervene in young Mahoney’s religious perspective. Just as Mahoney destroys his son’s religious faith by keeping him under physical, sexual and mental oppression, Father Gerald, in spite of his identity as a priest, annihilates young Mahoney’s religious faith, which is already fading away, by his immoral and aberrant attitude. The unexpected visit of the priest, which interrupts young Mahoney’s spiritual contemplation on the meaning of life and inevitability of death, is in a parallel with the sudden and frightful appearance of Mahoney at the moment just after young Mahoney’s blissful confession. The agony exerted by both figures on young Mahoney’s psychology is also similar; at one point during the conversation in the bed between Father Gerald and Young Mahoney, the priest asks him whether he desired to kiss a girl; young Mahoney, answering in the affirmative, feels even worse than he did at the nights with his father: “… the tears flowed hopelessly, just broken, he was cutting through to the nothingness
and squalor of your life, you were now as you were born, as low as the dirt” (McGahern, *The Dark* 72). Thus, Father Gerald, causes a mental collapse in young Mahoney by his perverted intimacy as well as questioning him about deeply private issues. The questions of the priest, which are all about young Mahoney’s sexuality, and the latter’s entirely honest responses turn the conversation into an unusual kind of confession. However, even in such an embarrassing and degrading state, young Mahoney asks the priest whether he can be purified from his sins and become good enough to be a priest; he heartily wishes to hear the approval of the priest as follows:

> You still felt a nothing and broken, cheap as dirt, but hope was rising, would the priest restore the wreckage, would he say—yes, yes, you’re good enough. “I don’t see any reason why not if you fight that sin.” Joy rose, the world was beautiful again, all was beautiful. “Had you ever to fight that sin when you were my age, father?” you asked, everything was open, you could share your lives, both of you fellow passengers in the same rocked boat. There was such silence that you winced, you had committed an impertinence, you were by no means in the same boat, you were out there alone with your sins. “The only thing I see wrong with you is that you take things far too serious, and bottle them up, and brood,” he completely ignored the question. … resentment risen close to hatred. He had broken down your life to the dirt, he’d reduced you to that, and no flesh was superior to other flesh. You’d wanted to share, rise on admittance together into joy, but he was different, he was above that, you were impertinent to ask. He must have committed sins the same as yours once too, if he was flesh. What right had he to come and lie with you in bed, his body hot against yours, his arm about your shoulders. Almost as the cursed nights when your father used stroke your thighs. You remembered the blue scars on the stomach by your side. … You’d listened with increasing irritation and hatred, you wished the night could happen again. You’d tell him nothing. You’d give him his own steel. (McGahern, *The Dark* 73-74)

Thus, as exhibited in the quote, to young Mahoney’s vexation and disappointment, Father Gerald does not provide him with an inner relief by referring to his own experiences during adolescence. Young Mahoney is frustrated to realize that the priest is not the figure whom he could befriend with and confide to. His assumption that the priest would understand and help him in his uncertainties and anxieties disillusions him. Father Gerald’s disregard for young Mahoney’s question shows that he, as a priest, wants to keep a certain distance with young Mahoney about his own private issues even though he
himself completely invades the latter’s privacy. Young Mahoney’s question, on the other hand, signals to his desire to mitigate the burden of his sinful acts by ascertaining that his self-sexuality, at his age, might not be an obstacle to becoming a priest. Thus, being unable to attain a spiritual palliation and regretful to reveal his private life, young Mahoney feels betrayed and is completely estranged from Father Gerald. He becomes full of hatred and anger against the priest for encroaching on his privacy but disregarding him as an individual whom he could share his own secrets with. He becomes conscious of that Father Gerald, just like his own father, approaches him without leaving his superiority and authority. Instead of sympathizing with young Mahoney, the priest treats him as he pleases and in an inconsiderate way. With their abusive aspects, both ‘father’ figures make young Mahoney feel “cornered and desperate” (McGahern, *The Dark* 71). For this reason, young Mahoney reacts to Father Gerald’s disparaging action in the very same way as he previously did to that of his father: that is, he develops a deep detestation towards the priest and, in order to diminish his anxiety caused by him, he turns to self-satisfaction and breaks his six-week avoidance of self-abuse which he innocently had kept for the sake of being pure during his visit. Young Mahoney’s mental pain at losing his hope to attain security through priesthood is revealed as follows: “you’d broken the three weeks discipline since Confession, you’d not be able to go to Communion in the morning. You’d never be able to be a priest either, you’d drift on without being able to decide anything, it was easier to let it go. You shivered as the interrogation of an hour ago came back, the squalor, but it was better try and shut it out.” (McGahern, *The Dark* 76) Hence, Father Gerald’s relationship with young Mahoney remains at the level of the priest’s abnormal physical intimacy rather than being characterized by an affectionate and sincere concern about the latter’s inner dilemma. The priest’s anomalous conduct and apathetic manner not only dismays and traumatizes young Mahoney but pushes him into further anxiety and ambiguity about his future life.
Father Gerald’s indifferent and loose attitude becomes more explicit during the day after the “destruction of the night before” (McGahern, *The Dark* 77). The priest does not speak anything of the night before and even asks young Mahoney to perform the Mass. He does not notice or care about that young Mahoney, who feels uneasy due to his self-abuse the previous night, can not receive the Communion properly. After the breakfast, rather than staying with young Mahoney and being concerned with his perplexity, the priest leaves the church without making any explanation. Even though young Mahoney does not show any protest against the priest’s departure he feels upset to be left alone to confront his inner confusion: “once back in the room you had the pure day on your hands, without distraction, except what you wished to be without, the fears and doubts and longings, coming and going.” (McGahern, *The Dark* 81). As a result, he stays on his own to be entangled in his thoughts; he vacillates between the pleasures of having a wife and children and the reality that these pleasures are transitory and that the only authenticity is the moment of death and the day of judgement. His dilemma grows deeper with that even if he decides to abandon priesthood he would have to go back to the bleak atmosphere of his father’s house and undergo the tyranny of his father again. Sitting as a desperate figure at the churchyard and not knowing for sure what to decide, young Mahoney flounders in his thoughts as follows: “you were only a drifter and you’d drift. You couldn’t carry the responsibility of a decision. You were only a hankerer. You’d drift and drift. You’d just dream of the ecstasy of destruction on a woman’s mouth.” (McGahern, *The Dark* 84) Thus, young Mahoney remains completely alone with his inner distress and without a friendly figure. Even John, the young housekeeper of Father Gerald, is unwilling to be drawn into conversation with him: “you looked at John, you wished you could talk, whether he was happy here or not, how long more he’d stay with the priest and where he’d go then, if he had interest in books or sports or anything, but you couldn’t, and the more you heard of the sirring the more unreal it got.” (McGahern,
The Dark 89). Even though Young Mahoney feels depressed and wishes to communicate with someone and share his feelings and thoughts, the housekeeper avoids from being intimate with him as instructed by Father Gerald. In fact, the priest tells young Mahoney too about keeping a certain distance with John, saying that “never forget that both of you are in unequal positions” (McGahern, The Dark 64). For this reason, by blocking young Mahoney’s way to communicate with John, who is almost at the same age with the protagonist, the priest actually worsens young Mahoney’s mental pressure; he hinders young Mahoney from having a more profound insight into whether he could fit in the church and priesthood through a cordial conversation with someone who has already spent plenty of time within ecclesiastical premises. In his loneliness, young Mahoney wanders around the churchyard and observes the dullness and mundanity of the religious space as follows:

This place was such a green prison. The wall of sycamores shut it away from the road. The tall graveyard hedges and the steep furze-covered hill at the back of the house, only one green patch in its centre where a lone donkey grazed, closed it to the fields around, it ran to no horizon. There was little movement. … Here was only interest of the graves and names, the verses, the dates, the weeds and withered wreaths, the ghastly artificial roses and lilies under globes of glass. (McGahern, The Dark 85)

Hence, being extremely constrained not only by his inner anxieties but the restraining and lonesome atmosphere of the church as well, young Mahoney is coerced into fury and frustration. He turns to be in such an exasperated and desperate state of mind that he has a severe fit while checking some books in Father Gerald’s bookcase:

You took out several books and it was the same performance each time. Your eye roved angrily over the print, you replaced it and took out another, replaced it, on and on, till you hurled a big history on the floor, and jumped on it with rage, crying, “I’ll do for you, I’ll do for you, do for you.” The fit brought release once it spent itself. You wondered if John had heard in the kitchen, you must be half going crazy. You wondered if the damage to the book on the floor would ever be noticed. (McGahern, The Dark 87)
Young Mahoney’s sudden burst of anger exhibits that he feels oppressed by the distressing realities surrounding him to such an extent that he comes near to a neurotic state of mind. The fact that he is entirely alone and helpless in his struggle to come to a certain decision about his future life has a significant role in his mental suffering. An ambiguity in meaning is created through his cry because it is unclear whether he refers to the book itself or a person. The “you” in his cry might be representing his father, the priest, scholarly studies or, in a more extensive meaning and regarding the content of the book, the whole Irish history which is basically characterized by the hegemony of the Catholic Church.

Hardly tolerating the solitude at the church and undergoing an extreme inner crisis, young Mahoney goes to the diaper’s shop to visit his sister. However, he is further shocked to learn that she has been sexually abused by the owner of the shop since the time she began to work there.20 Being unable to endure the calamities surrounding him anymore, young Mahoney instantly decides to take his sister away and go back to his father’s house the following day. He barely controls himself to not attack Ryan when he takes his sister back to the shop. He goes back to the place of Father Gerald, who is resentful of him for leaving the house and visiting his sister. He feels that the priest “was using the same pressure of the night before” (McGahern, The Dark 98) and does not answer him. Hence, as young Mahoney tries to keep his control, the more intense grows the constraint on him. When he tells Father Gerald about Ryan’s sexual interference with Joan, the priest, instead of expressing any protest or condemnation, feels relieved to learn that young Mahoney did not attack Ryan for it. Even though he is supposed to take responsibility in this abominable incident since he is the one who found the job for Joan, he does not show even any sign of regret or worry and continues to eat his food. When

20 McGahern carries his first-hand experience into the novel. His sister, Rosaleen, was sexually abused by the owner of the diaper’s shop where she worked and McGahern, upon learning about his sister’s situation, took her away from the shop and brought her back to his father’s house (Memoir 185).
he drives young Mahoney into the town next morning, he leaves him at a place far from
the diaper’s shop and pays attention not to be seen by anyone. He says “there’s going to
be no pleasantness over Joan’s going like this and I can’t seem to get involved. I have to
remain in the parish. I’m their priest” (McGahern, The Dark 103) and leaves by his car.
Such an inattentive attitude of the priest reveals that he is mindless of what young
Mahoney feels or needs and that he lacks a solicitous personality. Young Mahoney feels
sick to be alone to face Ryan; nevertheless, he takes his sister to go to the bus station.

Thus, in moral and ethical terms, the image of Ireland which McGahern sketches
in The Dark is a place where, as Eamon Maher indicates, “fathers and priests were capable
of acts of abuse on children, an Ireland where religion was more of a means of achieving
social prestige than an expression of genuinely held spiritual convictions.” (“John
McGahern” 130). The environment encircling young Mahoney, with all its patriarchal
oppression, moral depravation and stony desolation corresponds to the characteristics of
the rural Ireland of the 1950s. In such a gloomy environment characterized by the
hypocrisy of Father Gerald and Ryan, who is also implicitly depicted as “a pillar of
society and of the Catholic church” (Maher “John McGahern” 129), young Mahoney’s
lonely and desperate state after the leaving of the priest and just before going to the
diaper’s shop apparently illustrates his posture as an outsider. He is forced to move out
of the ‘divine circle’ due to the pressure of some insufferable external circumstances and
he has nowhere else to go other than the ‘darkness’ of his father’s house. His experience
at the church and his relationship with Father Gerald, and particularly the priest’s
abnormal and inconsistent manners exhibit the way and process in which young Mahoney
is unable to join ecclesiastical community and therefore continues to act as an outsider.
Even though Father Gerald is aware of that young Mahoney is uncertain about priesthood,
he does not act in a way which would give him spiritual support and encourage him
towards priesthood or simply let him have a clear vision of this career. Hence, young
Mahoney, unlike what he imagined before his visit, finds himself in a state of listless depression during his visit, succumbs to ennui and despair and fails to fulfil his desire to identify himself with an ‘imago’. The priest’s insensible and inconsiderate manner adds to young Mahoney’s estrangement from priesthood; and, in this respect, Father Gerald can be associated with his cousin, that is young Mahoney’s father. In the end, young Mahoney’s attempt to attain security through the church and priesthood ends up with his confrontation with terror and anxiety instead of achieving relief; he becomes more entangled in his thoughts rather than making a decision and subjected to further isolation and solitariness instead of delightedly opting in religious space.

Young Mahoney’s failure to be attuned to the Church and religious life is also related with deformities in the religious system in general. Even though he was reared as a pious boy and with the love of the Catholic Church by his mother, the persons who stand as the rulers and agents of this institution act in such an oppressive and callous way to undermine proximity of such people as young Mahoney with the Church. Regarding the antagonistic attitude of the Church as well as other institutions of the state on characters created by McGahern, Brian Liddy, in his paper titled “State and Church: Darkness in the Fiction of John McGahern”, asserts as follows:

Loss of hope, ironically created by the achievement of national unity, has created a crisis of identity for many of the characters that people McGahern’s fiction; the displaced individual is seen to seek refuge from the darkness of his own disillusionment within the structure of church or state. Rather than ameliorating the individual's disillusionment, however, both church and state act to further fragment this already highly fragmented identity. (113)

Thus, being one of the characters mentioned in the quote, young Mahoney’s dilemma about his piety as well as his aim or direction in the world is intensified by the Catholic Church and, as will be elaborated, by the university. Ironically enough, both of these public institutions are established with an aim to provide individual with intellectual (university) and spiritual (the church) support and development. Yet, both institutions, in
the case of young Mahoney, push him into further ‘darkness’ of indecision, insecurity and loneliness.

Young Mahoney’s disengagement from priesthood does not put a definite end to his dilemma about religion and secularity; on the contrary, he is coerced into further ambivalence about renouncing pious way of life. Such a confusion about religion is actually what McGahern also experienced during his adolescence. In Memoir, he refers to “the guilt that I felt at turning my back half-heartedly – on the death in life that was the priest’s choice and on that dear promise to say Mass … In all this, there was much confusion and ignorance as well as long suppressed adolescent emotions” (208-209). However, while young McGahern finds a way out of his dilemma by his certainty (“as clear as a single star” (Memoir 209)) about his love for letters and desire to become a writer, young Mahoney does not have such a clear state of mind about in what direction he wishes to lead his life. Being unable to endure his father’s tyranny, he turns to his studies for university as a possible way of obtaining security and freedom. The transitions from his father’s house to the Church, from the Church to the university and from there to Dublin represent young Mahoney’s search for self and identity in a way as the use of multiple narrative voices in the novel indicates. For, as Van der Ziel argues, “the main aim of the shifting perspective is to reflect the narrator's quest for a way of seeing himself: a search for his own identity” (106); and such a self-struggle to attain his ‘name’ by looking at himself from different angles and trying different directions to find a shelter is also indicative of his lonely posture as an outsider.

As befitting to his struggle to achieve personal integration through an external one with the outer world, young Mahoney believes that the scholarship and university, with its scholarly atmosphere as well as distance from his hometown, would provide him with independence from his father. Thus, in spite of his father’s restraints and his own hesitation about moving away from divine circles, he exerts himself to win the scholarship
and go to the university. However, the circumstances and incidents which he encounters at the university and in Galway thwart him in having a sense of belonging and integration.

3.6. The University

On his first day at the university, young Mahoney wishes to fulfil one phenomenon which he lacked all over his life; that is, having friends and mingling within a social circle. He wanders about the campus, by which he is fascinated, and meets a student named John O’Donnell, with whom he goes to the cinema at night. On his way back to his accommodation, young Mahoney’s lonely posture and hunger for communicating is depicted as follows: “You wished you could have walked with O’Donnell, even though you’d have to come back across the sleeping town on your own, and you wished you could find someone to talk any rubbish with when you reached Prospect Hill, anything to avoid the four walls of the room and the electric light on the bed, but it was too late” (McGahern, The Dark 170). Hence, having been stuck at his father’s house and deprived of a friendly environment throughout his life, young Mahoney is extremely enthusiastic about becoming acquainted with people. In this respect, he accepts O’Donnell’s offer to go to a night club. However, O’Donnell, unlike Young Mahoney, is used to urban life and has no inner constraints or anxieties about going to dances and having intimacy with women. Young Mahoney, on the other hand, is restrained by his fears of being humiliated and losing his control in his intercourse with women; unable to overcome his uneasiness, he remains at the outside of the night club and fails to develop an intimate friendship with O’Donnell. In other words, as Denis Sampson argues, young Mahoney’s “sense of failure is heightened by another student’s [O’Donnell’s] freedom from crippling self-consciousness” (Outstaring, Locations 1627-1629, Ch. 2). Thus, even though he is independent from his father’s interventions in Galway and at the university, young Mahoney can not erase the marks of what he has been accustomed to all over his life; that is, a life characterized by oppression, anxiety, fear, isolation and loneliness. In a way, his
experiences at the house of his father have shaped his character and personality in a profound way which does not permit him to be freely and easily attuned to the dynamics of urban society.

The foremost trouble Young Mahoney faces with at the university is that he is supposed to choose a certain department and yet he is unable to decide what to study. He notices that there are only a few who speak about their subject with love; all the other students consider their future position and status after graduation and make their choice of subjects accordingly in order to find a proper job. For this reason, he is distressed to realize that there is the possibility of being unemployed even after graduation and being depended on his father again. Besides, the fact that he may lose his scholarship in case of a failure in his courses oppresses him as follows: “fear close to despair came at the image of failing or getting sick or losing the Scholarship, you’d have to fall back on Mahoney for support. It was frightening.” (McGahern, The Dark 174). Thus, being irresolute and having no one to take advice from, young Mahoney feels deeply anxious as he is constrained to come to a decision in a very short time. The university, to his frustration and unlike what he imagined, does not immediately let him attain complete security and perpetual independence; he is intensely demoralized to be in a space dominated by concern and unease about future: “the dream was torn piecemeal from the university before the week was over. Everyone wanted as much security and money as they could get.” (McGahern, The Dark 172) Hence, even on the very first days at the university, young Mahoney is dispirited by the burdensome reality of making a decision which would have a direct influence on his future life. Even though young Mahoney is free in his decisions and actions, he is actually in a state of being, in Sartre’s words, “condemned to be free” (440), because he has the burden of taking ‘endless’ probabilities into consideration as the outcomes of his decision. In such a perplexed state of mind, he begins to attend classes: “you drifted from one lecture to another, soon you’d have to decide”
(McGahern, *The Dark* 173). Hence, though he is far away from his father’s tyranny, young Mahoney is unable to achieve a mental relief; the dynamics of the university engender serious uncertainties and anxieties regarding his future. Contrary to what he expected, the university does not function as the ‘shelter’ which would enable him to put his life into a definite order embodied by security and certainty. As a result, he begins to think about moving away from the university: “your doubts grew as you wandered, you wanted less and less to stay the more you saw” (McGahern, *The Dark* 174). In such a confusion, he gets a job offer from E.S.B. in Dublin, which coerces him into a further dilemma about accepting the offer or staying at the university. Being dejected by his indecision as well as the risk of being depended on his father again, young Mahoney loses his initial enthusiasm about university, which is revealed as follows: “staying here at the University would be three years of cramming rubbish into the mind in constant dread of sickness and failure at the exams. You just couldn’t go home defeated to Mahoney.” (McGahern, *The Dark* 179) However, even though he is estranged from the university, he is still hesitant about leaving it for sure since he lacks the necessary self-confidence to make such a decision.

A particular incident intensifies the pressure on young Mahoney to an extent which detaches him from the university on a great scale. He gets dismissed from the classroom by one of the lecturers in a very degrading way and for no reason at all. Getting out of the classroom, he feels humiliated and depressed as follows: “awkwardly you got out of the bench … and you were alone on the wooden steps of the passage without strength to climb, sense of that mass to your left staring at you, and the shock and shame. You wanted to weep when you’d got through the door, it had happened too quick to comprehend, the shock was too sudden, and you stood dazed on the quadrangle in the rain.” (McGahern, *The Dark* 180). Thus, young Mahoney’s inner perturbation caused by the realities of the university (i.e. difficulty of the courses, risk of losing his scholarship,
choice of a proper department etc.) is aggravated by an insulting attack on his personality by the agent of the same institution. At this point, the anomalous attitude and personality of Brady, the lecturer who dismisses young Mahoney, apparently reveals that he is an academic who acts completely in opposite to the “gowned professor under the chestnuts” (McGahern, The Dark 167) that young Mahoney imagined before coming to the university. As the dialogue between young Mahoney and an older student exhibits, the lecturer is an obsessive type who persecutes some students in order to make them massage his ego. For this reason, the university, with not only its stressful structure but the academics in it as well operates as an institution in which the protagonist fails to be integrated.

Young Mahoney, being disheartened to the core by the unfair and derogatory treatment he got from Brady, wanders around the town alone in his dilemma about whether he should stay at the university and confront the years of hard study or take the job and go to Dublin. He is depicted as an outsider as follows: “you went down the tarmacadam, Brady’s cursed class in progress to your right, out under the drips of the green oaks along University Road. The tar shone in the rain. The town faced you, smoke mixed in the rain above the houses. You’d to make up your mind. Either to go and apologize to Brady and face three years cramming here or go to Dublin to the job.” (McGahern, The Dark 181) As a result of his absorption in this solitary contemplation, young Mahoney recognizes that he would not be able to adapt to the circumstances at the university if he stayed there and, most significantly, that the university would add to his anxieties about his future rather than easing him with mental and financial safety and security. Thus, he intends to take the job; but he compulsively feels it necessary to let his father know about his intention and writes a letter to him. His father arrives in Galway the next day and the father and son go to the University Dean’s office to take his advice. As the second agent of the university who appears in the novel, the Dean, just like the
lecturer, approaches to the Mahoneys in a contemptuous and indifferent manner, which young Mahoney notices as follows: “…there seemed contempt in his voice, you and Mahoney would never give commands but be always menials to the race he’d come from and still belonged to, you’d make a schoolteacher at best. You might have your uses but you were both his stableboys, and would never eat at his table” (McGahern, *The Dark* 187-188). Thus, the Dean, with his apathetic and sarcastic attitude, does not provide young Mahoney with any sort of help or support; he implicitly forces him to decide for himself. Such an ‘alienating’ approach of the Dean lucidly demonstrates the unfavourable and dismissive circumstances surrounding young Mahoney at the university. In the end, being constrained at the university by its own agents and the insecure prospect it offers, he decides to take the job and go to Dublin. Young Mahoney’s decision to quit university means that he would give up the “brilliant career in front of you [himself] at the University, and that you’d [he’d] rot in an office” (McGahern, *The Dark* 184), as pointed out by his teacher at the high-school. This decision is surely related with the oppression of the external social/paternal circumstances and his seeking for security and freedom as well. Hence, as Christina Hunt Mahony suggests, for young Mahoney, “a heritage of deprivation, of both the emotional and the tangible sort, overpowers natural talent and enthusiasm, leaving its dread mark for life” (226). In the end, he moves out of the circles of the university which, he had imagined, would provide him with escape from anxiety. Especially in McGahern’s early novels, as Peter Guy points out, “characters fled from tyrannical fathers, from ennui or the backbreaking drudgery of the bog and potato pits” to the city which functions as “a place of refuge or anonymity” (149); however, in *The Dark*, one of the Irish cities, Galway, becomes the place for the extension of ‘ennui’ and frustration for young Mahoney while Dublin remains as the last possible venue of security and freedom.
Young Mahoney’s experience at the university and in Galway and his conducts as an outsider who is in an effort to join a community resemble to his situation at the church in many ways. His inclination towards both institutions is related with his yearning for security as well as elusion from the despotism of his father. He undergoes a particular inner dilemma in both places, to which he puts an end only by moving out of that particular place. In both cases, his perplexity is created by some environmental factors which exert a distressing influence on his psychology; he feels upset to see that the life at the church is too monotonous and mundane and he undergoes a similar unhappiness at the university where he feels under pressure to see that all students hectically seek for chances to guarantee their future. Eamon Maher refers to young Mahoney’s posture as a lonely and helpless outsider as follows:

Young Mahoney never achieves the self-knowledge … partly because he remains throughout crippled by his widower father's abuse. He is thus incapable of any type of genuine liberation. He experiences no healing relationship; no significant encounters illuminate his path. … [young] Mahoney has no one outside his immediate family to instruct him in this way. Physical and psychological abuse, masturbation, guilt, inertia, betrayal, here is little or nothing in this novel to elevate the spirits. (“Disintegration” 89)

As a matter of fact, as stated in the quote, the figures whom young Mahoney encounters function in a way which prevent his rapport with the church, university or the outer world as a whole. He fails to establish a close friendship with his peers within both spaces; he confronts John’s rigid attitude at the church and he is unable to adapt himself to the vibrant and indulgent life of university students, which O’Donnell is familiar with. He is treated as an outsider who is unworthy of any kind of affection by the agents of both the church and the university. Brady, having a small form, satisfies his ego by reprimanding and dismissing young Mahoney while Father Gerald almost abuses him sexually in order to satisfy his sexual desires. Furthermore, both Father Gerald and the Dean of the university keep themselves distant from young Mahoney’s problems and confusion; their
unsympathetic and unconcerned attitude undermines young Mahoney’s aspirations to attain security and certainty and coerces him to moving out of divine and academic circles. In the end, being unable to cope with the afflictions of these ‘persons of authority’ and depressed by the repressive qualities of the church and university, young Mahoney gets out of the boundaries of these institutions; he turns to be in a pathetically lonely and isolated posture as well as in a collapsed mental state.

Young Mahoney’s indignant and yet enfeebled state outside the classroom and night club is in a close parallel with his lonely posture near the diaper’s shop; in all three cases he is frustrated to be impelled to move out of a certain institution or community. Before moving to Dublin with yet another hope of security, young Mahoney expresses his frustration at the authorities of the church and university as follows: “one day, one day, you’d come perhaps to more real authority than all this, an authority that had need of neither vast buildings nor professorial chairs nor robes nor solemn organ tones, an authority that was simply a state of mind, a calmness even in the face of the turmoil of your own passing.” (McGahern, The Dark 188). The scene can be seen, as Brendan Thomas Mitchell suggests, as a “typical Joycean epiphany, a spiritual manifestation” (74); yet, unlike Stephen Dedalus, young Mahoney possesses no such means as art or aestheticism which could give his search for self and identity an intellectual aura21. Instead, what young Mahoney seeks for at the end of the novel is, in fact, a state of mental relaxation and independence from the hegemony or control of any sort of superior figures, who are mainly personified throughout the novel by his father, Father Gerald and the agents of the university. His father’s oppression and intolerable interventions in his

21 In John McGahern and the Imagination of Tradition, Stanley van der Ziel argues that McGahern and Joyce, and young Mahoney and Stephen Dedalus have different personal natures and worldviews. As Ziel puts it, “McGahern knew better than anyone that his temperament was not that of Joyce, just as young Mahoney’s in The Dark is not like that of Stephen Dedalus. … McGahern [and young Mahoney] had chosen the security of steady paid employment above the impractical ‘dream’ of the purely intellectual life” (185-186).
choices and decisions, Father Gerald’s bizarre perversity and coarse manners, and finally the degrading and even hostile attitude of the university lecturer and dean create in young Mahoney an extreme sensitivity to and detestation of authority. And yet, it is the authority of the Irish state where he decides to move in the end in order to find security. In a way, being under dominion of a superior institution (family, church, university) turns to be the safest and familiar way for him to feel secure. As Eve Patten suggests, “having internalised the ideology passed down to him, he [young Mahoney] ends by taking the submissive route - a safe civil service position in a State company. In place of reconciliation, there is the capitulation of youth, in symbolic compliance with the authoritarian structures of the nation itself” (66). Each of these authoritarian figures whom he encounters behaves in a highly apathetical way and lacks affection and rationality; their infliction on young Mahoney not only deprives him of an ‘imago’ whom he could identify with but cause him to be left as a helpless person who becomes perplexed by his fears, dilemmas and uncertainties in his pursue for security. At the end, as an outsider, young Mahoney “recognize[s] the futility of seeking licence for his life from external forces” (Doljanin and Doyle 2); but since he has no other alternative for social/financial security he continues his struggle to be included in society through employment.

In conclusion, John McGahern’s protagonist in The Dark is portrayed as a forlorn figure who, after having long been exposed to the severe mental and physical violence of his brutal father, fails in his attempts to mingle with the outside world and attain security in his life. The traumatic childhood experiences and sufferings of this nameless adolescent as well as the oppressive hold of his father mould his mentality and personality in a way which restrain him from acting and thinking freely and cause him to feel intensely desolate and bereft. Unlike McGahern himself, who, in his childhood and adolescence, had a chance to avoid from his father’s frequent brutalities and restraints through school, books, river and the Catholic Church (Memoir 198), young Mahoney is completely
entrapped both by his father’s assaults and the indifference and hostility of institutions of the state as well as the society. As a result, as Dermot McCarthy states, “by the end of the novel, the protagonist has been disillusioned of all three dreams” which are “spiritual, erotic and intellectual” and he ends up with “heading for an uncertain future in the big city” (117); or, in young Mahoney’s own saying, he “drift[s] into the world” (McGahern, *The Dark 77*).

The persons of authority whom young Mahoney encounters in societal space aggravate his distress and prevent his integration in society rather than showing any concern or solicitude to him; therefore, they can be regarded as ‘replicas’ of Mahoney senior only covered by different identities. In a way, via the outer figures and environment, and the depiction of young Mahoney’s inner world, McGahern draws a landscape with a dual layer. On the surface, he projects the rural Ireland of the 1950s with all its ‘darkness’, which overlays young Mahoney’s inscape. This darkness, in the novel as well as in reality, is the ‘shadow’ of basically two phenomena: father Mahoney and the Irish society of the period, which is embodied by economic insufficiency, the Church’s entrenched hold and desolate rural life due to poverty and emigration. Regarding his stiff and abrasive personality, bigoted mentality and tyrannical attitude towards his children, Mahoney is actually a prototype or miniature of this society itself; or, as Denis Sampson puts it, “an allegory of Irish society itself” (*Outstaring*, Location 260, Introduction). He represents the hegemony and oppressive authority of the Catholic Church over Irish people’s life especially in terms of its restraints and hypocrisy. He seems to be rigidly and adamantly bound to the tenets of the Catholic Church; and even though he fulfils some religious rituals (prayer before dinner, attendance to mass, prayer for his son’s success etc.) and makes his children adopt his assumedly puritanical perspective, wickedly enough, he terrorizes them with his relentless beatings, scorns and scoldings as well as abusing young Mahoney. Secondly, Mahoney represents the historical, traditional and
typical Irish villager who lives on potato farming and adopts a conservative outlook. This outlook is that of an “inward-looking society that emerged in Ireland during the 1920s, 30s and 40s” and McGahern “found it abhorrent that many of the laudable ideals of the leaders of 1916 were abandoned in the mad rush to establish a country dominated by bigotry and sectarianism” (Maher “Autobiography” 118). So, the son’s hatred towards his father can be construed as the reaction of a new and more liberal generation against the bigoted and parochial previous one. In this respect, Young Mahoney, is the personification of the change in Irish society, culture and mentality appearing from the late 1950s onwards. He embodies the religious doubts, socio-economic insecurity and anxieties of future which were all experienced during the period of society’s transition from conservativism towards liberalism and modernism. Thus, one significant reason of young Mahoney’s posture as an outsider is the conflict and discrepancies between these two periods in terms of the norms, standards and socio-cultural values adopted by Irish people. His ‘in-between’ state, regarding his dither between profanity and piety, patently heralds the oncoming societal transition and, in particular, the attenuation in especially young people’s religious faith. The discordance between young Mahoney and his environment and the fact that the persons surrounding him give him no affectionate welcome end up with the protagonist’s being left as an outsider. And through the image of outsider as well as drawing on his personal experiences, McGahern not only digs in his memory and reveal some ‘dark’ sides of Irish society represented by the institutions of family, the church and university, but delves into the depths of human soul through young Mahoney’s psychic landscape as well.

To conclude, this chapter of the thesis argues that John McGahern’s protagonist in *The Dark* is an outsider who is forced to move out of his hometown only to be excluded from such institutions of the outer world as the church and university. The ways in which John McGahern depicts young Mahoney as an outsider are illustrated. It is suggested that
the author intends to reveal the impact of paternal oppression and social indifference on a youth who is adept at scholarly issues. These two forces, exacerbated by the absence of a mother figure and the dullness of social environment, are manifested as phenomena which push young Mahoney into particular patterns of personality and conduct; he develops a timid and hesitant personality and feels unprotected, helpless, desolate and bereft. In order to compensate the lacks in his inner and outer life he pathetically and almost pathologically gets involved with masturbation and imagination. Such sort of behaviour and character traits impair the protagonist’s struggle to be integrated with the external world and compel him into a vicious circle. Furthermore, it is postulated that paternal tyranny and social hostility counteract young Mahoney’s intellectual and academic development; in a broader sense, the social and familial circumstances are presented by McGahern as obstacles preventing social and intellectual progress embodied by a new generation. For, the conditions which leave young Mahoney as an outsider coerce him to giving up his academic and scholarly aspirations and focusing on only obtaining the basic human need which is security. Thus, at the end, while pursuing certainty and security in the ‘darkness’ of the outside life, young Mahoney implicitly acknowledges his existence in the world as an outsider who ‘drifts and drifts’.
CHAPTER FOUR

THE OUTSIDER in WILLIAM TREVOR’S THE CHILDREN OF DYNMOUTH

William Trevor, in *The Children of Dynmouth*, presents an absorbing depiction of the inner states and outer lives of people in Dynmouth, a fictional and outwardly ordinary and drowsy town. Within this locality, populated by middle or upper-middle class people, Trevor places Timothy Gedge, the young, lower-class protagonist, who is unable to foster an intact personality and a sense of belonging and conformity to his environment. By forming a sharp contrast between Timothy and other characters in appearance, mentality, personality and social strata Trevor starkly and at times humorously elucidates some realities related with man’s evil nature subtly hidden behind outer roles and identities.

Narrated by third person omniscient narrator, *The Children of Dynmouth* is established on a storyline revolving around the axis of Timothy’s endless efforts to participate in a local talent competition and, in relation to that, his relationship with the residents of Dynmouth. As the short and introductory narrative of the setting reveals, Dynmouth is a little town at seaside where life is characterized by routine, dullness and humdrum. However, in reality, it is not an idyllic and picturesque place where everyone leads a decent, delightful and simple life as they pretend to do; as people of the town, the secondary characters in the novel bear some concealed, shocking facts about their lives or secretly commit some aberrant and scandalous acts as routines. And it is Timothy Gedge, the fifteen-year-old outsider, who breaks the hypocritical monotonality in Dynmouth by trespassing in the lives of the inhabitants, witnessing their wrongdoings and weaknesses and daring to blackmail and manipulate them.

Having been forsaken by his father and living with his unfeeling mother and sister, Timothy develops some psychological problems which lead him to abnormal behaviour. He wanders around the town all the time, goes to funerals, follows people, spies into their
houses and describes them especially in their most hidden and embarrassing actions. Though portrayed as such an odd figure, Timothy knows almost everything about the town and its people via his keen observation. Yet, he is psychologically deformed. Etiologically, his mental disorders are linked with his afflicting estrangement from his domestic sphere and social environment. His psychological impairment is exhibited with his inclination to fantasizing and lying, which makes his observations and claims about other people disputable for both the reader and the Dynmouth people as well. Actually, equivocality, in different forms and varying dimensions, is a common quality of Trevor’s writing. Regarding Trevor’s characters, as Julian Barnes notes in his review of Trevor’s Last Stories, “there are doubts and ambiguities at every turn. Did they go to bed together or not? Was it accident or suicide? Where does fault and responsibility actually lie? Trevor’s fiction is full of precise evasions – and evasive precisions” (Barnes, “Julian Barnes on”). Engendering a “pattern of readerly doubt and misprision” (Barnes, “Julian Barnes on”), such ambiguities in The Children of Dynmouth are created by a teenager’s serious allegations about the adults of an ostensibly moral and ethical community. Yet, Trevor gradually lets the reader see that the protagonist, on a very great scale, is right in his articulations of the evils he witnesses; Trevor’s Dynmouth is in fact a chaotic place. And the novel, in a way, tells of the events which put this seemingly undisturbed town into turmoil. As the figures of its community are deeply disturbed to be confronted by Timothy with the realities they hide from the outer world, their apathy to Timothy turns to be antagonism which entirely ostracizes the young protagonist from society.

A riveting and striking quality of the novel appears with the motif of return of the repressed because Timothy stands as the personification of the retribution inflicted on society for what they repress and choose not to worry about or even remember. The fact that the act he plans to stage is actually a re-enactment of the brutal story of a serial killer’s murders committed in London in the 1910s carries the theme of avoidance from reality
to a broader context. In a way, Timothy becomes the agent that operates to bring man face
to face with his covert or forgotten sins and cruelties. Even though he is physically weak,
socially subordinate and mentally impaired, his awareness of the truth about other people
disturbs their complacency and simply evokes nuisance, uneasiness and anxiety in them.

Thus, for a number of reasons, the protagonist of *The Children of Dynmouth* acts
as a lonely figure who is estranged from his family and detached from the social space
encompassing him. This chapter of the thesis argues that Timothy is an outsider whose
marginalization is engendered by the adverse conditions in his family. Timothy’s
relationship with his mother and sister and the ways in which he was reared up manifest
that he has been exposed to the damages of dysfunctional family. In this respect, after a
short note on William Trevor’s literary background, the domestic and parental
circumstances which have a deforming influence on Timothy’s personality and
psychology will be elaborated on; the role of dysfunctional family represented by
indifferent and hostile parental treatment in begetting his mental problems will be
analysed. After thus unfolding the domestic matters underlying the protagonist’s
abnormal mental state, the significance of society’s perception of Timothy will be
considered in relation with his extended helplessness in the outer world. The ways in
which Timothy’s impaired psychology causes him to deviate from normal behaviour and
makes his actions pathological conducts will be explicat
ed. In particular, the extent to
which his anomalous behaviour and psychological disorders occur as a reaction to
external antagonism will be discussed. The characteristics of Dynmouth society will be
discussed in terms of both class division and the ways in which community’s own failures,
weaknesses and faults function to form its antagonistic and disparaging attitude towards
Timothy. Finally, the ways in which Timothy fails in his struggle for social integration
and acclamation and remains to be an outsider will be investigated.
4.1. William Trevor and His Literary Background

William Trevor (1928-2016) is a prominent Irish writer who was born William Cox in County Cork to Protestant parents of middle class. Trevor’s family, as Michael L. Storey indicates, “moved often, as a result of his father’s frequent transfers for his bank work, living in small towns (which provided Trevor with much material for his fiction)” (441). Continual change of places and schools caused Trevor to recurrently feel the sense of being a stranger and also enabled him to observe the outer world through the eyes of an outsider and develop an avid interest in observing people; both situations echo in *The Children of Dynmouth* with the protagonist’s scrutinisation of others’ lives. Trevor experienced a distressed period of childhood and adolescence due to his parents’ unhappy marriage and obvious hatred towards each other. In an interview with Lisa Allardice, he refers to the atmosphere of anxiety and misery during his childhood as follows: “they [his parents] just simply didn’t get on. There was no respect, nothing. … All the way on the bus home, he [his brother] used to dread coming back from school … there was total silence in the house, nothing said at meals” (Trevor, “A Life in Books”). Traces of Trevor’s gloomy childhood can be seen in his works including *The Children of Dynmouth* in which the young protagonist stays detached from his family. Yet, rather than heavily drawing on his past life as the material for his work, Trevor essentially employs his profound imagination in creating his stories. As Eileen Battersby suggests, Trevor can be taken as “the least autobiographical of major Irish writers” because “he looked to the imagination and as an astute, natural psychologist believed in foraging the unpredictable depths of human behaviour” (Battersby, “William Trevor made”).

After receiving his degree in history from Trinity College, Trevor married Jane Ryan; the couple had two sons and had to emigrate to England in the early 1950s for financial reasons (Fitzgerald-Hoyt, 406). Trevor’s first novel, *A Standard of Behaviour* was published in 1958 and, with the publication of *The Old Boys* (1964), he became a
full-time writer having already worked as a teacher, advertising copywriter and sculptor. Prolifically, he wrote a large number of short story collections as well as a good many novels, novellas and works of drama, which not only brought him international recognition but let him win manifold awards and honours as well. Shortlisted for the Booker Prize, *The Children of Dynmouth* brought Trevor Whitbread Award in 1976. He got the same award for his *Fools of Fortune* in 1983 and *Felicia’s Journey* in 1994. In *Fools of Fortune*, which is a Big House novel, Trevor focuses on the experiences of a traumatized boy, Willie Quinton, at the time of Anglo-Irish conflict and deals with the issues of love and revenge. Made into a film in 1999, *Felicia’s Journey* exhibits the tragic and melancholic story of an eighteen-year-old Irish girl, Felicia, who is impregnated and abandoned by a psychopath. Trevor was shortlisted for the Booker and Whitbread Prizes in 2002 with *The Story of Lucy Gault*, a novel telling about an Irish girl’s life story which stretches from the 1920s to the 2000s. Being knighted in 2002, Trevor led the peaceful life of a successful writer in Devon, England till he died in 2016 (Cox 2018).

Trevor is particularly celebrated with his exceptional ability to empathically explore human psyche, behaviour and feelings. Described as “a peculiar synthesis of empathy and irony” (499) by Benjamin La Farge, Trevor’s writing is distinguished with its extraordinary quality of taking the reader right into the lives of fictional persons. He detects the true nature of man via engrossing plotlines in his works and peripheral and somewhat eccentric protagonists who are generally lonely, neglected and pathetic. As John J. Winters puts it, Trevor’s works “were tales of simple people living not-so-simple lives … His characters knew from poverty and loneliness, they were outsiders who knew they’d never gain the upper hand, but did their best to momentarily transcend or forget their circumstances” (“William Trevor Masterfully”). Just like Trevor himself, the outsiders in Trevor’s fiction are generally aware of or learn from experience that man can be capable of unexpected cruelties and keep malice, shame and frustration behind his
outer mask. For this reason, the stories of Trevor’s characters appear as disclosures of hidden truths. In reality, Trevor himself attains such truths by means of taking a step into the lives of strangers. In an interview with Trevor, Eileen Battersby makes it clear that the author, while standing in the hotel reception, glances around, notes everything and observes people that pass; then, adding his imagination, he turns what he observes into the stories of his works (“William Trevor: ‘I am a fiction writer’”). Additionally, Marianne Hartigan, in a 1995 interview with Trevor, reveals that the author “used to wander the streets at night talking to the strangers he met. … Such encounters made Trevor want to delve back into their lives to find out what had happened to have them strolling in the streets in the first place” (“The Old Boy: William Trevor”)22. Hence, as an outsider himself, Trevor not only has a sharp and penetrating sense of detecting the distinctive and unnoticeable qualities of people around him but feels a literary curiosity to learn about their private life; he tells about the bond between his inquisitiveness and literary works as follows: “all I can say is, I'm aware that I'm very curious. I'm inquisitive both as a person and as a writer and I've harnessed that in writing fiction” (“An Interview with”). In a way, he approaches to strangers in the outside as if they were potentially fictional characters; a specific movement, gesture, glance or utterance by them could sparkle Trevor’s imagination and set him to work writing one of his brilliant short stories or novels.

Trevor’s fiction is distinctively imbued with “philosophical density, exactness of style and idiom, variety of character, comic depth, and tragic intensity” (Core, “Belonging nowhere”) and, as Ben Howard suggests, “in both his novels and his stories Trevor exposes the secrets and examines the surreptitious activities of his characters” (“A Voice of Restraint”). “The theme of loneliness and hunger for love”, according to Julian Gitzen,

22 In another interview with Tom Adair, William Trevor states that he created the plot of *Felicia’s Journey* through his talks to some stranger women during his wanderings at the streets of London (Trevor, “An Interview with”).
“more than any other feature distinguishes his writing”; as for Trevor’s protagonists, they are “the lonely and forgotten, far removed from centers of purposeful activity and social ferment” and they “find little to which they may attach themselves” (“The Truth-Tellers”). *The Children of Dynmouth*, the author’s eighth novel, perfectly exhibits all of these aspects, which is the reason for the selection of the novel among the others for this study. Gathering a number of encomiums, it is one of Trevor’s novels in which he “makes eccentricity seem normal and normality bizarre” and exudes the air of “a moralist who only implies morality” (Catling 26).

The young protagonist of *The Children of Dynmouth*, Timothy Gedge, is an eccentric figure who perfectly fits into the author’s following description of the eccentric and eccentricity:

> Eccentricity when it is tediously pretended is born of a search for identity, as hell-raising often is, or a deviant stance of one kind or another. Genuine eccentrics, though, hardly know what they are, obscurely going their way in shadowy suburbs, noticed only by a few. The world they look out at is too grey for them: the peculiarities that come to govern their lives may even keep certifiable insanity at bay; often they merely fear boredom. (Trevor, *Excursions* 55)

Accordingly, Timothy is in a deviant search for identity; he is a genuine eccentric who is ignored by others and yet who finds others too boring. Interestingly, he behaves as Trevor does in real life in one significant way; he observes, follows and eavesdrops strangers; he keeps in his mind a vivid memory of what he sees or hears and makes use of that account in one way or the other. As typical of Trevor’s many other protagonists, he is lonely, desperate, unloved and marginalized; he is bizarre in his appearance and behaviour. In an interview Trevor states that he likes “that devilish thing in children” (“William Trevor, *The Art*”); and it is precisely the ‘devilish’ conducts and mentality of Timothy what bewilders the other characters as well as the reader. Notwithstanding, no matter how he acts or appears, Timothy sees through the truth in others’ inner lives and gives them unease with his awareness, which intensifies his isolation from the outer world. Timothy’s
social isolation is not by his own consent; rather, he is given no other alternative by either his family or the society than being an outsider who forcibly and compulsively struggles to be attached to community. That is, rather than choosing to be ‘devilish’, he is pushed into becoming so. The first and foremost phenomenon coercing Timothy into loneliness as well as inducing his mental problems and hindering his adjustment to society is the deprivations and maltreatment he undergoes in his dysfunctional family.

4.2. Dysfunctional Family

At the very beginning of *The Children of Dynmouth*, Timothy is inspired by an Irishman, Brehon O’Hennesy, his teacher at Dynmouth Comprehensive for half a term. Unlike dull residents of Dynmouth, O’Hennesy favours change and individual progress. Smoking his cigarettes containing cannabis, he preaches on self-discovery during the English class: “‘the void can be filled,’ … ‘Your soul is your property,’ he said … Everyone was good at something, he said, nobody was without talent: it was a question of discovering yourself” (Trevor, *The Children* 23). After O’Hennesy’s classes, Timothy begins to contemplate on what he is good at and determines on acting. Hence, O’Hennesy stands at a pivotal point in the plotline in spite of his minor role because he indirectly incites Timothy’s struggle to participate in the Spot the Talent Competition organized as a part of the Easter Feté in Dynmouth. Timothy then decides to perform a re-enactment of George Joseph Smith, an English serial killer, and his murders. He needs a wedding dress, a suit, a bathtub and curtains for his play and the plotline of the novel is mainly set upon Timothy’s struggle to obtain these items from the neighbourhood. But, when Timothy mentions the horrific content of his planned play to people from whom he asks for the necessary stuff he gets repudiated by them. In order to secure their assistance, he ends up with harassing, threatening and blackmailing them by informing them that he knows about their secret faults, weaknesses, indecencies and even crimes. Even though Timothy collects what he needs for his act, he is blocked by the vicar of the town to perform his
act and the novel ends with the protagonist’s failure and immediate switch to a pursuit of another fantasy.

A crucial fact regarding Timothy’s presence in Dynmouth as an outsider is that he is an unduly weird and outré figure already shunned, insulted and excluded by Dynmouth people for his excessive intimacy, discursive and unruly manner and irrelevant jokes. As one of Trevor’s “compassionate portrayal[s] of evil characters” (Allardice 2009), Timothy Gedge, even before being engrossed in the idea of performing a macabre act, is recognized as a virtually lunatic young boy. In most cases, as seen in his dialogues with Mr. Featherstone and Mr. Dass, he seems to be unaware that his behaviour lacks respect and that the person whom he speaks to is disturbed by his manner. Timothy’s abnormal attitude towards others encircling him is attended by his struggle to attract their attention. Such a ‘striving to prove his existence’ in the eyes of others, which can be construed as the nucleus of the novel, leads Timothy into such aberrant conducts as lying, stealing and blackmailing as well. However, it is the domestic circumstances in which Timothy is reared up what originally shape his personality and affect his psychology profoundly. As John B. Watson argues in his *Behaviorism*, social and domestic environment has a strong hold on individual’s personality to the extent that an individual could be ‘remade’ and have new habits by changing his environment (237). In a parallel, B. F. Skinner, in his *Beyond Freedom and Dignity* suggests that “behaviour is shaped and maintained by its [environment’s] consequences” (18). And in Timothy’s case, his environment is characterized by emotional indifference, insolence, perversion, inequality and hypocrisy. As a consequence, he becomes one of Trevor’s “malefactors” who are “often themselves victims of some distress or evil in the past, usually in childhood” and therefore “tend to be ‘loners’” (Parkin “The Malign” 92). For this reason, it is necessary to scrutinize the aspect of Timothy’s relationship with his ‘dysfunctional family’ and of the domestic
circle and conditions in which he grew up in order to get a full grasp of his mentality in his deviant pattern of behaviour.

One significant phenomenon having an intensely negative influence on Timothy’s psychology, personality and, consequently, interpersonal relations is the absence of his father. He has lacked a father figure almost throughout his life because his father abandoned his family for good when Timothy was only one-year-old. The protagonist has no relatives or some other personages whom he could substitute for his father; as a result, he has been void of fatherly protection, tenderness, support and also discipline since his infancy and childhood. Furthermore, as one of the most crucial deficiencies impinging upon his psychological and personal development, Timothy, due to his father’s absence, has lacked a figure who could operate as an ‘imago’; he does not have anyone with whom he could communicate, befriend and identify. Hence, in Lacanian perspective, he is deprived of the apparatus which is necessary “to establish a relation between the organism and its reality— or, as they say, between the Innenwelt and the Umwelt” (“The Mirror” 3). In other words, since he lacks a figure whom he could take as his role model, he can not establish an individuality that has a purpose and be sure of his own identity. Besides, as Kim A. Jones argues, absence of father “deprive[s] the child of a sense of mastery and industry, which comes from development of skills and talents through modeling and identification with the father” (47). The most visible outcome of such a depersonalized state of mind on Timothy is his feeling of futility and being at a loss, which is revealed by his boredom at school and in life in general, and exorbitant attachment to his routine of watching T.V. as well. So, the fact that “it seemed to Timothy that he was good at nothing” (Trevor, The Children 23) is directly related with the absence of a father figure in his life; and, for the very same reason, when he unwittingly makes other students laugh one day at school and discovers that “he could adopt a falsetto voice” (Trevor, The Children 25) he becomes firmly committed to the idea of acting and becoming a
professional comedian. Having “had felt aimless in his adolescence before that” (Trevor, *The Children* 25) incident, Timothy now has a purpose to struggle to realize. In a way, this preoccupation turns to be his only way of enjoying life and drawing people’s attention to himself and, as a result, he becomes obsessively engrossed with it. Yet, he does not know about the normal, moral or ethical ways to achieve his goal because, rather than being taught, advised and guided, he was ignored and left unattended throughout his life.

Lack of father also causes Timothy to fail to have a proper resolution of Oedipus complex, which results with his inclination to feminine characteristics. This inclination comes into sight when he unconsciously decides to stage a charade in which he takes on female characters and he dresses himself with his mother’s and sister’s clothes while preparing for the event. Timothy’s failure in dealing with Oedipus complex results in that he grows up without any strict discipline, control and limitation because, as Freud indicates, this process “comprises the prohibition” (*The Ego and The Id* 30) inflicted by father on son. Father has a dual role in boy’s mental development; he is perceived by male children as someone who “provokes guilt and fear” and also “as a protector, and that of a “great” and “Godlike” being that is idealized by the small child” (Jones 45). Therefore, one of the principal reasons for Timothy’s irresponsible, immoderately intimate and liberated manners in his involvement with the outer world is that he has been free from paternal control and hegemony all over his life. Besides, as will be elaborated, his obsessive seeking for social recognition and integration is related with his need for security and protection which are the conditions he lacked due to being without a father.

Apart from absence of father, another critical issue which damages Timothy’s inner state and exerts a negative influence on his personality is his dysfunctional relationship with his mother and sister. His mother’s attitude towards him has always been distinguished by her neglect, indifference and even contempt, which, in consequence, entrenches a sense of being worthless and unwanted in Timothy. Lack of
parental love and tenderness severely obstructs Timothy’s development of selfhood and individuality because, as Carl Rogers points out, the child, from infancy onwards, “perceives himself as lovable, worth of love” only via manifestation of external affection to himself and, therefore, parental love “is a significant and core element of the structure of self as it begins to form” (499). In fact, Timothy’s mother’s aloofness is also related with the abandonment of Timothy’s father. Regarding the impact of father’s absence on mother, Kim A. Jones asserts as follows: “loss of father in the first year of life has the potential to impact the mother and her ability to be fully immersed with the infant, which may in turn disrupt the optimal need gratification/frustration rhythm” (46). Bitter and insensitive reaction of his mother to Timothy after desertion of her husband is in accordance with what Jones explains. Throughout the novel, Timothy has no communication with either his mother or sister owing to their disregard of him. His mother has had to work late hours since Timothy’s early childhood and Timothy had to stay at his aunt’s house where he was not wanted either. As he grows up to go to the primary school, his mother and sister are out working the whole day, which makes Timothy “become used to the empty flat and to looking after himself” (Trevor, *The Children* 28). And when they return, they totally ignore Timothy and exclude him from not only their conversation but their life as well. Such a dispiriting and depressing treatment Timothy receives from his mother and sister pushes him into a deep isolation, which is described by the narrator as follows:

There had, over the years, developed in Timothy a distrust of his mother, and of his sister also. He didn’t speak much in their company, having become familiar with their lack of response. He’d be the death of her, his mother used to reply when he asked her something, although he’d never been able to understand why he should be. ‘You’re a bloody little dopey-D,’ Rose-Ann had a way of saying … It was all half joking, all quick and rushy, his mother laughing her shrill staccato laugh, Rose-Ann laughing also, neither of them listening to him. In the end he’d come to imagine that the atmosphere in the flat was laden with the suggestion that there’d be more room if he wasn’t there, more privacy and a sense of relief. (Trevor, *The Children* 29-30)
As the quote reveals, the attitude of Timothy’s family coerces him into a sense of inferiority and insufficiency; and, as Adler suggests, when such a feeling of being curtailed is aggravated to an extent which the child is unable to bear, a pathologic state of inferiority complex occurs and the child “flees to the magic of fantasy” (The Individual 218). As Timothy feels incomplete and lacks self-confidence, he finds it impossible to cope with the reality that he is inferior to others, which is imposed on him by external domestic or social figures; and he neurotically replaces reality with fantasies due to excessively focusing on his inner space. In the same manner, suffering from such an acute inferiority complex enforced upon him by his insensate family members, Timothy tends to be fixated on his “fictitious goal” of becoming a comedian. In his fantasies, his position is enhanced in social strata and his personal deficiencies are annihilated by his talent of acting and amusing people. He becomes strictly attached to his fantasies and, eerily, his fantasies are those “of real people behaving in the fantastic way that real people do” (McCabe “Irish Outrage”); that is, he believes in the reality of his fantasies and behaves in a way enthralled by them. Yet, in the end, he has to withhold his goal due to social preclusion in spite of his endless efforts. His anomaly does not let him get the pathos of his loneliness and helplessness underlying his commitment to acting across to people; and because he can not get along without their help and consent, he is unable to move away from the isolated state of an outsider.

Momentous influence of the lack of motherly tenderness in Timothy’s life can be explicated with Otto Rank’s arguments on the birth trauma and the consequences of an impairment in the postnatal bond between mother and child. In Rank’s point of view, mother has a key role in allaying postpartum anxiety and phobias suffered by the child; in case of the absence of such a figure of protection and affection, the child fails to overcome the “primal affect” of birth trauma and, in a parallel with Adlerian perspective, neurotically develops “phantasy formations” which are “reproductions of the intrauterine
state, or of birth” (*The Trauma* 50). Being situated at such a critical point in the early psychological development and wellbeing, the proper bond between mother, as a *comme il faut* personage, and the child is what Timothy is bereft of all through his childhood and adolescence. He is helplessly prone to the anxieties of the world outside mother’s safe and secure womb and in order to create a pleasurable “womb-like” atmosphere he clings to his inner space for the content of which he exerts himself to extract to the world in the outside. And when he fails in his striving he is drifted into futility and emptiness; he does not have any sense of belonging to the environment surrounding him and remains as an outsider.

The distress inflicted on Timothy by lack of a father figure is intensified by the disparaging and condescending attitude of his mother and sister. Deprivation of maternal care and affection combined with the absence of paternal protection and control leaves Timothy in a solitary, insecure and distrustful state. Within domestic space, he stands as “an unwanted child, neglected at home by his working mother and sister and abandoned by his father” and therefore focuses on “others’ lives as sources of information and feelings that feed his diseased imagination” (Halio “William Trevor: Overview”). As consequences of growing up within such a dysfunctional family he compulsively develops some disorders in his personality and some peculiar habits which make his character incomprehensible to people, cause him to be incongruous with the community and therefore undermine his engagement with society.

**4.3. The Outsider in Dynmouth**

Timothy Gedge is a fictional creation who ‘flounders’ through Dynmouth’s ostensible ordinariness to reach an individuality integrated into the outer world and by whom Trevor poignantly conveys to the reader the senses of solitariness, being despised and excluded. The basic phenomenon which coerces Timothy into loneliness and isolation, and becoming an outsider among the inhabitants of Dynmouth is, as detailed above, the
severely problematic structure of his family and the lack of parental care and sympathy. As marks of growing up in a dysfunctional family with no father and being reared up by an unaffectionate and indifferent mother, Timothy develops some mental disorders and behavioural anomalies which are mentioned by Andrew Parkin as follows:

Timothy's lonely childhood and adolescence estrange him from normal children and also develop his imagination in a curious way. They also make him unfeeling and even callous. He is in a solipsistic world with no sympathy for the suffering he may cause in others. He is obsessed with his 'act' and imagined talent. He is also well on the way to being the outsider as petty criminal. (10)

To elaborate, owing to the emotional deprivations and parental maltreatment, Timothy exhibits symptoms of narcissistic and obsessive-compulsive personality disorders, sadistic personality disorder, neurotic trend of aggressive personality and hysterically extraverted personality. These disorders are visibly seen in the traits of his personality and mentality as well as his particular attitudes and ways of acting and thinking in regards with both his own life and his relationship with other people. Furthermore, these pathological problems in Timothy’s personality and mentality have a pivotal role in his being repudiated by society and remaining as an outsider. For this reason, a detailed explication of the disorders which Timothy suffer from is necessary to be presented in connection with the protagonist’s particular behaviour.

In his paper titled “On Narcissism: An Introduction”, Freud associates narcissism with extensive presence of libido and argues that narcissistic attitude is generated by “the libido that has been withdrawn from the external world” and “has been directed to the ego” (75). In other words, a narcissistic person’s focus and energy is directed to his own body and self. Freud also indicates that an obvious aspect of narcissistic persons is “megalomania: an overestimation of the power of their wishes and mental acts” (75) and that homosexuality and narcissism may be found in the same person (73). On the other hand, Jamie McLean, referring to Heinz Kohut’s ‘self-psychology model’, indicates that
“narcissistic psychopathology is a result of parental lack of empathy during development” and that, as a consequence of such a deprivation “the individual does not develop full capacity to regulate self-esteem” (40). The pathologically narcissistic individual, according to McLean, “vacillates between an irrational overestimation of the self and irrational feelings of inferiority, and relies on others to regulate his self-esteem and give him a sense of value” (40). Accordingly, having been grown up within a domestic and social environment where he is left on his own and blocked to externalize his selfhood, Timothy develops an exaggerated and narcissistic fixation with his own wishes and aspirations. Lack of communication and interaction with outer figures and the antipathy and aversion of his mother and sister towards him make Timothy concentrate on his own self. Furthermore, absence of his father also has an essential role in his narcissistic attitude because, as Kim A. Jones asserts, loss or absence of father “before the age of two could potentially have profound effects upon narcissistic development” (46). Thus, from a very early age onwards, Timothy interiorizes narcissistic behaviour and mentality and, gradually, displays obvious signs of narcissistic personality disorder.

Regarding the hallmarks of this disorder, Heinz Kohut, in his influential work titled The Analysis of the Self: A Systematic Approach to the Psychoanalytic Treatment of Narcissistic Personality Disorders, states that one of the obvious aspects of narcissistic individuals is that they develop “grandiosity and exhibitionism” (114). They tend to keep themselves at a position superior to others and regard their goals as ‘special’ and more important than anything else. Since they consider themselves as gifted, they are excessively fond of exhibiting their talents to other people and enjoying their admiration. In Kohut’s words, individuals with pathological narcissism have a heightened tendency “to the unrealistic unconscious or disavowed grandiose fantasies” (114) which mostly comprise “irrational content” (151). Other significant qualities of narcissistic personality are “lack of interest in sex … inability to form and maintain significant relationships,
delinquent activities … lack of empathy for other people's needs and feelings, lack of a
sense of proportion, … pathological lying” (Kohut 23). Jamie McLean, who expands on
Kohut’s work and theories, suggests that individuals with narcissistic personality disorder
are “interpersonally exploitative” and they display “arrogant and haughty behaviours”
(41).

Considering these diagnostic criteria for narcissistic personality disorder with
regard to Timothy’s behaviour, attitude and relationship with other persons, it is evident
that he suffers from this disorder in an intense way. First of all, the fact that he deliberately
chooses to wear clothes of yellow colour has a significant sub-meaning in terms of his
narcissistic attitude. As the narrator makes it clear, Timothy “was always dressed in the
same clothes: pale yellow jeans and a yellow jacket with a zip, and a T-shirt that more
often than not was yellow also” (Trevor, The Children 13). Timothy’s choice of yellow
clothes shows that he has an unconscious tendency to drawing outer attention on himself
because, as June McLeod argues, the colour yellow is picked out quickly as it is the most
eye-catching and high-recognition colour (Colour Psychology Today Ch. 3)23. As his
behaviour exhibits, Timothy is in an abnormal effort to draw attention on himself: at
school he causes a girl fall down and get seriously injured and “on another occasion he’d
mixed up everyone’s books and pencils, muddling the contents of one desk with another”
(Trevor, The Children 30). Furthermore, before the idea of acting, he embarks on
constructing a model-aeroplane; but he fails and feels a great disappointment because
“he’d imagined flying the clever little plane on the beach, getting the engine going and
showing people how it was done” (Trevor, The Children 24). Such an effort of Timothy’s
reveals his exhibitionist character and the grandiosity of his fantasies early in the novel.

23 McLeod also states that the colour yellow “can raise and develop your self-esteem, and confidence in yourself and
abilities” (Colour Psychology Today Ch. 3), which is exactly what Timothy struggles to achieve. Besides, Angela
Wright suggests that yellow is the colour of warmth, friendliness and extraversion (13), which are qualities exhibited
in Timothy’s behaviour. For this reason, allegorically, Timothy’s yellow clothes symbolize the characteristics of his
personality and psychology in manifold ways.
However, the only incident which provides him with outer attention is when he wears a costume and adopts a false voice at school, which makes other students focus on and laugh at him: “the eight children in Timothy Gedge’s group laughed uproariously when he dressed up as Queen Elizabeth I, in a red wig and a garment that had a lank white ruff at its neck. Timothy laughed himself, seeing in a mirror how peculiar he looked, with a pair of tights stuffed into the dress to give him a bosom. He enjoyed laughing at himself and being laughed at” (Trevor, *The Children* 24) rather than feeling resentful towards anyone. From that moment onwards, he narcissistically believes that he has an exceptional talent of acting and making people laugh, which, he assumes, renders him superior to the residents of Dynmouth. His assumption of his superiority in this regard is apparent because, at many stages all over the novel, he states that people surrounding him have no sense of humour and, thereby, he implicitly lets himself excel among others. In order to exhibit his so-called talent, he constantly makes jokes and tells funny stories to whomever he meets, which unsettles others and makes them shun him. His exhibitionist manner is most clearly seen when he develops a ‘grandiose fantasy’ of becoming a famous comedian by performing an act at the local festival. An account of his absorption in the grandiosity of his fantasy is given as follows:

> Ever since he’d planned to go in for the Spot the Talent competition he’d been affected by a pleasant fantasy. Having been successful in the competition, he found himself going in for Opportunity Knocks on the television. Sometimes, if he let his thoughts drift, it seemed that Hughie Green was staying in the Queen Victoria Hotel, in Dynmouth for the golf, and having nothing better to do had wandered up to the Easter Fête in the rectory garden and had wandered into the Spot the Talent competition. ‘That’s really good!’ he proclaimed with great delight, excited when he saw the act, and the next thing was the act was being done in the Opportunity Knocks studio.24 (Trevor, *The Children* 31)

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24 Hughie Green (1920-1997) was an English entertainer and TV presenter who, as Richard Hewett indicates, made a name at the age of fourteen through a radio show and travelling concert party (Hewett 2008). Green presented a talent show called *Opportunity Knocks*, a programme in which the guests exhibited their talents. Su Holmes states that though the programme had a significant role in popular memory it “was often subject to scathing critical discourse for much of its run” (24).
As demonstrated in the quotation, Timothy imaginarily elevates himself to a point of fame and glory where he is at the centre of public attention and admiration. The pathological aspect of his narcissistic attitude is that, in reality, he disregards the “irrational content” of his fantasies and struggles to actualize them since he steadily believes in the authenticity of his superiority with his extraordinary gift. Such an anomalous engagement of Timothy with fantasies can be taken, in Freudian terms, as a result of the operation of the principles of pleasure and reality; he flees from the painful realities of being ignored and insignificant to the pleasure of being an admired and successful figure. Or, in Rankian perspective, he establishes a womb-like atmosphere where he feels the certainty, security, affection and sympathy he yearns for. Invariably, he has a notion of himself unusually higher in ability and, in accordance with it, he gets indulged in irrational fantasies and aspirations. Regarding himself as a ‘special’ youth with an exceptional talent, Timothy places a famous TV personality into his fantasies and imagines that only a figure such as Hughie Green could notice his remarkable abilities. Because, he thinks, “nobody had ever done a show like that on Opportunity Knocks” (Trevor, *The Children* 64) and his performance would be the most outstanding one. His self-association and identification with a personage of upper-class celebrity also signals to his idea of being superior to other people and therefore his narcissistic opinion of himself. His daydreams of appearing in TV and achieving great fame and prosperity is related with the grandiosity of his exhibitionist attitude; rather than being satisfied with becoming a local celebrity, he dreams of attaining the esteem and sympathy of the whole country.

An apparent characteristic of Timothy that evidences his pathological narcissism is his haughtiness and arrogant manner. Throughout the novel he ridicules other persons with a sardonic smile even though he has no intimacy with them and they are older than him. For example, he addresses to Mr. Featherstone, the vicar of the town, with a false name, shakes his head over the folly and dullness of other people, mocks their appearance...
and actions. Thereby, he tries to compensate his own state of being mocked and belittled by his sister and mother by acting in the same way to other people. Besides, his apathy towards sex and his conducts which hint homosexuality also manifest his narcissistic personality disorder. Directing his libidinal energy and interest inwards, he frigidly displays no sexual interest towards the opposite sex even though he is at an age when sexuality is supposed to be arising. He even avoids from visiting the Youth Centre because people there would be “playing ping-pong and smoking and talking about sex” (Trevor, The Children 22).

One of the most peculiar characteristics of Timothy which manifests his narcissism is that he is entirely devoid of empathy and affectionate feelings for others. The fact that he pries into their lives is related with collecting the necessary knowledge about their secrets and, thereby, manipulating them rather than being sympathetic and considerate about their problems. He acts and takes all of his decisions in an egoistic way which would enable him to stage his play. For example, he disregards the Dasses’ grief upon the absence of their beloved son, who abandoned them three years ago, and Mrs. Dass’s invalidity; without any sense of proportion, he ignores their sensitivities about their son and indifferently talks to them about him. Timothy’s relationship with Kate and Stephen is also characterized by his lack of empathy; he tells Stephen that he witnessed Stephen’s father murdered his wife, which intensely damages both kids’ psychologies. In the same apathetic and unconcerned manner, he turns the marriage of the Abigails upside down. Thus, the fact that Timothy does not care about the consequences of his conducts upon others proves his excessive self-absorption. His communication and affinity with the residents of Dynmouth is established only within the context of getting their help or collecting the necessary stuff for his performance. In other words, he treats them as tools that could facilitate his act to be staged. He needs the curtains for his play from the Dasses, the wedding dress from Stephen, the ‘dog’s tooth suit’ from Mr. Abigail and the bath to
be transported by Mr. Plant. As befitting to his narcissistic personality, he tries to ‘exploit’ other people in order to achieve his goal. Yet, when he is rejected by each of these characters, he turns to delinquent activities and stoops to some petty crimes.

For the sake of realizing his ‘grandiose fantasies’, Timothy blackmails people of Dynmouth with their secrets or some other facts related with them. He wanders around the town all the time and follows and observes people. Thus, he finds out Mr. Abigail’s homosexual inclination and Mr. Plant’s sexual affairs with other women; he assumes that Stephen’s mother was murdered by her husband even though she probably committed a suicide in reality. To manipulate and exploit them, he overwhelms these characters by implying that he could reveal such hidden truths about them, which, in the end, he does and devastates their lives. Furthermore, he recurrently tells lies to them in an effort to ensure their help. As Robert Tracy accurately suggests, just as Trevor himself creates fictions, his fictional characters, including Timothy Gedge, “are also fiction makers” (295). Yet, in Timothy’s case, a fusion of fiction and reality is in question and, in fact, the realities he witnesses around Dynmouth outweigh. Notwithstanding, as his attitude indicates, Timothy disregards a questioning of the ethicality and morality of his conducts because, for him, attainment of his aims is a matter of utmost importance; his performance becomes an issue for which he is ready to violate any sort of norms and callously harm people. His abnormally narcissistic attitude is therefore related with that he is profoundly absorbed in overcoming any obstacles to performing his act and also that he has no former, parental education that would inculcate social norms in him.

Due to his narcissistic personality disorder, Timothy is compulsively motivated to follow a particular pattern of behaviour which extensively impairs his interpersonal relations. His anxiety about exhibiting his superior talent to others occupies his entire mentality and psychology because, in his assumption, participation in the local competition to perform his act is the only apparatus to enable him to achieve a place in
society. Therefore, he is unable to divert his concentration to a phenomenon other than his act and he fails to establish a proper communication with people surrounding him. However, on the other hand, he wishes to be accepted, respected and admired by them; that is, he tries to compensate his domestic deprivations through social integration. But his struggle is hindered by his aberrant personality and manners, which can be defined as pathologically narcissistic, and he is left in the outside of society.

Timothy’s desire to be a talked-about personality in Dynmouth through performing his act is so intense and exaggerated as to be named as obsession, which, as Freud suggests, is generated by childhood repressions and prohibitions. According to Freud, “the influence of the repressed instinct is felt as a temptation, and during the process of repression itself anxiety is generated, which gains control over the future in the form of expectant anxiety” (“Obsessive Actions” 124). The deprivations, prohibitions and repression which Timothy suffers from during his childhood bring about his obsession to receive public recognition and appreciation. Besides, he possesses the two constituents which, as Freud argues, are found in every individual with obsessions: “an idea that forces itself upon the patient” and “an associated emotional state” (Obsessions and Phobias 4). His restive state in his effort to make the necessary arrangements for his performance and the fact that he feels a profound compulsion to make sure that his play will be staged without any detail overlooked signal to his obsessive-compulsive mental state. His repeated visits to other people to get their help and talk about the details of his play indicate that he has an uncontrollable urge to think about and make plans on his act. He can not be free from the obsessive idea of performing at the competition and being ‘discovered’ as a gifted youth; and his emotional state changes in accordance with his proximity to the realization of his fantasies. As in some other characters of Trevor in his
short stories\textsuperscript{25}, as Michael W. Thomas postulates, Timothy’s rich imagination “rapidly fattens fancy up into an idée fixe” (447). His repetitive and coercive behaviour which occurs as a result of his obsession frequently harass other people. He develops an excessive need for communication and unification with the outer world and displays anomalous habits of following people, looking through their windows into their houses, telling them about his play in detail, and telling jokes or funny puzzles to them. He is perceived as a ‘lunatic’ figure to whom people approach with a sense of caution and antipathy; and, for this reason, his obsessive-compulsive disorder has a significant role in his posture as an outsider in society.

Timothy’s deviant behaviour generated by his obsessive-compulsive disorder can be further explicated through Albert Ellis’s “rational emotive behavioral theory” in which he posits that “at the heart of neurotic disturbance lies the tendency of humans to make devout, absolutistic evaluations of the perceived events in their lives” (Ellis and Dryden 14). Ellis regards this sort of evaluations as outcomes of “irrational beliefs” which “impede and obstruct people in the pursuit of their basic goals and purposes” (14). In this regard, Timothy’s ‘absolutistic’ goal of performing his act, in fact, impedes his basic purpose of mingling with society and excelling among other people. His irrationally devout belief that he has to draw outer attention on himself and that he can attain his aim only through performing an unusual and unprecedented act leads him to psychological disturbance as exhibited by his obsessive attitude.

Apart from narcissistic and obsessive-compulsive disorders, another circumstance which prevents Timothy’s integration with society is his sadistic personality, a disorder which is, again, engendered by the domestic and parental conditions and manifested by

\textsuperscript{25} Michael W. Thomas, in his “Worlds of Their Own: A Host of Trevor's Obsessives”, states that “adolescent obsessive” is “a type occupying a significant place in Trevor’s fiction” (445). Thomas analyzes William Trevor’s such short stories as “Miss Smith”, “The Death of Peggy Morrissey”, “Attracta”, “The Raising of Elvira Tremlett” and “Torridge” as works laden with protagonists with pathological obsessions.
his particular conducts. Regarding the origins of sadistic attitude, Freud argues that children who “witness sexual intercourse between adults … inevitably regard the sexual act as a sort of ill-treatment or act of subjugation: they view it, that is, in a sadistic sense” (“Three Essays” 196). In Freud’s point of view, the impression the child gets from the scene he sees “contributes a great deal towards a predisposition to a subsequent sadistic displacement of the sexual aim” (“Three Essays” 196). In consequence, they develop a sadistic attitude in which satisfaction is obtained through violence, humiliation and maltreatment (“Three Essays” 158). Such a witnessing of sexual acts might be the reason for Timothy’s sadistic tendency because, several times during his childhood, he witnesses sexual intercourses between his mother and Mr. Plant and also between his sister and Lenny: “Plant on the job with his mother, his legs as white as mutton-fat. … Disgusting Plant had looked, with his legs and his equipment showing. … Another time Rose-Ann and Len had been on the job, on the hearth-rug in the lounge” (Trevor, The Children 57). In some cases, Timothy’s mother and sister simply ignore him during their sexual act even though they know that he can see them, which is another manifestation of their indifference to him.

In Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders III (DSM-III), diagnostic criteria for sadistic personality, which are almost entirely displayed by Timothy’s behaviour, are listed as follows:

A. A pervasive pattern of cruel, demeaning, and aggressive behavior, beginning by early adulthood, as indicated by the repeated occurrence of at least four of the following:
   (1) has used physical cruelty or violence for the purpose of establishing dominance in a relationship (not merely to achieve some noninterpersonal goal, such as striking someone in order to rob him or her)
   (2) humiliates or demeans people in the presence of others
   (3) has treated or disciplined someone under his or her control unusually harshly, e.g., a child, student, prisoner, or patient
   (4) is amused by, or takes pleasure in, the psychological or physical suffering of others (including animals)
   (5) has lied for the purpose of harming or inflicting pain on others (not merely to achieve some other goal)
(6) gets other people to do what he or she wants by frightening them (through intimidation or even terror)
(7) restricts the autonomy of people with whom he or she has a close relationship, e.g., will not let spouse leave the house unaccompanied or permit teen-age daughter to attend social functions
(8) is fascinated by violence, weapons, martial arts, injury, or torture
B. The behavior in A has not been directed toward only one person (e.g., spouse, one child) and has not been solely for the purpose of sexual arousal (as in Sexual Sadism). (DSM-III-R, 371)

Additionally, as argued by Daniel L. Segal et al. “persons with Sadistic Personality Disorder typically do not see any problems with their behavior (and, in fact, usually see the positive outcomes of getting what they want)” (141). Considering Timothy’s attitude towards other people around him, it is apparent that he exhibits the symptoms of pathological sadism. His lack of empathy, as already mentioned, is in connection with his tendency to cruelty and aggressiveness invariably directed to all of the characters in the novel. He inflicts psychological suffering upon others in any way possible and especially by intimidating them with their secrets into getting their help for staging his act. He takes pleasure in harming or causing trouble for other people; for example, he finds two bottles of beers at the Youth Centre hidden by someone and drinks the beer in them “not expecting to like it but drinking it because it didn’t belong to him” (Trevor, *The Children* 59). In another case which shows his debauched sense of morality, he picks up a purse dropped by an elderly woman in the street and keeps the money in it for himself. He finds it enjoyable to go to the funerals of people whom he does not know, which evinces that he relishes seeing people in pain. He intentionally puts the Dasses into great distress for no reason at all by advising their son, Nevil, to leave the town, which he does. Timothy’s sadistic mentality in terms of his inclination to and fascination by terror, frightening, violence and injury is most visibly seen in the content of his intended act on George Joseph Smith26, an account of which he gives to Mrs. Abigail as follows:

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26 George Joseph Smith (1872-1915) was an English womanizer and serial killer whose murders were titled as “The Brides in the Bath Murders” by the reason of that he married five times and killed three of his wives by drowning them in the bathtub. He was sentenced to death and hanged in 1915 (Gordon 171-172).
You’d have each of the brides acting like she was struggling against George Joseph Smith and all the time George Joseph Smith would be winning, only you wouldn’t actually see him, you’d have to imagine him. And when she went under the water the lights would go black and George Joseph Smith would appear a few seconds later in the dog’s-tooth suit. He’d tell jokes, standing beside the bath with the bride in it. You’d know she was in it because a bit of her wedding-dress would be draped over the side, only of course she wouldn’t be there at all because it was a one-man act. ‘Ah well, best be getting back to work,’ George Joseph Smith would say when he had them bringing the house down. The lights would go black and the next thing you’d see would be another bride struggling against the murdering hands of the man. After he’d drowned each bride George Joseph Smith had gone out to buy the dead woman her supper, fish for Miss Munday, eggs for Mrs Burnham and Miss Lofty. It was a peculiarity with him, like his passion for death by the sea. George Joseph Smith had once stayed in Dynmouth, in the Castlerea boarding-house. (Trevor, The Children 64)

Thus, Timothy’s act, which, as the quote shows, is about “a man who had murdered three wives in a bath” (Trevor, The Children 123) and laden with physical violence, externalizes his sadistic mind. The fact that he interiorizes and rationalizes the horrific context and plot of his act as normal and acceptable is in a parallel with his justification of his other sadistic conducts; in both cases, that is, in his imagination and outer behaviour, he disregards the abnormal and startling nature of what he clings to. He is also unaware of that his sadistic disposition to entertain himself and manipulate others estranges him from not only his peers but the society entirely. Even though he wishes to be accepted and appreciated by other persons, his sadistic tendencies damage his relationship with the outer world and do not let him behave properly. His desire to harm others and inflict mental suffering on them conflicts with his struggle for public acclamation; in consequence, it has a major role in making people treat him with intense dislike and regard him as insane, as represented by Kate’s description of him as a person “possessed by devils” (Trevor, The Children 133). Thus, Timothy’s lonely posture as an outsider in society is directly related with his sadistic personality disorder which is originated by the distresses and deprivations he suffered from during his childhood.

Timothy’s belligerent attitude and mentality, which appears as the basic constituent of his pathological sadism, fits into what Karen Horney diagnoses as the
aggressive neurotic type that develops a neurotic need for power, social recognition or
prestige, personal admiration, personal achievement and to exploit others (Self 54-59).
Horney ascribes this disorder in personality to unresolved childhood anxieties and,
particularly, a tenacious sense of being inferior, unworthy and unwanted (The Neurotic
162-163). According to Horney, the individual, who is unable to overcome his anxieties
inflicted on him by parental or social circumstances, turns to be aggressive and has “a
strong need to exploit others, to outsmart them, to make them of use to himself…” (Our
Inner 65). Describing the aggressive type as a “good strategist” (Our Inner 67), Horney
also argues that individuals with this personality disorder tend to identify themselves with
an unrealistic “idealized image. This imaginary persona is treated by the aggressive
neurotic type as a perfect and ideal figure; to him, becoming his idealized image means
to be the elimination of all the anxieties, deprivations and inferiorities which distresses
him (Our Inner 97).

Considering the domestic and social circumstances encircling Timothy and the
characteristics of his reaction to people and incidents he confronts with, it is evident that
he saliently possesses aspects of the aggressive type. Having grown up in a lonely state
and with a dysfunctional family where he lacks a protective father and an affectionate
mother, Timothy develops some neurotic needs which are concentrated on prevailing over
his anxiety basically caused by his feelings of being insignificant, unwanted and ignored.
He struggles to fulfil his emotional deprivations by exhibiting his assumedly superior
qualities to others and acquiring their admiration and recognition; he neurotically needs
such an external confirmation of his positive personal traits to exterminate his senses of
being inferior and unworthy. The ultimate embodiment of the disclosure of his
completion and perfection is the image of a renowned TV entertainer, that is, the
“idealized image” whom he identifies with. In this respect, he interiorizes the idea that
the ultimate possible way to realize his aspirations is to behave in an aggressive,
indifferent, arrogant, exploitative and self-centred manner in his relationship with other people since this sort of an antagonistic attitude is exactly what he observes on his mother and sister and embraces as the normal way of acting. Even though he initially adopts a compliant and genial attitude when he approaches to other people for their help or to ask for the necessary stuff for his act, upon being rejected and repulsed, he immediately takes on an implicitly aggressive attitude.

Manifestations of Timothy’s pathological aggression are the same with those of his sadistic personality disorder; that is, he tries to manipulate other characters by blackmailing and lying, which proves to be internecine attempts because, in consequence, he is denied by society and the lives of some members of society are ruined. For example, he asks for Mr. Plant’s assistance to use his van for moving a bathtub to the marquee where the talent competition would be held; Mr. Plant reacts in a cantankerous way and calls him “a bloody nutcase” (Trevor, The Children 75). Being disdainfully rebuffed and ignored, Timothy shifts into the aggressive mood and blackmails Mr. Plant by telling him he witnessed the sexual affairs he (Mr. Plant) had with his (Timothy’s) mother and other women and adds: “we have the secret between us, sir. I wouldn’t open my mouth to Mrs Plant” (Trevor, The Children 76). Yet, Mr. Plant denies what Timothy told him and threatens him sharply to beat him and send him to a borstal, which makes Timothy visit him again, but this time at his shop where Mrs. Plant is also present. In the end, Mr. Plant, unable to cope with Timothy's blackmail, becomes obliged to help him. Timothy makes resorts to the same blatant aggression in his relationship with Mr. Abigail and Stephen and forces them to get their help. His aggression, bellicosity and impetuous gravitation to improper acts of blackmailing and lying signifies not only his overreaction and oversensitivity to any sort of rejection of help but the exaggerated significance he attributes to performing his act as well. His neurotic need for public recognition and acclamation, which is generated by his childhood lack of care, tenderness and protection,
coerces him into a particular pattern of thinking and behaving. Thus, he compulsively feels that he has to demonstrate his assumedly remarkable talent and superiority in entertaining people and that the only way of proving himself is participation in Spot the Talent Competition and performing an unusual act that would profoundly impress the audience. In other words, Timothy’s actions and mentality are formed by childhood deprivations and anxieties rather than being triggered by a purely subjective and genuine willingness. His needs, tendencies and conducts are neurotic because they are simply the outcomes of his rigid fixation on reversing the poor and injurious treatment of his mother and sister and also the annihilation of the negative qualities assigned to him. As a result of his neurotic aggression, he employs inappropriate and deviant methods to achieve his aspirations, which, consequently, keeps him detached from society and makes him look like “something from another world” (Trevor, The Children 121).

Timothy’s isolated posture as an outsider is also related with his hysterically extraverted state, as obvious in his grotesque, eccentric and overly intimate attitude. Regarding the extraverted personality type Jung suggests that, the extraverted type adjusts his life according to the fundamentals of external world; he has a strong attachment to ideas and judgements originating outside his inner self (Psychological Types 419-420). He is enthusiastic to adopt values and ideals determined or possessed by outer figures. The plans and purposes that the extraverted type holds in his life are directly related with external conditions. Instead of focusing on his subjective feelings and thoughts, he struggles to act in a manner that would enable him to remain and excel in his outer circle. In this regard, the way he is perceived by society plays a significant role in forming his expectation from and outlook on life. Hence, a conflict between his aspirations and the realities of society constrains the extravert to make further effort to achieve his goal, which brings him on the verge of alienating from himself through the assimilation of the external aim (Psychological Types 11). According to Jung, a fixed and permanent
inclination to making an impression on the external world is “a basic trait of the hysterical nature” which is displayed with hysterical communicativeness, lying and preoccupation with fantasies (Psychological Types 421). In other words, for the sake of obtaining social integration and acclamation, a hysterically extraverted individual behaves in an overly sociable manner; he becomes excessively communicative; he tells lies to create a false impression on his outer circle and he turns to his own imagination to get a sense of achievement of his wishes and expectations. Adding to Jung’s assertions of extraversion, Henry A. Murray suggests that “the extravert emphasizes observable facts and inductions arising from them”; he “is insensitive, objective, practical, impersonal and experimental” and “materialistic and tough-minded in the sense that he values most what is obvious and irrefutable (money, position, prestige)” (238).

A comparison between Jung’s and Murray’s definition of hysterically extraverted type and the ways in which Timothy thinks and behaves reveals that the protagonist exhibits all of the traits of hysterical extraversion. First of all, he leads all of his energy to the outer objective of becoming a prestigious figure in society who is well-known for his ability in entertaining people. He insensitively gives a paramount importance to the achievement of this goal, which shows that the positive views and assumptions of his social milieu exert a great influence on his feelings and thoughts. His fixed opinion of himself that he has an unusual talent in acting is related with the impression he would make on people. In this respect, being fully engrossed in the idea of entertaining others, he disregards the fact that his attitude is perceived by society as inordinate and exaggerated. Thus, entirely possessed by one external objective, he hysterically exerts himself to reach his goal, as exhibited in his excessive communicativeness. He talks to anyone whom he sees in the outside and tells them about himself or asks them questions to be acquainted with them: “‘Cheers,’ he said to a couple of old-age pensioners who were tottering along together, clinging to one another on a slippery pavement, but they
didn’t reply. He paused beside three nuns who were examining a shop window full of garden tools while waiting for a bus. He smiled at them and pointed out a pair of secateurs, saying they looked good value” (Trevor, The Children 16). After clinging to the idea of acting, his long talks turn to be about his act and questions about the talent competition. Yet, being “endlessly friendly and smiling, keen for conversation” (Trevor, The Children 14), Timothy is unaware of that he “was increasingly becoming a nuisance to people” and that he was perceived as a “strange boy, always at a loose end” (Trevor, The Children 14). Hence, on one hand he strives to entertain people and gain their interest, as befitting to his extraverted nature, and on the other hand, he not only gets wholly absorbed in this purpose but becomes oblivious to the way his conducts are perceived and evaluated in reality as well.

Timothy’s misconception about himself as well as the failure in receiving the expected outcome of his effort, which is external appreciation and sympathy, pushes him into further aberrant conducts and an intensified inclination to imagination. His rigid assumption that he would make an impact on people in a positive way by performing his act controls his mentality and directs him to any sort of behaviour regardless of its ethicality, morality or legality. Accordingly, he does not desist from acts of blackmailing, lying and manipulating other people, which, as a result, intensifies society’s antipathy towards him and makes him a figure who is approached with repulsion and antagonism. For example, in order to get Mr. Abigail’s suit as a costume to wear in his act, Timothy threatens him with telling his wife about his homosexual urges, upon which Mr. Abigail reacts as follows: “‘the kind of person you are, Gedge,’ the Commander shouted, ‘you should be locked away. You’re a bloody young devil. You can’t mind your own business. Can you, Gedge?’ shrieked the Commander. ‘Can you mind your own business?’ … You’re trying on a blackmail attempt. You can be had up for blackmail, you know.’ … You bloody young pup!’ screamed the Commander” (Trevor, The Children 113). In
another case, being frightened and psychologically distressed by Timothy’s harassing visits and disclosures of other people’s secrets including the murder of Stephen’s mother, Kate asks Mr. Featherstone to exorcize Timothy. Hence, Timothy’s baleful and eerie attitude as embodiment of his hysterically extraverted personality disengages him from society, puts him in an invidious position and also renders him a person who is loathed and regarded as a psychopath.

Timothy’s fantasies of realizing his desire of performing his act and being famous operate as another demonstration of the hysterical nature of his extraversion. For example, during his visit at Mr. Featherstone’s house, he entertains the vicar’s little daughters with a funny voice. Being fascinated by their laughter upon his gestures, Timothy delves into his imaginary space as follows:

They laughed delightedly, clapping their hands together, and Timothy Gedge closed his eyes. The lights flickered in the darkness around him, and then the limelight blazed and he stood in its yellow flame. ‘Big hand, friends!’ cried Hughie Green, his famous eyebrow raised, his voice twanging pleasantly into his microphone. ‘Big hand for the boy with the funnies!’ All over Dynmouth the limelight blazed on Dynmouth’s television screens, and people watched, unable not to. ‘Big hand for the Timothy G Show!’ cried Hughie Green in Pretty Street and Once Hill and High Park Avenue. Like a bomb the show exploded, the funnies, the falsetto, Timothy himself. Clearly they heard him in the Comerways flats and in Sea House and in the Dasses’ house and in the lounges of the Queen Victoria Hotel. From the blazing screen he smiled at the proprietor of the Artilleryman’s Friend and at his mother and Rose-Ann and his aunt the dressmaker and at his father, wherever he was. He smiled in the Youth Centre and in the house of Stringer the headmaster and in the house of Miss Wilkins on with her charada. He smiled at Brehon O’Hennessy, wherever he was too, and in the houses of everyone in 3A. (Trevor, The Children 106)

As obvious in the quote, Timothy, confronting with constant public condemnation and censure in reality, fictitiously attains society’s admiration in his imagination. The fact that he includes his mother, sister and father in the imaginary audience watching his show in the T.V. shows that he unconsciously wishes to be adored by his family and that his deviant behaviour is related with the deprivations and mistreatment he undergoes in his family. In a way, Timothy’s fantasies function as the means by which he proves his
competency and capabilities as an individual in the eyes of his parents and alter their neglectful and belittling approach to him. Additionally, direct references to all the places and persons that have a connection with him testify to his hysterical devotion to making a huge impact on people encircling him.

The mental state and personality traits of Timothy Gedge, as delineated so far, are impaired by the sufferings he is exposed to in his dysfunctional family to an extent that he exhibits apparent symptoms of five basic personality disorders, which are involved with pathological narcissism, obsession, sadism, neurotic aggression and hysterical extraversion. Being deprived of a father and disregarded by his mother and sister all over his childhood and early adolescence, Timothy compulsively develops a persistent urge to ‘shine’ in the outer world in a way that would amaze his family and the residents of Dynmouth as well. The sense of being unworthy and impotent is inflicted on him so intensely that he eagerly seeks for a way to promote himself and, as a consequence, frantically becomes fixated on the idea of becoming an entertainer. Again due to pernicious influences of being brought up under damaging domestic circumstances, he does not have a consciousness that would let him discern between decent and indecent, ethical and unethical, and moral and immoral. Thus, on one hand, negative parental and social conditions coerce him into a particular pattern of behaviour, which is the set of conducts to draw public attention and acclamation, and on the other, he is devoid of any sense compliant to patriarchal/social norms. Consequently, his mentality and personality are shaped in a way departing from accepted physiological and psychological standards. He takes on a hostile attitude towards the community and his hostility fits into what George Kelly defines as an injury inflicted, “upon another person, not as a primary goal in itself, but as an incidental outcome of something more vital that he [one] is trying to accomplish” (376). In Timothy’s case, the vital phenomenon he wishes to attain is the enactment of his fantasies of performing his play and reversing his inferior status in
society. However, his abnormal and aberrant behaviour embodied by his hostility further detaches him from society rather than letting him be integrated in it as a sympathetic person. In the end, the more he makes effort to supremely stand out in the external world, the more intensely he is rejected and repulsed by it since he is preoccupied by reaching his goal with improper methods of blackmailing and lying and via one single path, which is an eerie re-enactment of a murderous story.

Thus, William Trevor portrays Timothy as a harassing and irritating outsider in Dynmouth who, with his mental issues, trespasses into others’ lives and threats of disclosing their secrets, insanely pursues an objective. As a whole, Timothy is depicted as a nuisance; even his outer appearance adds to his presence in Dynmouth as an abnormal figure: “Timothy Gedge was a youth of fifteen, ungainly due to adolescence, a boy with a sharp-boned face and wide, thin shoulders, whose short hair was almost white. His eyes seemed hungry, giving him a predatory look; his cheeks had a hollowness about them” (Trevor, The Children 13). Hence, his personal attitude, mental state and physical appearance are all in coordination and accordance with each other in a way that hinders his consolidation with society. However, apart from the issues which are related with himself and, indirectly, with the negative influence of his dysfunctional family on his psychology and personality, one significant phenomenon which has a role in the formation of Timothy’s lonely and isolated posture is society itself.

4.4. ‘Something Rotten’ in Dynmouth: Social Context

The social sphere depicted in The Children of Dynmouth stands as a landscape where multiple sorts of people are brought together. In fact, tendency to creating such a

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27 Timothy’s ‘predatory look’ suggests his primitive mentality and conducts as exhibited in his blunt acts of blackmailing and threatening to have an immediate achievement of his goal. This sort of an aggression, in Erich Fromm’s perspective, could be defined as “predatory behavior” which is normally peculiar to animals. Fromm suggests that predatory behaviour “does not show rage and is not interchangeable with fight behavior, but it is purpose-determined, accurately aimed, and the tension ends with the accomplishment of the goal” (98-99), which precisely fits into Timothy’s behavior.
‘congress’ is a literary fondness of Trevor: “I rather like this business of gathering people together; I have a thing about different kinds of people being drawn together” (Trevor “William Trevor: Interviewed”). However, even though characters in Dynmouth differ from each other in many ways, basically, they share some similar aspects and feelings because they are exposed to the same external threat, that is, Timothy Gedge.

Lisa Allardice, in her interview with Trevor, accurately highlights that “a profound melancholy pervades all Trevor's fictional landscapes as softly and persistently as Irish rain. His tales of quiet calamities and defeat, disappointment and guilt, are saturated in loneliness and secret sorrow” (“A Life in Books”). This melancholy occurs in multiple forms in The Children of Dynmouth. For example, tragedy of three women (Mrs. Abigail, Miss Lavant and Mrs. Featherstone) is embedded within the main storyline. Mrs. Abigail grieves to see that she failed to notice her husband’s homosexuality for thirty-six years; Miss Lavant pathologically yearns for uniting with Dr. Greenslade; and Mrs. Featherstone is depressed to miscarry a baby son. Hence, anguish and catastrophe of women characters, which is a common aspect of many of Trevor’s works, accords with the melancholic atmosphere depicted in the novel.  Yet, dejection of these characters do not make them outsiders, because, in one way or the other, they are a part of society and have a mental, social and economic stability to let them endure their pain. In the case of Timothy, an amalgam of melancholy, poverty, helplessness, social and mental weakness is in question. But Timothy’s failure to mingle with the residents of Dynmouth is not only related with his anomalous attitude and conducts; the fact that he is aware of all the secret crimes, immoralities and indecencies connected with other people has also a major role in his isolation from them. In other words, Timothy operates as an agent who brings people of Dynmouth face to face with their misdeeds, weaknesses and improper behaviour through the hidden realities he knows

28 Ironically, the gruesome act Timothy plans to perform is based on the tragedy of three women murdered by a serial killer.
about them. In fact, beneath the seemingly pedestrian and ordinary lives of the residents of Dynmouth lies a variety of wicked conducts witnessed by Timothy:

He’d witnessed all sorts, he said: the dead buried, kids from the primary school lifting rubbers out of W. H. Smith’s, Plant on the job with his mother ... He’d witnessed Rose-Ann and Len up to tricks on the hearth-rug, and others up to tricks in the wood behind the Youth Centre, kids of all ages, nine to thirteen, take your pick. He’d seen the Robson woman from the Post Office buying fish and chips in Phyl’s Phries with Slocombe from the Fine Fare off-licence, and Pym, the solicitor, being sick into the sea after a Rotary dinner in the Queen Victoria Hotel. He’d seen the Dynmouth Hards beating up the Pakistani from the steam laundry in a bus-shelter, and spraying Blacks Out on the back wall of the Essoldo. He’d seen them terrorizing Nurse Hackett, the midwife, swerving their motor-cycles in front of her blue Mini when she was trying to go about her duties at night-time. There was wife-swapping every Saturday night at parties on the new estate, Leaflands it was called, out on the London road. He’d looked in a window once and seen a man in Lace Street taking out his glass eye. He’d seen Slocombe and the Robson woman up on the golf-course. In Dynmouth and its neighbourhood he’d witnessed terrible things, he said. (Trevor, The Children 66)

Thus, as Timothy observes, Dynmouth is a seaside town where diverse acts of theft, adultery, racism, vandalism and violence are committed though it appears to be a quiet and ordinary place. Actually, it is the breakage in this ordinariness and mundanity of Dynmouth, which might be a fictional embodiment of the dullness of Trevor’s childhood Ireland, what gives the novel its darkly tragic quality. As Andrew Parkin asserts, “the truths he [Timothy] bears and bares to others are always painful unmaskings of the fallen world” (11) where hypocrisy and pretention reign. The adverse qualities of this ‘fallen world’ undeniably have deleterious effects on Timothy’s behaviour and mentality. Accentuating the role of social environment in forming individual’s behaviour through his/her observation and imitation, Albert Bandura, in his Social Learning Theory, asserts that “most of the behaviors that people display are learned, either deliberately or inadvertently, through the influence of example” (5). In this regard, the characteristics of the figures serving as examples for Timothy and directly shaping his behaviour represent the ‘terrible things’ witnessed by him. He interiorizes others’ cruel, unscrupulous and
unprincipled manners and acts in the same way, only with the exception that, by doing so, he confronts Dynmouth people with what they conceal or repress.

The chaotic and improper social environment in Dynmouth is personified by the particular characters in the novel. The Dasses, for example, repress a domestic tragedy related with their son, Nevil, who abandons them due to their restrictively attentive manner. Being rejected and abandoned by their only son, the Dasses become devastated and feel guilty; Mrs. Dass even turns to be an invalid. They prudently keep the reality about their son secret in order to avoid a scandal in the neighbourhood and also due to their unconscious eschewal from their inadequacies and faults as parents. Timothy is the only outer person who knows about this incident and he insensately threatens Mr. Dass with disclosing the truth in order to get the curtains necessary for his act. His awareness of the reality about Nevil, in a way, operates as a force that brings the source of suffering and anxiety back into Mr. Dass’s consciousness. It is precisely this return of the repressed what gives Mr. Dass unease, rather than Timothy’s act of blackmailing. As a father who is deserted by his son, Mr. Dass is forced to face with the painful reality about himself by a youth who is, ironically enough, deserted by his father. In a way, Timothy becomes the evocation of Mr. Dass’s weaknesses and flaws in his relationship with his son; by his existence, “the painfully healing wound had been maliciously opened” in Mr. Dass (Trevor, The Children 153). Hence, the fact that he ends up by hating Timothy, gives him the curtains and wishes not to see him again can be construed as the manifestation of his inner wish to keep his paternal impotence and infirmity hidden and stay away from the anguish which could be engendered by it.

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29 Sense of guilt and loss of innocence are critical phenomena in Trevor’s fiction; according to him “guilt is not as terrible a position as it is made out to be. People should feel guilty sometimes. … I think that it can be something that really renews people” (“A Life in Books.”). In The Children of Dynmouth, even though such characters as Mr. Dass, Mr. Plant and Mr. Abigail exhibit vestiges of inner unease, it is the insufficiency and inefficacy of characters’ feeling of guilt what makes Dynmouth such a rotten place and renders Timothy an outsider in it.
Timothy’s posture as “the obstinate and unwelcome truth-teller” (Gitzen “The Truth-Tellers”) is evident in his relationship with Mr. Plant, the publican who is confronted by Timothy with his misdeeds. Being married and having two boys and two daughters, Mr. Plant is a womanizer who has sexual affair with many women in Dynmouth including Timothy’s mother. Therefore, he gets nervous with a sense of guilt whenever he encounters Timothy: “Because of his [Mr. Plant’s] relationship with the boy’s mother, Timothy Gedge embarrassed him” (Trevor, *The Children* 73). Even before being blackmailed by Timothy, Mr. Plant feels uneasy in the presence of him and wishes not to see him due to his own inner unrest engendered by his affair with the boy’s mother. Hence, the relationship between Timothy and Mr. Plant is impaired originally due to the publican’s immorality. Timothy’s implicit threat of revealing Mr. Plant’s infidelity to his wife turns Mr. Plant’s uneasiness into anger and hatred towards Timothy. Being shocked by the fact that Timothy knows about his acts of cheating on his wife, Mr. Plant denies the reality at first and harshly counter-threatens the protagonist with beating and sending him to a borstal. Yet, when Timothy visits him at his shop in the presence of his wife, Mr. Plant accepts to help him since he is overwhelmed with anxiety and fear; he is terrified by the idea that if his scandalous behaviour was disclosed he would not only lose his family but have a notoriety in society as an indecent man. Hence, in a similar situation with Mr. Dass, Mr. Plant submits to Timothy in order to stay away from him; for Mr. Plant, Timothy represents a figure who induces shame in him and represents the danger of being condemned by society.

Just as Mr. Plant’s tendency to committing adultery is the essential phenomenon that causes him to develop a particular, negative attitude to Timothy, Mr. Abigail’s homosexual orientation and proximity to child abuse is the reality which terminates the Abigails’ connection with Timothy and makes them end up with feelings of hatred and disgrace. Gordon Abigail, who is sixty-five years old, fond of drinking alcohol and
proudly telling about old days of his time, frequently goes to the sea even on days when the weather is not good. Wandering in the outside all the time, Timothy witnesses that Mr. Abigail goes to the sea since he watches cub scouts and intends to commit indecencies. On the day when Timothy comes to the Abigails’ house for helping Mrs. Abigail with the housework, Mr. Abigail lets him drink sherry and beer. Being heavily drunk, Timothy mentions the reality about Mr. Abigail: “I’ve witnessed you up to your tricks, Commander, when she’s out on her Meals on Wheels.’ … Timothy whispered, but the whisper was clumsy because of the sherry and the beer: she heard distinctly, as though he were shouting. They would keep the secret, he said, he would never tell a soul that her husband went after Dynmouth’s cub scouts, intent on committing indecencies” (The Children 68). Timothy’s remarks put the old man into panic as he is aware of that his wife heard what Timothy whispered. By her husband’s alert and considering the turbulence in their relationship in sexual terms, Mrs. Abigail becomes sure about her husband’s perversion. They get Timothy out of the house, wishing not to see him again, and know that their marriage has been shattered. The old man feels deeply depressed and fails to repress the reality disclosed by Timothy as follows:

The truth kept poking itself up, like a weed in a garden. You pushed it away to the back recesses of your mind, but it crept and crawled about and then annoyingly broke through the surface again. The truth was that the unfortunate boy had somehow pried his way into an area that was private, an area that naturally didn’t concern anyone else. Commander Abigail didn’t even like the area: it caused him shame and guilt to consider it, he tried not to think about it. (Trevor, The Children 94)

Hence, for Mr. Abigail, Timothy ceases to be a friendly youth and transforms into a figure who confronts him (and his wife) with his shameful and disgraceful secret hidden so far by his marriage with a meek woman. He struggles to repress the truth about himself; therefore, when Timothy visits the Abigails next time to ask for the money for his housework and the suit, Mr. Abigail outrageously attempts to attack him: “in a high voice he [Mr. Abigail] used expressions she’d never heard before. His face had reddened. His
eyes had a wildness about them, as though he might attack the boy” (Trevor, *The Children* 112). Mr. Abigail’s intense anger and hatred to Timothy is in fact related with that he regards Timothy as the embodiment of the truth about himself. He compulsively wants to exterminate Timothy because he can not tolerate coming face to face with his own disgrace especially in the company of his wife. Ironically, it is Mr. Abigail himself who causes Timothy to get drunk and speak about the old man’s homosexuality. Hence, with a deep sense of remorse, shame and guilt and seeing that the boy insists on not leaving, Mr. Abigail thinks of committing suicide: “He moaned and sobbed, clinging to the door. He said he thought he would commit suicide.” (Trevor, *The Children* 113). The idea of suicide, which reveals the extremity of the pressure on Mr. Abigail, can be taken as another way of avoiding from confronting with the painful reality, or, metaphorically, shunning Timothy. In fact, the dichotomy between Timothy and other characters including Mr. Abigail in terms of their relation to truth fits into Richard Bonaccorso’s categorization of Trevor’s characters as those who “try to evade the truth” and those “who gravitate, often in spite of themselves, toward it” (113); while “truth becomes an avenger in the lives of the characters” such as Mr. Abigail, the protagonists such as Timothy “find themselves pursuing rather than fleeing truth” (114).

Timothy’s another act of ‘telling the truth’ which exacerbates his isolation in Dynmouth occurs in his relationship with Kate and Stephen, the twelve-year-old children who have just returned to Dynmouth to stay at a Sea House for ten days while their newly-married parents are on honeymoon. Having recently been traumatized by his mother’s sudden death, Stephen hardly accepts his father’s marriage to Kate’s mother, who had been deserted by her husband. Timothy approaches the kids in a friendly manner intending to ask for the wedding-dress of Stephen’s mother. He tells the kids about his play and all of the realities that he witnessed in Dynmouth. He asks Stephen for the wedding-dress and says that he knows about the dress as he spied into the house of
Stephen’s father one night and saw him putting the dress into a trunk. Yet, being rejected and disregarded by the kids, at another time, he tells them that he witnessed the death of Stephen’s mother. He claims that she was pushed down the cliff by her husband and gives further details: “he [Stephen’s father] tipped her down because he was head over heels on your [Kate’s] mum and she was calling your mum a prostitute. There’s always a reason why a person performs the murder act. They were on the job, see, your mum and Stephen’s dad. He was black as thunder when she said your mum was a pro.” (Trevor, *The Children* 129). Unable to tolerate Timothy’s blatant statements, Kate and Stephen beat him and shout at him. On the way back to the Sea House, they see Miss Lavant and realize that she had bad teeth, as Timothy had claimed. They also see Mr. Abigail at the beach and, paying attention to his appearance, they think that what Timothy told about him was true. Furthermore, Timothy also had shown the kids the bath tub, which, they had thought, was a product of Timothy’s fantasies.

Hence, Stephen feels that what Timothy had told about his mother’s death might be true. He remembers the callousness of his father when had told him about his mother’s death and thinks that there was something wrong with his manner. He finds some love letters from an unnamed woman in the drawers of his father’s desk and remembers his parents’ quarrels in bitter words. As a result, he comes to believe that his mother was murdered by his father and suffers greatly: “He left the room and in his bed he wept with a violence he had never known before, spasm following spasm. It was as though she had died again, only it was worse” (Trevor, *The Children* 142). However, as the third person narrator informs, his mother, being unable to endure his husband’s infidelity, had committed a suicide. In the end, Stephen gives the wedding-dress to Timothy and Kate, sharing with Stephen the same feelings of hatred and animosity towards Timothy, believes that Timothy is possessed by devils; both kids wish to never encounter Timothy again.
Thus, Timothy’s disclosure of bitter realities (though distorted by his imagination) significantly operates to impair his friendship with the two kids. Even though the content of Timothy’s play (which also represents a social reality) and his acts of spying people unsettle them, the awful and appalling reports they hear from him about Dynmouth people play a pivotal role in their detachment from him. Timothy’s direct and explicit way of informing them about all the evils in Dynmouth causes them to get an impression of the protagonist as a dangerous and ‘dark’ personality. Being children and having no mental capacity to confront with utterances of murder, adultery and homosexuality, Kate and Stephen are only able to turn away from realities which they had never imagined to be existing. As the evils of Dynmouth people disclosed to them by Timothy and in a rather irksome way, they associate him with the terrible incidents he witnessed and end up with feelings of fear and disgust towards him. Their disconnection with Timothy is, in fact, a reasonable act of fending themselves off the iniquities and malignancies of the outer world. For, even after putting an end to their relationship with him, both kids develop a pessimistic and distrustful view on society: “Kate sat by the summer-house with the setters, hugging them and whispering to them … She wished people were like dogs, she said to them” (Trevor, *The Children* 144). The realities, embodied by Timothy in their eyes, about people of Dynmouth traumatize them so severely as to wish to die: “he [Stephen] wished he could destroy himself, as she [his mother] had been destroyed. He wished he might die” (Trevor, *The Children* 142). Even though it is essentially Timothy’s revelations, rather than his abnormal personality, what put the kids into such distress and impair their psychology, their fear and anxiety are engendered through the agency of Timothy and therefore they turn to become nauseated by even any discussion related with him. In consequence, being shocked and dismayed to learn about the abominable misdeeds of the men and women of Dynmouth, Kate and Stephen withdraw from the external world; as the narrator indicates, “they would never see their parents in quite the
same way again, and ironically it was apt that they should not, because Timothy Gedge had not told lies entirely” (Trevor, *The Children* 177). Timothy, on the other hand, remains as an outsider partially for acting as the only messenger of truth.

Another character who refuses to sympathize with Timothy and adds to his isolation from society is Quentin Featherstone, the vicar of Dynmouth. Mr. Featherstone, unlike other characters, is not threatened or blackmailed by Timothy; however, Timothy’s presence as a solitary and helpless youth and that he, as a clergyman, is unwilling and unable to help him gives Mr. Featherstone an inner disturbance: “He [Mr. Featherstone] felt uneasy in the presence of the boy. He felt inadequate and for some reason guilty” (*The Children* 82). Even though the vicar is aware of the boy’s domestic troubles and the nuisances he causes on other people, he avoids from making a proper effort to rehabilitate him; instead, he keeps his distance from him as far as possible and tries not to be involved with his questions or problems, which makes him feel that he does not fulfil his responsibility: “Quentin rode away, feeling he should have stayed longer with the boy, if only to explain why there was no need for him to go bothering the Dasses” (Trevor, *The Children* 15).

In fact, Timothy, with his disruptive attitude, acts as an instrument that enlightens a significant truth about Mr. Featherstone, that is, his lack of religious faith in spite of his clerical identity. The vicar’s inner, sceptical attitude to God’s conducts and man’s fate is manifested when Kate asks him to exorcize Timothy:

> How could he say that there was only God’s insistence, even though He abided by no rules Himself, that His strictures should be discovered and obeyed? How could he say that God was all vague promises, and small print on guarantees that no one knew if He ever kept? It was appalling that Timothy Gedge had terrified these children, yet it had been permitted, like floods and famine. (Trevor, *The Children* 167)

Mr. Featherstone’s religious doubts also explain his sense of guilt and inadequacy especially in the company of Timothy. Being in an enormous need of external sympathy,
affection and attention to have a rapport with society. Timothy spontaneously confronts the clergymen with his spiritual and religious laxity. Mr. Featherstone does not wish to have a talk to or see Timothy because, as he acknowledges, “he could feel no Christian love for him” (The Children 104). The young boy pathetically needs to be helped and the vicar feels too weak to give him support in any way because he thinks that he can not change anything since, as he states, “‘God permits chance’ (Trevor, The Children 180).

Hence, Timothy, with the misfortunes he was exposed to and the troubles he causes, evokes in the vicar the bitter sense that the world and its people are permitted to do any sort of evils. Such a futile view on life and creation, which contradicts his divine mission to invite people to goodness and holy dominion of God, can be considered as the primary phenomenon that impedes Mr. Featherstone to develop a more optimistic, congenial and sensitive outlook on Timothy. He regards the boy as the personification of man’s evils which encircle the whole world as well as Dynmouth. Ironically enough, while ending his preach to a small congregation at the church with a prayer, he makes an inner questioning on the meaning and rationality of the existence of terribly malevolent acts in the world of human beings. Ending the preach and being alone in the empty church, he feels more intensely the existence of the acute truth that the undeniable presence and domination of evil over man’s mind and life is transferred to younger generations, that is the children of Dynmouth; and he believes that this collective transference is more terrible than personal acts of sin and crime:

In the empty church more truth nagged, making itself felt. It didn’t belong in the category of murder, or of suburban drama with sex or filial rejection. Yet it seemed more terrible, a horror greater than the Abigail’s marriage or the treatment of the Dasses by their son, greater even than the death of Stephen’s mother because Stephen’s mother had sought peace and at least had found it. It filled his mind, and slipped through the evening streets of Dynmouth with him as he rode his bicycle back to his ivy-clad rectory. It kept him company on Once Hill and as he pushed the bicycle into the garage and leant it against the Suffolk Punch. (Trevor, The Children 178)
So, all the evil realities that Timothy discloses signal to one vital fact in Mr. Featherstone’s opinion and it is that the children, witnessing the misdeeds occurring all around them would make the future equally terrible. The vicar thinks that Timothy, being an early adolescent who directly witnesses manifold sorts of evil, would be the forerunner of evils in future: “the boy would stand in court-rooms with his smile. He would sit in the drab offices of social workers. He would be incarcerated in the cells of different gaols. By looking at him now you could sense that future, and his eyes reminded you that he had not asked to be born. What crime would it be? What greater vengeance would he take?” (Trevor, *The Children* 177). Thus, in Mr. Featherstone’s point of view, Timothy is a youth who stands as a potential source of horror and crime; for, even though he is at an age when he is expected to be relatively more innocent, tender and inexperienced, Timothy, in contrast, exhibits lower moral and ethical character of society. Mr. Featherstone feels guilty for acting as one of other people of Dynmouth because he ignores the truths revealed by Timothy’s observations and does his best to keep them hidden as well. His avoidance from Timothy is a proof of such an act of ignoring/shunning the reality. In a similar manner, he avoids from declaring his genuine thoughts (that the world is a place full of evils) to Kate when she tells him about what Timothy claims to have witnessed. “‘I should have been honest with that child this morning.’ … He shook his head. He said he should have said that morning that if you looked at Dynmouth in one way you saw it prettily, with its tea-shops and lace; and that if you looked at it in another way there was Timothy Gedge” (Trevor, *The Children* 179). Such a dichotomy clearly shows that Timothy, within a town where people are deluded by each other’s lies, secrets and hypocrisies, is a dissident outsider who tells the truth about them. Timothy, as Joyce Carol Oates describes, stands as “a fact of life in Dynmouth, a testimony to Dynmouth's inexplicable failure. … one is forced to experience Timothy as a natural event -- or an Act of God, like flood or famine” (“More Lonely”).

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Having made an impact on the lives of some residents of Dynmouth, Timothy is not permitted to bring about further catastrophe and stage his act in the competition; and it is the vicar who puts an end to Timothy’s aspirations. When Mr. Featherstone is informed by Kate about Timothy’s acts of harassments and blackmails and also the characteristics of his intended play, Mr. Featherstone goes to Timothy’s house and gets from him all of the stuff he collected from other people to give them back to their owners. He also tells Timothy that his play is not suitable for the competition and therefore he would not participate in it. Hence, in a way, the vicar performs a duty (or a divine intervention) which, in his opinion, is supposed to be carried out by God. However, it is apparent that he chooses to be satisfied with only maintaining seemingly untroubled façade of society. He prefers to see Dynmouth ‘prettily’ rather than dealing with the core of evils and looking at the part of the town where he confronts with Timothy. As befitting to the conventional role of a clergyman, he superficially re-establishes ‘order’ in Dynmouth by precluding any further disturbance that might be caused by Timothy. He warns Timothy to leave other people alone and give up the idea of performing his act. The vicar himself is aware of that he only pretends as if the essential wickedness in Dynmouth were fomented by Timothy and his acts of blackmailing. Therefore, apart from feeling insufficient and weak, Mr. Featherstone feels guilty in the presence of Timothy because the youth brings the vicar face to face with the fact that he behaves exactly in the same hypocritical way as other people in Dynmouth do. Hence, the vicar intensifies Timothy’s isolation from society instead of trying to find a genuinely helpful solution to his problems and acting as a catalyst to let him mingle with the outer world in a proper way.

Thus, Timothy, with his sinister smile and predatory look, ironically represents the society which rejects him; on the surface, he seems to be funny, humorous and amiable, but deep in his heart, the only thing he cares about is his act for which he does
not refrain from demonic conducts. As Kristin Morrison argues, “Timothy Gedge stands there, the child who in his mix of good and evil is an emblem of the community itself, even when that community denies its community with him, calling him monster and attempting to reject him” (78). Though community’s rejection of Timothy seems to be engendered by the protagonist’s harassing eccentricity and acts of blackmailing, it is actually owing to his awareness of their secrets; Timothy is denied by members of society because, for them, he embodies the realities that they want to repress. He remains as an outsider in Dynmouth because, as Gregory A. Schirmer articulates, he “is a destroyer of illusion, and therefore a seer of truth. And the truth that he brings to light is not very encouraging, at least to someone wanting to believe in man's capacity for Christian charity” (69).

One character who experiences a positive spiritual change at the end of the novel via Timothy’s existence in Dynmouth is Mrs. Featherstone. Contrary to Mr. Featherstone, whose bond with and trust in divine wisdom weakens as he ascribes human malignancies and evils to ill-fortune, his wife, Lavinia Featherstone possesses the insight he lacks. In a way as to be the spokesperson of Trevor30, she thinks that it would be a very easy way of eluding from reality to attribute wickedness of the world to merely chance. Being a compassionate woman towards children and running a nursery-school, Mrs. Featherstone has recently miscarried her baby boy and feels edgy, which has a role in her motherly consideration for Timothy. Taking Timothy’s case as a microcosm of worldly evils, Mrs. Featherstone asserts that the social/domestic circumstances inflicted by other people on Timothy lowers his self-esteem and coerce him into the deviant outlook he exhibits:

She wondered how he [Timothy] would be now if he’d been brought up in the Down Manor Orphanage. She wondered how he’d be if his father had not driven off or if his mother had shown him more affection. How would he be if on one of

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30 In William Trevor: A Study of His Fiction, Gregory A. Schirmer argues that “Trevor’s view of the human condition” is founded upon compassion, connection and loving kindness. In this regard, Lavinia Featherstone is the only character in the novel who has a shared perspective with Trevor; in a parallel with the author's humanistic mentality, Mrs. Featherstone sides with the opinion that “some kind of redemption, brought about by the compassion of other people, is always at least possible” (Schirmer 74).
those Saturday mornings when he’d hung around the rectory she’d recognized herself the bitterness beneath his grin? She couldn’t believe that the catastrophe of Timothy Gedge was not somehow due to other people, and the circumstances created by other people. Quentin was wrong, she said to herself. She was certain he was wrong, certain that it was not just bad luck in a chancy world. (Trevor, *The Children* 181)

Thus, it is Lavinia Featherstone, a relatively minor character, who contemplates on the circumstances that shapes Timothy’s personality and mentality and comes to conclusion that the boy himself is a victim of his environment. In fact, a scrutiny of the ways in which Timothy is influenced by his social and domestic environment shows that Mrs. Featherstone is right in her opinion about Timothy; the protagonist, fundamentally, transmits the outer attitude and conducts he receives on his own behaviour and mentality. First of all, the fact that his teacher, Mr. Stringer, takes Timothy and his classmates down to the Horror Chamber of Madame Tussaud Museum in London may have a direct role on Timothy’s impaired psychology; after that visit, he gets the idea of associating his act with George Joseph Smith and his murders. Being probably traumatized by the realistic waxwork figures of the murderer and his victims, Timothy decides to “reconcile death and comedy in a theatrical act” (Trevor, *The Children* 25). Besides, he witnesses the death of Stephen’s mother, which worsens his mental state as well. His lack of empathy and compassion as manifested through his attitude to the Dasses, the Abigails and Kate and Stephen is an outcome of his deprivations of parental care and affection; in a sense, he behaves in a way faithful to what he observes in the manner of his mother and sister. His acts of following people, looking and trespassing into their houses, threatening and blackmailing them are all related with his struggle to compensate his entrenched sense of being unwanted, unworthy, insignificant, ineligible and contemptible. In each of his aberrant acts, he intends to draw others’ attention on himself and make himself a vitally

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31 The Horror Chamber of Madame Tussaud Museum in London offers an exhibition of realistic wax figures of disreputable murderers and notorious figures in history. The chamber also includes some bloody and horrific stuff such as decapitated human figures, severed heads or other parts of body, figures being tortured and frightening re-enactments of infamous homicides in waxwork. The Chamber, with its dark and disturbing atmosphere, had such a traumatic impact on especially younger visitors that it was closed due to protests and complaints of parents whose children visited the Chamber (Baddeley 2017).
significant figure for them, which he achieves to do. Thus, as Mrs. Featherstone perceives, Timothy is pushed into being an outsider in Dynmouth rather than behaving and making decisions by his pure subjectivity. Yet, unlike her husband, who passively gets lost in his thought of evil’s inevitable hold over man and life, Mrs. Featherstone feels that she has the sparkle of hope to make things change positively:

Believing still that the catastrophe had been caused by other people and the actions of other people, … Lavinia saw a spark in the gloom. It was she, it seemed, not Quentin, who might somehow blow hope into hopelessness. It was she who one day, in the rectory or the garden, might penetrate the shell that out of necessity had grown. … the feeling of a pattern more securely possessed her, the feeling of events happening and being linked, the feeling that her wakeful nights and her edginess over her lost child had not been without an outcome. … She could in no way be glad that Timothy Gedge would come regularly to the rectory: that prospect was grim. Yet she felt, unable to help herself, a certain irrational joyfulness, as though an end and a beginning had been reached at the same time. You could not live without hope, some part of her woman’s intuition told her: while a future was left you must not. (Trevor, The Children 187)

Hence, Mrs. Featherstone, as the personification of “the passionate humanity he [Trevor] brings to his portrayal of the overlooked and the despised” (Prose “Comfort Cult”), empathically ponders over the possibility that she could help Timothy by being of a genuine support for him; because she believes that it is the lack of an external support (of a mother, sister, father or even a friend) what makes the boy act as a peculiar stranger in society. Describing such a change of mood in Mrs. Featherstone’s state of mind as an “epiphany”, Gregory A. Schirmer refers to the relationship between Timothy’s presence in society as an outsider and Mrs. Featherstone’s intuitive faith in ameliorating his isolation as follows: “Lavinia's belief that she might be able to rescue Timothy from the bleak future foreseen for him by her husband, that she might be able to make a useful, compassionate connection with this disturbed boy from an utterly alien social world, grows out of her conviction that Timothy's situation is the responsibility of people, not God, not Satan” (71). Hence, as Mrs. Featherstone’s experience of ‘an explosion of truth’ manifests, what makes the social world ‘alien’ and keeps Timothy in the outside of this
territory is, on a great scale, the hypocritical and corrupt manner and perspective of the Dynmouth people as well as his family. In fact, a juxtaposition of Timothy and other characters in terms of morality shows that the protagonist, excluding Kate, Stephen and other ‘children’ of Dynmouth, remains to be a more naïve figure. The seemingly moral and normal individuals in the town have a ‘dark’ incident in their past or an indecent or shocking aspect about themselves which characterize their faulty or weak personality. Timothy is lost within their darkness and, as Tom McAlindon puts it, with final contemplation of Lavinia Featherstone, “Trevor clearly implies that if anything can restore the lost Timothy, it will be the miracle of human compassion” (93).

While Lavinia experiences a “full epiphany”, other characters in the novel, as John J. Stinson argues, “through inexperience, obtuseness, or the need for repression, fall short of a full epiphany” (24). The contrast between Timothy and the society of Dynmouth is mainly created by that members of society fail to confront with evil realities about themselves known by Timothy; they repress them (and avoid Timothy) in such a stringent and fervid manner that they drastically turn to be aggressive upon a possibility of being scandalized. For that reason, let alone Timothy’s acts of threatening and blackmailing, even a slight indication made by him to his awareness of their secrets would be enough to render him an outsider in Dynmouth. Actually, the differences between the protagonist and the rest of Dynmouth society are also manifested through Trevor’s use of allegorical names for his characters. The connection between meanings of the characters’ names (or surnames) and their attitudes and personalities reveals that the names and surnames given to the characters hint their particular aspects. The name Timothy, coming from Greek Timotheos, means “honouring God” or “God honouring” (Morris 1346) and in the novel, Timothy, in a way, honours God by witnessing and attempting to reveal the crimes and sins encircling Dynmouth. The name ‘Abigail’, which comes from Hebrew “Abhigayil” and means “man of joy” or “my father is joy” (Morris 3), befits Mr. Abigail, who indulges
himself with alcohol and sexual perversion. Mr. Plant is also a character whose surname resonates with his lecherous acts. Hence, as the naming of characters indicates, Timothy represents William Trevor’s “alien forces impinging on cautious, conservative householders” and his action suggests “the plight of a complacent England grown increasingly defenceless against unruly outsiders” (Allen 141).

4.5. Class Distinction

Lower moral and ethical qualities of the residents of Dynmouth are combined with their implicit class consciousness as well. In fact, a reason for Timothy’s being disregarded and approached with contempt by society is that he belongs to a social class lower than any other characters in the novel, which is covertly indicated at several stages. For example, through detailed references to food and decoration of kitchens, the distinction between Timothy and other characters in terms of social class is demonstrated. The shabby kitchen at Timothy’s house and the ways in which he is deprived of food are depicted as follows:

In the small grease-laden kitchen the dishes they’d [Timothy’s mother and sister] eaten a meal off were in the sink. He hunted in a cupboard for another tin of peaches - or pineapple or pears, he didn’t mind. He knew he wouldn’t find any. He wouldn’t even find a tin of condensed milk, because his mother always opened tins on the day she bought them. ... Finding nothing edible, he closed the cupboard door. (Trevor, The Children 110)

While Timothy’s life at home is characterized by such an extreme poverty, loneliness and misery, the other characters, as members of upper classes, lead a much more comfortable life: “in the rectory the twins sat at the kitchen table with their parents, all of them eating poached eggs”; Kate and Stephen, having a “comfortable and comforting” kitchen where there was “the Aga burning quietly, the lofty, panelled ceiling, flowered plates arranged

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32 The food characters eat has a significance in Trevor’s writings because it gives a hint on that specific character. In an interview, Trevor refers to the place of food in his works as follows: “the food a person eats, or the food you describe that person eating, can establish that person. It tells you something about that person, in the same way as the decoration of a room does” (“Talking with William” 123).
on the dresser, the commodious wall-cupboards, the scrubbed wooden table” (Trevor, *The Children* 44) sit at the table of a rich breakfast consisting of chicken-and-ham paste, liver-and-bacon, sardine, tomato, apricot jam; and “in Mrs Abigail’s cupboards there were tins and jars of all sorts of things, fruit cocktail, chicken-and-ham paste, steak-and-kidney pie, Gentleman’s Relish” (Trevor, *The Children* 110). Such unequal conditions in terms of domestic life signal to the lower social status of Timothy. Apart from these socio-economic disparities between Timothy and the rest of the Dynmouth people, the fact that he has to work at the Abigails’ house for some pocket money since he gets none from his mother also exposes his subordinate state in society.

Belonging to a lower class has two essential functions in rendering Timothy’s state of being an outsider. The first is that society’s perception of Timothy is formed within the frame created by the class system; that is, other characters of upper or middle-upper classes have a covert sense of superiority in their relationship with the protagonist. For example, seeing Timothy in the garden of the Sea House, Mrs. Blakey, the nursemaid, feels that he “looked like something from another world in the garden. He didn’t belong in gardens, any more than he belonged in the company of two small children” (Trevor, *The Children* 121). The same disparaging treatment of Timothy as a person of lower qualities is exhibited by Mr. Featherstone as well; the vicar takes on an attentive and vigilant attitude to Kate while he belittles and disregards Timothy and pays no attention to his troubles. Timothy’s lower position in society enables Mr. Plant, the Dasses and the Abigails to have an extra freedom in behaving Timothy in an aggressive and unperturbed manner. A sense of self-assertion and being privileged, which emanates from being of a higher social standing, is apparently existent in Kate and Stephen when they beat Timothy for pestering them: “in a sudden jerk of anger Stephen turned and kicked at his shins, but the blows didn’t hurt because of Stephen’s Wellington boots. What was more painful were Kate’s fists smacking into his stomach, blow after blow. She hit him so savagely
that a woman with a pram told her to calm down” (Trevor, *The Children* 129). Even though it is certain that Timothy’s persistent harassments and unacceptable acts of blackmailing and threatening cause him to be repulsed by other people, society’s pre-established and fixed class consciousness situates him at a separate and inferior position. As George O’Brien indicates, “Timothy Gedge represents a side of Dynmouth from which such well-established citizens as Commander Abigail and Reverend Featherstone [and also Kate and Stephen] are remote. And by trespassing on the town’s composure, Timothy offends not only against geographical lines of social demarcation … but also against the standards of behaviour expected behind those lines” (32). Hence, class distinction operates as a social barrier for Timothy which blocks him to develop a sense of belonging to the outer world.

The other critical role of belonging to lower social strata in intensifying Timothy’s solitariness is related with its profound influence on the protagonist’s outlook on life. Just as other characters of upper classes treat Timothy with a consciousness of being higher in social status than him, Timothy views life and approaches other people through the perspective instilled in him by class distinction. Regarding this preconceived notion of lower selfhood, Denis Sampson argues that Timothy Gedge, as well as some other protagonists of Trevor, are exposed to the anguish and squalor inflicted on them by the lower social class they belong to; such characters, in his view, “are possessed by fantasies that are mediated by that culture, their fantasies of identity masks for a deeper psychological condition of acute shame and alienation” (“Bleak Splendour” 283). In a parallel, Timothy is distressed to think about his bleak future in which he would have to work at a sandpaper factory in case of a failure to perform his act.33 The possibility of working at the factory for a lifetime and being stuck in a destitute life with his mother and

33Such a future anxiety of the protagonist might be reverberating the economic stagnation of Trevor’s childhood Ireland where most people, including Trevor himself and especially the young, felt the same as Timothy about their future and emigrated to other countries.
sister motivates Timothy so as to let him attempt to move upper in social position. Therefore, in a way, the plotline of the novel, which is structured on Timothy’s relationship with other characters in the context of his effort to participate in the talent competition, can be construed as the protagonist’s refusal to stay within the boundaries of his lower status in society. Furthermore, as his aberrant conducts manifest, he compulsively acts in accordance with the ruthlessly vying structure of the outer world. Regarding the hold of exploitative and manipulative dynamics of class system on Timothy’s mentality, Gregory A. Schirmer states that Timothy’s “position in the class system has forced him to view human relationships - and his own life - in terms of competition and exploitation” (71). In other words, on one hand he is born into a social structure based on class distinction and strives to let himself be included within the privileged and well-off community of the upper classes; and on the other hand he recognizes and interiorizes the vile qualities of this structure and conceives a strategy of counter-attack accordingly. He intrinsically challenges and goes against other people rather than being unobtrusive, humble and gentle in his relationship with them. As he possesses no financial, domestic or social power, the only phenomenon he could employ to achieve his goal is a sly manipulation of the others’ faults and weaknesses which he obtains through an astute view of society; for this reason, his acts of following people, spying and trespassing into their houses can be taken as conducts which are carried out by the protagonist with class-oriented concerns as well. Class division therefore has a significant role in the occurrence of antagonistic and deviant activities of Timothy and therefore, in inducing the protagonist’s state of an outsider in society.

Thus, the aggressive reaction of Dynmouth people to a possible divulgation of their secrets and the concealed control of class system over people’s mentality are two basic societal factors which cause Timothy to be detached from society. Even though his personal abnormalities, inherited from his dysfunctional family, have a critical role in
forming a particular image of himself as an abnormally eccentric youth in the judgement of society, the anomalous characteristics of the residents of Dynmouth moulded by class consciousness magnify Timothy’s isolation and alienation from the outer world. In the end, Timothy’s attempts to establish a superiority upon others with the hidden truths he knows about them operate only to worsen his interpersonal relationships and intensify his solitariness. As he abandons his intention to perform his act and become a famous comedian, he narcissistically gets attached to another illusion which is that he is the illegitimate son of Dr. Greenslade, a married man, and his secret love, Miss Lavant. He assumes that he was given to his parents since the lovers had wanted to keep the child secret from other people and that he could get money left to him in a will. Timothy’s alteration of his fantasies and immersion in another imaginary story can be regarded as a way of defending his mental state against the frustration related with his act: “He had said to the clergyman that opportunity wouldn’t knock, but you never knew and you definitely had to keep your spirits up or you’d go to the wall” (Trevor, *The Children* 189).

The novel ends with a cheerful and exuberant view of Dynmouth people who gather at the venue of amusements of the Easter Fetê. A lively song plays on the loudspeaker system and “strings of coloured bulbs were lit up” (Trevor, *The Children* 184) though it was still daylight. “Commander Abigail, with his rolled-up towel and bathing-trunks under his arm, buying cake from Mrs Stead-Carter” while Timothy’s sister enjoys the atmosphere with her boyfriend (Trevor, *The Children* 186). His mother is also there, “her hair freshly styled, hurrying round the stalls with her sister the dressmaker, whose hair looked smart also. Mr Plant and his wife and children were there, but when he met Mrs Gedge face to face near the hoopla they passed as if they were strangers” (Trevor, *The Children* 186). Kate and Stephen, being largely recovered from the trauma caused by Timothy, are entertained to see the Spot the Talent competition. Within such an exhilarating atmosphere, Timothy draws a contrast; he stands alone as the only one
who sees through the hypocritical attitude of people towards each other and who reveals the murky side of society. Among these people who seem to be God-fearing, moral, honest, charitable and compassionate, Timothy is the outsider who is left alone for showing them the truths about them.

To conclude, as a creation of William Trevor’s vast imagination, Timothy Gedge is an eccentric figure who remains as an outsider roaming at the peripheries of the lives of Dynmouth people. Timothy’s isolation from society originates from his mental disorders as manifested by his abnormal behaviour; and his mental problems are unequivocal outcomes of his estrangement from his family. He grows up in a dysfunctional family where he lacks parental love, protection, affection, discipline and guidance, which are all vital for a normal development of individual psychology and personality. The inconsiderate, indifferent, negligent and humiliating attitude of his mother and sister makes Timothy feel worthless, insignificant, unloved and unwanted from his early childhood onwards. For this reason, he stays away from his mother and sister at home and spends most of his time watching T.V; and in the outside, he pursues people and seeks for precisely what he needs in order to become an individual; that is, the worth, significance, love, appreciation and attention he is domestically deprived of. Hence, in a way, each one of Timothy’s acts of having long talks with other people, observing and following them testify to an outsider’s pathetic loneliness and need for human communication and interaction. In a parallel, his fantasies of becoming a T.V celebrity signal to his poignant yearning for replacing his despised and marginalized selfhood with a superior identity.

Intense emotional deprivation and exposition to parental maltreatment leave a mark on Timothy. Controlled and put into practice by his impaired mentality, Timothy’s acts of harassing, spying, blackmailing, threatening and intimidating people are indicators of the ways in which his young, imaginative and creative faculties as well as his
astonishing tenacity are canalized into a path of deviant and even demonic conducts. By
presenting Timothy as a monstrous outsider, Trevor underscores the ‘venom’ that could
be unwittingly injected in man by family or society. As signs of such a damaging
influence, the deep distrust of people ingrained in Timothy by his family and the extremity
of his hunger for an external appreciation of his abilities catalyse his victimization of
people surrounding him. Yet, Timothy’s aggressive manner towards others may have a
vengeful characteristic rather than being ferocious hostility; for, the people tormented by
Timothy behave contemptuously superior to him because of their upper social status and
they are either perverted or mentally/spiritually weak and vulnerable due to repression of
a disturbing truth related with them. As his aspiration of becoming a famous comedian
suggests, Timothy’s understanding of integrating himself in society is in proportion to
outshining other people in terms of fame, respectability and adorability. Consequently,
the grandiosity of this goal, combined with his anomalous mentality and society’s
repugnance at him impede him to establish proper interpersonal relationships and coerce
him into the isolated state of an outsider.
CHAPTER FIVE

THE OUTSIDER in PATRICK McCABE’S THE BUTCHER BOY

Patrick McCabe’s third novel, The Butcher Boy (1992), recounts the tragic experiences of Francie Brady, a preadolescent, wayward school-boy who progressively becomes deranged in the course of the novel and commits a brutal murder in the end. Set in an unnamed, small Irish town and at a time which is probably the early 1960s, the novel is narrated retrospectively by the first person point of view of the protagonist himself. Francie, as an adult confined to a mental asylum, gives the account of his experiences from his childhood perspective. Thereby, McCabe limpidly manifests Francie’s deformed psychology as well as his humorous approach to the figures and incidents agonizing and oppressing him. Through Francie’s relationship with the outer world, McCabe brings a satirical outlook on Ireland’s social, historical, institutional and religious fabric. As Francie remains helpless within a hostile social sphere and fails to cope with the humiliation and exclusion inflicted on him, his contact with reality fades away; in this while, a good many unspoken realities of Irish society are conspicuously underscored.

This chapter of the thesis aims to discuss the ways in which Francie Brady acts as an outsider who pathetically struggles to let himself be embraced by the community and to secure a proper attachment to the outer world via remaining connected to some particular persons. In this respect, after a short reference to Patrick McCabe’s literary background and introduction to The Butcher Boy, the dysfunctional family where Francie grows up will be argued regarding the domestic circumstances which impair the protagonist’s psychology and personality. Then, the role of the upper-clas Nugent family in aggravating the protagonist’s inner anguish and further isolating him from society will be explicated. Also, the ways in which social and domestic distress exerts an influence on the protagonist’s behaviour and interpersonal relations will be illustrated by referring
to his specific attitude and conducts. The community’s indifferent, biased and antagonistic approach towards Francie will be scrutinized as a condition catalysing and intensifying Francie’s alienated state and, therefore, forcing him into transforming realities within his psychic landscape. Finally, the role of the failure of such institutions as industrial school, primary school and the court in worsening Francie’s psychology and coercing him toward the outside of communal life will be clarified because both the turbulence in Francie’s family and his own derangement and estrangement are partly tied up with these institutions.

5.1. Patrick McCabe, His Literary Background and *The Butcher Boy*

Born in 1955 in Clones, a small Irish town on the border in County Monaghan, Patrick McCabe is seen as one of the leading writers of contemporary Irish fiction particularly for his “unique blend of humour and pathos” (Head 141) in disclosing the impaired psychologies of his characters. In 1974, McCabe graduated from St Patrick's Teacher Training College in Dublin and worked as a teacher in the following nineteen years while writing and dealing with music at the same time. His first published work, *The Adventures of Shay Mouse* (1985), a children’s story, was followed by *Music on Clinton Street* (1986), an epistolary novel focusing on the correspondence between two brothers. While teaching in London, he wrote *Carn* (1989) in which he gives an authentic and vivid depiction of the life in a small Irish town between 1960s and 1980s. In his next and most acclaimed novel, *The Butcher Boy* (1992), McCabe not only once again draws on the genuine socio-cultural structure of a small Irish town as his fictional landscape but deftly delves into the inner world of Francie Brady, his preadolescent protagonist. Being awarded with The Irish Times/Aer Lingus Literature Prize in 1992 and shortlisted for Booker Prize in the same year, *The Butcher Boy* garnered McCabe pre-eminence in literary circles and was adapted into a play titled *Frank Pig Says Hello*. The novel was also homonymously adapted into a film directed by Neil Jordan in 1997.
McCabe’s following work, *The Dead School* (1995), which was adapted into a play in 2009, is “inspired by [his] conflict with a Dublin headmaster in the 70s” (O’Mahony, “King”) and tells of the relationship between two teachers both of whom are psychologically deformed. In his sixth novel, *Breakfast on Pluto* (1998), McCabe gives an account of the story of Patrick "Pussy" Braden, a marginalised male transvestite with a rich imagination. Shortlisted for the 1998 Booker Prize and adapted into a film with the same title by Neil Jordan in 2005, the novel, in many respects, resembles to *The Butcher Boy*; as Michiko Kakutani indicates; the protagonists in both novels “feel estranged from the small-town folks around them. And both lose themselves in fantasies constructed out of odd pop culture shards” (“Breakfast”).

*Mondo Desperado* (1999), McCabe’s collection of ten short stories, was followed by *Emerald Germs of Ireland* (2005) in which the author presents insights into the injured psychic space of Pat McNab, a forty-five-year-old madman who oscillates between the reality and his fantasies within the narrative of his numerous murders. Similarly, *Call Me the Breeze* (2003) is imbued with ambiguities generated by the delusional mind of the protagonist, Joey Tallo; the storyline revolves around atrocities of the 1970’s Ireland and Joey’s involvement in literary art which ends in failure. In *Winterwood* (2006), McCabe implicitly touches on the changing Irish culture and society especially in rural areas through inner transformation of Redmond Hatch, a journalist whose life and marriage is also turbulent. In 2007, McCabe’s play titled *The Revenant* was staged in Ireland with the directorship of Joe O’Bryne. McCabe’s next novel, *The Holy City* (2009) tells of Chris McCool, a sixty-seven-year-old protagonist who is kept in an asylum for a long time and whose memories of rural Ireland in the 1960s are infused with hallucinations. The author, in *The Stray Sod Country* (2010), presents “a dark but jauntily amusing portrait of an era” of the late 1950s, “and of an eccentric rural way of life inevitably affected by technological and cultural progress” (Briscoe 2010). *Hello and Goodbye* (2013), contains
two intertwined horror novellas and reflects McCabe’s chaotic fictional world. In 2013, McCabe’s play, *The Big Yum Yum*, bearing the qualities of revenge tragedy, was staged in Ireland. McCabe, in his last novel, *Heartland* (2018), once again creates a dark atmosphere laden with murder, betrayal and vengeance through the story of Ray “Ringo” Wade.

As typical of Patrick McCabe, his works swarm with narratives concentrating on the aftermath of individual trauma and psychological damage. Even though, as Peter Carty makes it clear, “the heights he [McCabe] reached early on with *The Butcher Boy*, *Breakfast on Pluto* and *The Dead School* gave way to several less acutely voiced works” (“The Stray”) mostly due to their complexities and ambiguities in plotline and narrative, McCabe remains to be one of the most accomplished figures among contemporary Irish novelists. The recurring themes of shame, guilt, vengeance and brutality embody the author’s dark and unsettling outlook in his novels. On the other hand, the absurd incidents his protagonists face with and their comical stance on their environment and life itself at large drastically adds humour to McCabe’s fiction. The author’s distinctive amalgamation of violence, insanity and playfulness forms his bitter comedy which is filled with subjects, concepts and images peculiar to provincial Ireland; therefore, his works are called ‘Bog Gothic’ although he asserts that “social fantastic” would be a more accurate term to identify his works with (“Draining Out” 141).

Through the depictions of life in small-town, urban landscapes, McCabe chronicles the pathology of a tumultuous and cultural transition in Ireland towards modernity (Sheridan 2016). In an interview he affirms that the community he portrays in *The Butcher Boy* freshly experiences this transition while the protagonist, basically belonging to the dynamics of the previous era, is left in the outside of his social milieu: “a feeling that something totally new is happening [in the fictional community] - but it hasn't really taken hold yet. That's what I remember. To some extent, the Francie character
has a foot in either camp. He's growing up in his mother's and father's time” (“Meat” 10). Especially in his major works, McCabe draws on the turbulent engagement of individual with a social environment which welcomes this transition and adopts a changed perspective. Even though McCabe’s such protagonists as Malachy Dudgeon and Patrick Braden “exhibit a fascination with American and British popular culture, being more familiar with comic books and television shows than they are with Irish history” (Smallman, “Patrick”), they take aggressive and violent action against the community’s readiness to forsake the essence of their Irishness and to espouse a hypocritical primness and disparaging attitude towards a victim, who is mostly themselves. Francie Brady, in *The Butcher Boy*, is precisely such a victimized and estranged protagonist; he is traumatized by his parents, forsaken by his best friend and contemptuously excluded by the community of the small town where he resides as a peripheral figure.

Being Patrick McCabe’s masterpiece, *The Butcher Boy* reflects the typical qualities of McCabe’s fiction particularly in that it is a small-town novel concentrating on a delusional youth’s disrupted relationship with an uncaring and humiliating social environment. The novel, as Rüdiger Imhof suggests, “offers a deeply moving, really devastating account of loneliness, jealousy, evil and madness” (290). The similarities between Francie’s experiences in the novel and those of McCabe point to the novel’s autobiographical aspect. The novel’s locale is probably Clones, the author’s hometown, and Francie’s domestic environment is, to some extent, corresponds to that of McCabe. Just like Francie’s father in the novel, McCabe’s father, who was originally from Belfast, also had a drink problem which affected his family (O’Mahony, “King”). Regarding the author’s childhood and family, Sophie Gorman notes a follows: “Pat's childhood was rarely quiet. His father Bernard and mother Dympna had often agitated relations and, from a very young age, Patrick would escape into his beloved Dandy comics and later into the Luxor cinema in the town. Bernard brought much music into the household and
music has always remained a major part of Pat's life” (“The wild”). Thus, domestic troubles, an alcoholic and musician father, and a keen interest in films and comic books, which are all shared aspects of the author and his protagonist, manifest some of the autobiographical aspects in *The Butcher Boy*. Furthermore, McCabe’s strong attachment to horror movies incites the dark and macabre tone of the novel whose storyline is, in fact, inspired by a murder committed in Clones[^34]. McCabe’s following statements illustrate his inspiration for the novel:

> It started off with a feeling of yearning that I remembered as a kid. … There was a lad I used to knock around with, we used to swap comics all the time, I was up and down to his house every day. But one day I went down and his mother said they were moving to Dublin, and I just couldn't take it in, I flipped. Then I heard this song, 'The Butcher Boy', about a woman hanging herself, and I suppose I was still harbouring this sense of loss because I identified with it. The murder [in the novel] itself was based on a real-life murder which took place in Clones in 1904, when one guy butchered another and buried him under a pile of manure, where he lay undiscovered for nine months. ("A Lad I Used to" 117)

McCabe’s frustration to lose his best friend and his sense of yearning are directly projected to *The Butcher Boy* as some of the central motifs of the novel. Besides, the fact that McCabe completed the novel “while working as a teacher of children with autism and behavioural difficulties” (Kelly 117) reveals that he might have drawn on his first-hand experience on and insight into the impaired child psychology in creating Francie Brady as a mentally disordered youth. And the graphic brutality committed by ‘the butcher boy’ of *The Butcher Boy* towards the end of the novel springs from another authorial experience; as McCabe states, “I used to pass an abattoir every day and like, Clones is a very small town. … So you encounter brutality at a very early age, anybody growing up in a small town does. I particularly did because the abattoir was beside the house” ("St. Macartan” 184).

[^34]: In 1903, a pig butcher named Joseph Fee brutally kills John Flanagan, a tradesman, and buries his body under a manure pile (Baker, 14-15). Francie’s way of killing Mrs. Nugent and disposing her body is the same with that of Joseph Fee, except that the protagonist murders a woman. In an interview, McCabe states that while writing the novel he initially thought that Francie would kill Philip rather than Mrs. Nugent (“Interview with”).
The Butcher Boy is characterized by the socio-cultural qualities of the 1960s Ireland, and particularly, of Clones, where Patrick McCabe grew up. As Melania Terrazas asserts, McCabe, during his childhood in Clones, “was witness to the region’s rapid modernization and internationalization, and the novel reflects the upheaval of this social and political transition” (302). At a period when Ireland was newly breaking out of the shell of De Valera’s conservatism to a liberation and modernism heralded by Lemass’ rule, such provincial communities as that of Clones were excited to experience the upcoming change in their lives. However, McCabe’s hometown was economically shaken in the late 1950’s and early 1960’s due to the closures of cross-border railway lines which had let the town thrive in the aftermath of the Second World War (Nash et al. 43). McCabe states that the closures as well as the Northern Troubles caused “a huge psychological wound” on the people of Clones and created a “brutalized culture” during his childhood (“St. Macartan” 181). He elaborates on the conditions of the social environment which he directly experienced and frequently transferred into his works as follows:

So the world that I write about, which is a world of noise and clamour and excitement… an interacting community …the families were huge, and they couldn’t afford to feed them because they were poor. So the kids were out all day every day, and you know, wearing shoddy enough clothes. But they were tremendously vital. A huge vivacity… At that time, the Church was beginning to collapse. The foundations were beginning to rock anyway … a world of secrets, like a world of small town provincial secrets which contains appalling horrors under the cover of ordinariness or maybe even simplicity. (“Draining out” 135-139)

In The Butcher Boy, McCabe manifests such facts as the weakening of the Church’s power and moral/ethical decline in public foundations through the experiences of one of the kids he mentions in the quotation. Sexual abuse of children by priests, for example, is one of the issues which he exhibits in the novel as indicative of the connection of his work with real life: “if the paedophile thing was there in the book to begin with because there it was in life, it’s only reflecting the growth, the trajectory of the society” (McCabe, “Draining Out” 139). One significant phenomenon characterizing the novel is the
hypocritical, uncaring and disdainful manner of the community encircling the protagonist. This sort of a social structure can be approached through neo-colonial lens because, as Donna Potts indicates, Francie and his family “conform in just as many ways to the Celtic type as the Nugents”, who, to a great extent, epitomize the community’s perspective, “do to the Saxon type” (83). For this reason, “while The Butcher Boy is about a boy caught between childhood and adolescence, it is also about a culture torn between Irish and English values, between the traditional and the modern” (Potts 83).

The Butcher Boy also exhibits the impact of such global issues as Cuban Missile Crisis and the risk of a nuclear war on the community of a small town. The period portrayed in the novel is, as Carole Zucker argues, “a time governed by the paranoiac, and somewhat mad A-Bomb and anti-Communist hysteria, the mysticism and paralysis of a country still dominated by archaic religious beliefs and superstitions, and the repressive, largely rural, small-town milieu that characterized the era” (203). Hence, in The Butcher Boy, McCabe conveys the aspects of the world which he personally observed during his childhood through the experiences of a youth whose psychology progressively deteriorates in the course of the novel. The novel, in a way, is the story of the ways in which Francie Brady remains as an outsider as a result of being unable to grapple with the humiliation, stigmatization and isolation imposed on him by the outer world and resulting with his transformation into a murderer. In this respect, the initial source of anguish for the protagonist is his dysfunctional family which profoundly traumatizes him and, therefore, has a crucial role in his helpless and marginalized state.

5.2. Alcoholic Father and Suicidal Mother: Francie’s Dysfunctional Family

The Butcher Boy begins with assumedly grown-up Francie’s remembering his childhood. The rest of the narrative is delivered by little Francie, who is probably twelve-years-old. At the very beginning of the novel, Francie and his best friend, Joe, take Philip Nugent’s
comic books against his wish and run away. Philip is the son of an upper class family that have only recently moved to the town after having lived in England for a long time. Philip’s mother, Mrs. Nugent, as the personification of upper class hauteur and vanity, complains fiercely to Mrs. Brady, Francie’s mother, about Francie’s mischievous behaviour against her son. However, to the astonishment of Francie and his mother, Mrs. Nugent, impertinently enough, denounces Mrs. Brady and her entire family, calling them pigs:

I was waiting for her [his mother] to come flying up the stairs, get me by the ear and throw me on the step in front of Nugent and that's what she would have done if Nugent hadn't started on about the pigs. 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, lying about the pubs from morning to night, he's no better than a pig. You needn't think we don't know what goes on in this house oh we know all right! Small wonder the boy is the way he is what chance has he got running about the town at all hours and the clothes hanging off him it doesn't take money to dress a child God love him it's not his fault but if he's seen near our Philip again there'll be trouble. (McCabe, The Butcher Boy 4)

This incident has a critical place within the storyline of The Butcher Boy in terms of its traumatizing impact on Francie. Throughout the novel, Francie, never truly recovering from the trauma caused by Mrs. Nugent, recurrently states that the series of unfortunate and tragic incidents that happened to him and his family were triggered by this call of Mrs. Nugent’s on their house. However, considering the domestic atmosphere where he is reared up, it is possible to argue that the circumstances which signal to the dysfunctionality of Francie’s family and its damage on his psychology already exist before the trouble with the Nugents starts. Actually, McCabe himself refers to the role of

35 Liam Harte refers to the historical sub-meanings and associations of the epithet “pig” attributed to Irish people as follows: “the novel’s porcine motif is heavily freighted with cultural and historical opprobrium. At the most obvious level, Mrs Nugent’s insulting remarks brand the Bradys as subhuman by equating them with animals long regarded as base, abominable, and unclean. St. Mark’s Gospel shows Christ displacing the “unclean spirits” from man to a herd of swine … By the late nineteenth century there was a well-entrenched tradition of using porcine motifs to signify the innate degeneracy and inferiority of a people perceived as seditious, which qualities provided a moral justification for the English colonial project in Ireland” (82-83).
domestic circumstances in creating Francie’s sense of shame which leads him to derangement; in McCabe’s words, Francie is “ashamed of so many things - of what he's done to his mother, of his father's drunkenness, of the state in which his house is left and so on. Subconsciously he is deeply aware of his class and his position in that. So the Nugents, who are a perfectly ordinary middleclass family, become the focus of his hatred, and of the longing for release” (“Meat” 10). Yet, Mrs. Nugent and her family do not belong to the ‘ordinary’ middle or lower-middle class society delineated in the novel; the ways the Nugents speak and get dressed, the food they eat and the home they live in all represent an ostentatious and arrogant sense of English superiority which Francie has never encountered before in the town. In contrast with the Brady family, the Nugents, and particularly Mrs. Nugent, are characterized by their harsh “power of judgment and socially discriminatory outlook” (O’Brien 115). Even though the contemptuous manner of Mrs. Nugent seriously deteriorate Francie’s and Mrs. Brady’s inner states, it is the pre-existing domestic issues what initially engenders the distress in Francie’s life and, as will be elaborated, coerces him into his inner world of fantasies as well as keeping him isolated and estranged from the outer world.

McCabe’s fictional universe in The Butcher Boy demonstrates the ways in which a turbulent and unstable family environment leaves detrimental impacts on a child’s psychology and behaviour and engenders his ineptitude to cope with the pressure of external life. The fact that Francie’s father is an alcoholic who is haunted by his ‘dark’ childhood memories can be construed as the essential factor catalysing the violence, anxiety and misery predominating Francie’s domestic environment, causing his mental disorders and, eventually, engendering his state as an outsider. Having been deserted by his father when he was seven and put in an orphanage with his brother, Benny Brady develops an addiction to alcohol as a way of attaining relief. His ill-temper and ill-treatment of his wife have existed since the beginning of their marriage. He is not sober
most of the time and at nights, he fights with his wife, shouts and curses at her. At one such stage, Benny, being drunk, comes home late at night, and severely quarrels with his wife, which is narrated from Francie’s point of view as follows:

Something else broke crockery or something and then ma was crying: Don't blame me because you can't face the truth about yourself, any chances you had you drank them away! …

I was trying to listen to the cars going by on the Newtown Road and saying to myself: I can't hear anything in the kitchen now it must be all over. But it wasn't all over and when I stopped listening to the cars I'd hear him: God's curse the fucking day I ever set eyes on you! (McCabe, The Butcher 6-7)

Such domestic disruption and violence, witnessed by Francie, undermines the development of his psychology and personality so as to lead him to aggressive, deviant and pugnacious conducts. At another similar point, his father ruins the cheerful atmosphere created by the visit of Alo, his brother, for Christmas. Living in England for years and well-known as a successful and admirable figure at the town where Francie lives, Alo represents prestige, pride and superiority for Francie: “I went off up the town and anybody I met I told them about Alo. … I couldn't take my eyes off Alo. … He stood proudly by the fireplace and I thought to myself Nugent? Hah! Nugent has nobody like him. I felt like cheering” (McCabe, The Butcher 26) Hence, Francie adores his uncle and the way he speaks and appears; in a way, Alo, with his perfection, serves as Francie’s role model who is not formed by his father. Furthermore, he assumes that Alo would not only enable him and his family to be respected by society (especially by the Nugents) but diminish the distressful atmosphere at home as well. Yet, the buoyancy created by the advent of his uncle is destroyed by his father. When Alo sings a song taught to him by a priest at the orphanage, Francie’s father, being heavily drunk, loses his temper and harshly scolds him:

Then I saw him [his father] look at Alo. I knew the look. He wouldn't take his eyes off him now until he had finished with him. I saw him do it to ma. They could pierce you them eyes good as any blade. Then he said it. Who do you think you're fooling Alo? Are you going to go on making a laughing stock of yourself or are
you going to catch yourself on? Do you think any of them believe that shite-talk you've been going on with all night? For the love of God Benny leave the man alone, cried ma. (McCabe, *The Butcher* 32)

Apart from thus spoiling the happy mood of the others, Benny discloses some realities about Alo in a way which deliberately belittles his brother; contrary to what Francie assumes, Alo is only a security man at a factory in London “tipping his cap to his betters in his wee blue porter's suit” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 33) and married to a woman who is twenty years older than him, “half-blind and hates him from the day she married him” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 33). Benny’s abrupt insults and cantankerous manner offends his brother and obliges him to leave the home immediately. The brutality of his unsparing reproval worsens the mental state of his wife and causes Francie to feel depressed so as to run away from home: “I waited until he [his father] was asleep in the armchair and then I opened the front door and went out into the morning. I was afraid because I hadn't planned it and I had never run away from home before. … I wanted to walk and walk until the soles of my boots were worn out and I could walk no more” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 36). His father’s bitter words frustrate and deeply traumatize Francie as the image of his uncle in his mind is destroyed. In the course of the novel, Francie’s mother, being unable to tolerate the torture of her husband and suffering a severe mental disorder, kills herself. And his father silently dies on the sofa only to be treated by his now delusional son as if he were alive.

Thus, Francie’s family, rather than supplying him with care and a sense of security and belonging, represents anguish, oppression and melancholy for him; home, as Tom Herron suggests, “becomes a thoroughly pathologized site” (177) for Francie. Domestic environment, in Freudian perspective, represents the source of “unpleasure” for him from where he compulsively tries to get away by turning his interest towards the outside, as already implied by his act of focusing on the cars in the outside during his parents’ quarrel. His relationship and communication with his father are profoundly damaged by the
latter’s alcohol dependence and ill-treatment of his wife. As he lacks the necessary parental attention, he ends up being a child who is inclined to undisciplined and irresponsible behaviour; and, as Kate Walls suggests, he also “lacks the emotional maturity (or role model) to learn or grow as a human being” (20) mainly due to domestic distress as well as communal marginalization. As Mrs. Nugent makes it clear, he runs about the town at all hours and looks messy with his clothes hanging off him. The irascibility of his father and mental illness of his mother leave Francie totally on his own: “there wasn't much I could do then I got fed up watching the birds hop along the garden wall so I went off up the street” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 10).

The inability of Francie’s father to grapple with haunting childhood memories and his consequential alcoholic state, dejection and violence, as thus detailed, exert a damaging influence on the protagonist’s mental state in manifold ways. First of all, as Liam Harte argues, Francie confronts “a prolonged history of abysmal shame, the origins of which lie in Francie’s father’s childhood experience of rejection, abandonment, and lovelessness” (87). Benny’s repression of his sense of inferiority and worthlessness is adopted by Francie; he avoids to confront his own sense of shame engendered by the painful realities pertaining to the violence and misery in his family. Such an unacknowledged shame, which begets anger as well as “irrational and destructive behaviour” (Scheff and Retzinger 104), causes Francie to be vulnerable to external disparagement and stigmatization as applied by Mrs. Nugent as well as the community as a whole.

Furthermore, due to paternal (or parental) troubles, Francie is not able to establish and maintain a stable sense of self and identity because, as Heinz Kohut argues, the self of a child is not firmly established “in consequence of the severely disturbed empathic responses of the parents” (*The Restoration* 74). Benny’s incessant gloom, lethargy and aggression makes his son bereft of a proper ‘imago’ whom he could identify with. Kohut
postulates that a child’s failure in achieving a “gradual and secure internalization of the idealized parent imago” through “reliable ideals” damages his self-esteem and his “fixation on the mother-fetish becomes intensified” (The Restoration 57) as well. In this respect, both of these consequences related with the deprivation of a proper father figure are exhibited by the qualities of Francie’s mental state and outer conducts; throughout the novel he suffers a severe inferiority complex amplified by the community’s disparaging approach, as will be detailed later, and he develops a devotion to his mother which can be described as exorbitant. His attachment to his mother is so fixed as to cause him to be traumatized by a feeling of guilt for not making any effort to prevent his father’s acts of violence on her. Francie’s lack of an ‘imago’ leads him to a failure in establishing his own ‘Gestalt’ identity and, as argued by John Scaggs, indicates his inability to “enter Lacan’s mirror stage, in which the Self is first created as a coherent, self-governing entity” (52). According to Scaggs, this failure is also explicit in the fragmented and irregular first-person narrative of Francie; his retreat into his inner world of fantasies due to domestic and then communal oppression and hostility “is effectively an attempt to return to a pre-linguistic space, to refuse the burden of subjectivity” (52) which ends up with his isolation from the world.

Francie is influenced by his father’s mistreatment indirectly as well, through the deterioration of his mother’s psychology which ends up with her suicide. The impact of Benny’s wildly abrasive manner over his wife is destructive. Having been exposed to and enervated by her husband’s denigration and ill-temper for years and living in poverty as her husband hardly maintains his family by playing the trumpet, Annie Brady develops severe psychological problems and, consequently, turns to be suicidal. At one case, Francie gets into the kitchen and unwittingly interrupts his mother who is about to hang herself with a fuse wire. Acutely suffering from mental breakdown, she leaves home to go to shopping but is found “standing for two hours looking in the window of the fishing
tackle shop with the bag on the ground and a tin of beans rolling round the footpath” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 8). Soon afterwards, she is taken to the mental hospital for treatment. And yet, back from the hospital, she behaves hysterically: “one minute she was up the stairs and the next she'd be standing right beside you talking then away off into something else” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 18). She gets a record and frenziedly listens a song in it called “The Butcher Boy” which entitles the novel and tells about a son who finds her mother hanging from a rope. As a result, her relationship with his son is gradually injured by her impaired mental state:

The more she'd sing the redder her face'd get. We'll stop now ma I said but away we went again. …

She starts telling me all about it but I didn't want to hear any more. …

One minute she'd say I see Mrs Connolly has a lovely new coat then before you had time to answer she said are they turning off the town water or something about the hospital when I was born. Then off she'd go again rolling pastry and stacking butterfly buns on tray after tray. The house was full of cakes. (McCabe, *The Butcher* 19-20)

Thus, the misery and melancholy caused by Francie’s father damages his mother’s psychology and hinders a proper and healthy relationship between the mother and son. His mother’s affection and solicitude are extremely crucial for Francie because paternal oppression strongly attaches them to each other and he regards her as his essential source of support and happiness: “she meant you wouldn't let me down like da did I said no I wouldn't let her down in a hundred million years no matter how many times she took into me with the stick. … me and ma we were great pals” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 5). Hence, the detriment of such a relationship of co-dependency between Francie and his mother blights the protagonist’s mentality and personality in many ways. Regarding the damage caused by mother’s psychological impairment on child, Manning and Gregoire suggest that mental illness of mother “can have a significant impact on the social, emotional, behavioural and cognitive development of children, as well as their safety and wider environment” (9); in that case, the child is under a higher risk of suffering from severe
depression and anxiety as well as exhibiting symptoms of “conduct disorder” (8). Besides, as Otto Rank puts it, external fear and anxiety are most effectively mitigated by mother who provides the child with a womb-like environment of security and serenity (The Trauma 12). Therefore, as the bond between Francie and his mother weakens, he feels the anxiety of being alone and helpless in a world hostile to him (as embodied by Mrs. Nugent). In this regard, the hiding place which he builds with Joe, his best friend, can be construed as the embodiment of his inner urge for protection and avoidance from anxiety. This tunnel-like hole, which might be taken as the symbol of womb in terms of its incapacious and dark structure, provides Francie with a sense of safety which he lacks in his family: “you could see plenty from the inside but no one could see you” (McCabe, The Butcher 1). And the fact that he does not hesitate to run into this camouflaged shelter in cases of trouble (as he does after killing Mrs. Nugent) metaphorically represents the restoration of his unity with his mother.

Apart from injuring and then destroying the unity of Francie with his mother, the ill-treatment of Francie’s father, mainly caused by alcohol dependence, exerts an immediate and indelible damage on the protagonist’s mentality and behaviour. To elaborate, regarding the detrimental effects of a parent’s alcohol abuse on child, Kaur and Ajinkya postulate that “the alcoholic’s family distinguishes itself from other families in that there may be a negative, critical, hostile, and rejectionist environment which is eventually passed on to their own children. The alcoholic shows poor adjustment in his relationships with his wife and children” (126). In a parallel, Kenneth J. Sher states that the child of alcoholics is exposed to a “family environment characterized by disruption, deviant parental role models, inadequate parenting, and disturbed parent-child relationships” (247); such a parent causes “distress and impaired interpersonal functioning” (247) in him or her. Such children suffer from “high levels of depression and anxiety” (249) and their behaviour is characterized by “rule breaking, defiance,
aggression, inattention, and impulsivity” (249). Sher also suggests that child of an alcoholic parent exhibits such neurotic personality traits as “propensity for guilt and self-blame, and sensitivity to criticism” as well as having “lower self-esteem” (251) and experiencing “anger and resentment as a result of family disruption” (253). Furthermore, Kaur and Ajinkya posit that “children of alcoholics are more likely to develop externalizing problems such as conduct disorder, oppositional defiant disorder, delinquency, and attention deficit disorder” (126).

Hence, the domestic anxiety and distress brought about by Francie’s alcoholic father and mentally disordered mother prompts his aggressive and aberrant acts which can be regarded as the symptoms of “conduct disorder” and “oppositional defiant disorder”. As stated in DSM-IV by American Psychiatric Association, the symptoms exhibited by the child suffering from oppositional defiance disorder are “losing temper, … actively defying or refusing to comply with the requests or rules of adults, deliberately doing things that will annoy other people, blaming others for his or her own mistakes or misbehavior, being touchy or easily annoyed by others, being angry and resentful, or being spiteful or vindictive” (91). As for the diagnosis of conduct disorder, Stephen Scott lists some particular attitudes as follows:

- Frequently initiates physical fights … - Has used a weapon that can cause serious physical harm to others (e.g., bat, brick, broken bottle, knife, gun) … - Exhibits physical cruelty to other people (e.g., ties up, cuts or burns a victim) … - Steals objects of non-trivial value without confronting the victim, either within the home or outside (e.g. shoplifting, burglary, forgery) … - Has run away from parental or parental surrogate home at least twice or has run away once for more than a single night … - Frequently bullies others (e.g., deliberate infliction of pain or hurt, including persistent intimidation, tormenting, or molestation) - Breaks into someone else’s house, building or car. (Scott 2-3)

These anomalous conducts, which, as Scott argues, mostly “apply to older children and teenagers” (2) in dysfunctional families, are precisely what Francie performs throughout the novel and cause him to be isolated from the community.
Accordingly, one of the most conspicuous impacts of the dysfunctionality of Francie’s family on him is that he develops an aggressive personality; he is easily provoked and inclined to verbal or physical violence, which, in turn, detaches him from society. Paternal violence and ferocity inflicted on him for a life time and his mother’s disordered mental state instills in him a readiness to belligerently confront or attack any negation. He lacks a proper “imago”, as already mentioned, and therefore his father’s mostly aggressive and defiant characteristic is transmitted on him. His aggression is initially evoked and aggravated by the insults of Mrs. Nugent, which renders her the target of his acts imbued with hostility and violence. In other words, his inner aggression, generated by the pressure and mental strain he is subjected to at home, is unleashed through his relationship with the Nugents. Members of this bumptious family, therefore, function to reveal the intensity and acuteness of Francie’s domestic distress rather than triggering his mental disorders. Even though Mrs. Nugent’s contemptuous manner has a role in worsening Francie’s psychology, it is the domestic distress what accumulates Francie’s senses of anxiety and aggression which, in time, turn to a brutal hostility as the circumstances in his family deteriorate.

The fact that Francie bullies Philip at the very beginning of the novel and forcefully takes his comics away from him shows that his aggressive and intimidating characteristics already exist before being agonized by Mrs. Nugent. However, her disparaging attitude stimulates Francie’s antipathy and even antagonism towards her and lets him canalize his inner aggression into his outer conducts against her. Thus, each encounter between Francie and Mrs. Nugent is marked with the protagonist’s prolonged hostility and vendetta. At one such point, Francie comes across Mrs. Nugent and Philip on the street and blocks their way. In spite of Mrs. Nugent’s “one of those looks that is supposed to make you shrivel up and die” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 11), Francie stands in the middle of the footpath and does not let them pass. He asks for a payment from them,
which he calls “the Pig Toll Tax”, to let them pass. Even though Mrs. Nugent tries to get away, Francie hinders her by gripping her sleeve tightly. He lets them by only when he sees the tear in Mrs. Nugent’s eye.

This behaviour of Francie’s seems to be a petty act; however, it evidently signifies his keenness to defiance and impertinence as well as foreshadowing his potential to commit violent conducts. And manifestation of his pathological aggression in the form of physical assault occurs when he comes back to the town after running away from home and learns about his mother’s death. He loses his temper, ambushes Philip and attempts to beat him savagely with a chain. He is stopped by Joe just before striking Philip in a way that would practically kill him. Francie’s vicious assault on Philip, which demonstrates symptoms of conduct disorder in various ways (i.e. physical cruelty, use of a weapon, tormenting and victimizing others), not only causes him to be dissociated from the community but seriously undermines his friendship with Joe: “he [Joe] 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” (McCabe, The Butcher 49). Although Joe does not leave him upon this occasion, he does so when he witnesses Francie’s frantic burst of anger which makes the protagonist brutally hit Buttsy, Mrs. Nugent’s brother, with a rock several times. Thus, basically, it is the irrepressible and uncontrollable aggression ingrained in Francie by domestic distress and deprivations what leads him to reckless, violent and cruel acts and, consequentially, leaves him helpless in the outer world. His alcoholic father’s ill-temper causes Francie to be bereft of fatherly protection and discipline, motherly affection and attention and also the quasi-imago of his uncle Alo; and the mental and emotional instability inherited to him from his dysfunctional family results in the loss of his friendship with Joe, the ultimate figure who could help him cling to life.
Apart from abnormal aggression and violent attitude related to it, some other deeds of Francie which testify to his conduct disorder and engender his detachment from society are his delinquent acts of theft and trespassing. After running away from home, he walks for a few days and arrives in Dublin in an exhausted state; he goes into a chip shop and steals money from there. And in the time following his mother’s death, he breaks into the Nugents’ house and damages their property and defecates on their floor, which causes him to be sent to an industrial school. Both of these misdeeds debilitate his relationship with the outer world; the fact that these actions are instigated by Francie’s deformed psychology which is, on a great scale, an outcome of his distressed domestic environment, indicates the central role of the dysfunctionality of his family in engendering his posture as an outsider.

Distressing family atmosphere caused by his father’s ill-temper and his mother’s mental instability makes Francie develop a tendency to moving away from external anguish. He attains such an escape in the outside through his friendship with Joe and they spend most of their time reading comics and enacting the content in them. And at home, television and western films enable Francie to tentatively mitigate his mental strain. Throughout the novel, he refers to characters from films and comics and, at times, he identifies himself with them; such an escapist tendency signifies the pressure of the real world on his psychology. In other words, for Francie, “the search for freedom occurs within the context of a traumatizing, dysfunctional familial space” (Kirwan 7). Therefore, when T.V breaks down he is deeply frustrated since it is the only apparatus at home which could get his mind away from domestic agony: “it was all going well until the telly went. Phut! … He [his father] drew out and out his boot through it, the glass went everywhere. I'll fix it, he said, I'll fix it good and fucking proper. Then he fell asleep on the sofa with one shoe hanging off” (McCabe, The Butcher 9-10). The fact that the T.V. is shattered by Francie’s father draws a parallel with his father’s obliteration of family connections with
Alo and annihilation of his wife’s mental health which causes her death: in each case, patriarchal violence destroys phenomena to which Francie has an attachment.

However, apart from his friendship with Joe and fondness for comics and T.V., the first shelter where Francie compulsively retreats is his imaginary landscape. “As greater violence”, which is initially generated by his father’s aggression, “is enacted upon Francie's psyche, his regression into an imaginary world is amplified” (Zucker 205). A significantly deleterious influence of domestic violence and deprivations on Francie is that the anxiety caused by his parents predisposes him to being engrossed in his fantasies and, therefore, isolated from society. That is, being too weak and helpless to overcome what Karen Horney calls “the basic anxiety” (Our Inner 41), Francie turns to his fantasies which, as Freud suggests, originate from unsatisfied wishes and unsatisfying, painful realities (“Creative” 423-424). Lack of maternal tenderness, in this regard, has a crucial role in pushing Francie into his internal space because, as Harry S. Sullivan points out, the impairment of the tie between mother and child not only causes the child to feel lonely but makes him gravitate to his inner fantasies and subverts his interpersonal relationships as well (The Interpersonal 247-248). A case of Francie’s withdrawal in his imagination due to perturbating circumstances in his family is seen at the moment of the conflict between his father and Alo. Feeling intensely depressed and terrified by his father’s hostile attitude, Francie creates an imaginary reconciliation between Alo and his father in his mind as follows:

Da had a whiskey glass in his hand. It was trembling a little. I thought maybe he wanted to fling it from him, throw his arms around Alo and cry at the top of his voice: How about that Alo? Fairly fooled you there! That took you in hook line and sinker! Me and Alo -- the years we spent in Belfast! The home? A wonderful place! The best years of our lives! Me and Alo -- we loved every minute of it there! Isn't that right old friend? When all this came into my head I wanted to leap up and yahoo. I wanted to cry out let's have another party …

But that was only me raving and didn't happen and the next thing I heard was the sound of the front door closing, you could hardly hear it at all. Ma was in a bad way now. (McCabe, The Butcher 34-35)
Thus, Francie’s imaginary landscape enables him to alter painful realities in a way that would please him. Such an escape indicates both the intensity of the mental strain he experiences and his pathetic yearning for the removal of the distress predominating his family. As domestic anxiety becomes more intense and pushes him into deeper dejection, Francie’s inclination to his inner world gradually brings about a pathological disregard of realities and then replacement of realities with fantasies. As a matter of fact, it is Francie’s loss of touch with reality what completely detaches him from the community and makes his presence in the outer world that of an outsider. As will be discussed later in detail, there is also an indisputably effective role of social hostility, inequality and indifference on the process of Francie’s becoming an outsider.

The fact that Francie’s fantasies begin to affect his behaviour signals to his neurotic and even psychotic state of mind because, as Freud puts it, “if phantasies become over-luxuriant and over-powerful, the conditions are laid for an onset of neurosis or psychosis (“Creative” 423-424). According to Freud, both disorders occur as a result of individual’s “unwillingness” or “incapacity” to adapt himself “to the exigencies of reality”; but, while neurosis “does not disavow the reality, it only ignores it; psychosis disavows it and tries to replace it” (“The Loss” 185). In this regard, the fact that external anguish initially impels Francie to ignore realities suggests his neurotic state of mind. His neurosis can be diagnosed through some of his particular conducts. For example, seeing a chair on the table and a fuse wire dangling from the ceiling, he senses that his mother is about to hang herself; yet, he ignores and represses that reality. At another point, he tries to refrain from the reality that his mother is taken to a mental hospital by his unconvincing assumption that she is at a ‘garage’: “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 to hear so I said it was a garage” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 35). Thus, Francie’s unwillingness to
admit or confront with exasperating realities hint his neurosis; he represses these realities and acts in a way ignoring them. Yet, as his inner fear and trepidation escalates with the worsening of his parents’ conditions, his repression and disregard of realities affect him more intensely rather than putting an end to his inner anxiety.

McCabe portrays Francie as a character who is led to deviant behaviour as a result of being profoundly hurt by the loss of his beloved uncle, mother and friend respectively. Francie experiences a severe mental collapse when he learns that his mother, being unable to endure his son’s running away from home, drowned herself in the river. His mother’s suicide is catastrophic for Francie basically in two ways. The first is that his father blames Francie for his wife’s suicide, which causes an everlasting inner torment for the young boy. His self-blame appears earlier in the novel when he thinks that he should not have let his father oppress his mother. However, his father’s accusation turns his self-blame into self-loathing: “I knew one thing. As long as I walked the streets under them stars there'd be only one thing anyone could say about me and that was: I hope he's proud of himself now, the pig, after what he did on his poor mother” (McCabe, The Butcher 44). Hence, his father’s unjust and insensitive treatment not only further damages Francie’s psychology but makes him feel alienated from the outer world.

The other traumatic impact of his mother’s death on Francie is that, from this point onwards he fails to discern fantasies from realities and suffers from delusional disorder. His deformed psychology leads him to a series of deviant conducts and causes him to be ostracized from the community. At one stage, he sees Mrs. Nugent and Philip coming out of a shop and assumes that she was talking to her son about himself and his family:

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36Jessica Hack and Graham Martin argue that “individuals who experience overwhelming levels of shame are prone to viewing themselves as defective and worthless, become self-loathing, and cope by directing their aggression towards their external self” (12). In this respect, Francie’s sense of shame due to his family’s shortcomings and society’s contemptuous manner causes him to loath himself; and the fact that he directs his aggression towards his external self is explicit in that he attempts to commit suicide several times.
I didn't say it!, Nugent said but she did and that was why I called down to the house. I didn't say anything what are you talking about was all she could say so I said what do you think I am Mrs Nugent, stupid? I heard you. … I was a good bit away from them but I saw her stopping to point me out to Philip. I saw her. There he is! she said, there won't be so much chat out of him from now on Philip, him and his pig toll tax! Maybe if she had just left it at that I wouldn't have passed much remarks but she should have left Alo out of it. I just heard the tail end of it but that was enough for me. Half-blind and hates him from the day she married him! What did I tell you Philip! (McCabe, The Butcher 50-51)

The fact that the statement about Alo, which Francie believes to have been uttered by Mrs. Nugent, was actually spoken out by his father after the Christmas party manifests Francie’s psychotic state of mind. He is acutely traumatized by the truth about his uncle and the reality which he rejects and represses pathologically resurfaces only to be associated with Mrs. Nugent, the figure whom he regards as the sole source of his troubles. His treatment of his delusions as realities adds to his inner distress and also amplifies his feelings of animosity against the Nugents. He breaks into their house and deliriously acts as if he were Philip; as a consequence, he is taken to an industrial school, which suggests his segregation from society as a wayward figure.

Coming back from the industrial school, Francie continues to be engaged with delusions especially upon incidents which injure his mental state. He hopes to restore his friendship with Joe and establish an orderly life at home with his father by working at an abattoir and making money; in a way, as Clare Wallace asserts, “he remains arrested at a particular juncture returning to an imaginary utopian time” (146). But he is emotionally tormented to witness that Joe and Philip have become friends:

I'll be all right and I would have been if I hadn't of seen Joe just as I was going by the cafe. … He was sitting in between the blondie one and some other one laughing away and who was on the other side of her only Philip Nugent. … When he stood up we were looking at one another face to face through the window. … I kept waiting for him to look back down and say come on in or something but he didn't he just kept on drumming and mouthing the words of the songs to himself. (McCabe, The Butcher 128-129)
Feeling helpless and deserted, Francie starts drinking alcohol and befriends with a drunk lad. But, eventually, he retreats into his fantasies again in order to get away from outer agony. He fails (or compulsively rejects) to realize that his father is dead and, therefore, he treats the body of his father as if it were alive. Being controlled by his delusions, he talks to a woman figure in an advertisement and assumes that his uncle Alo would be visiting his family; that is, he deludedly re-enacts the Christmas night, which is, in fact, partially the only moment of domestic happiness for him. He gets cakes and drinks for the party and hallucinates that he talks to Alo and his father. In his delusion, he substitutes the traumatic reality of his father’s cold and antagonistic attitude towards Alo with a fictitious, avuncular welcome: “Alo, says da, the man himself and threw his arms around him. Let me look at you he says and then they were off into their stories” (McCabe, The Butcher 142). The town’s doctor, who probably senses that something is wrong with Francie and his father, comes to the house with a sergeant and policeman and they find the decaying body of Francie’s father. Francie, still immersed in his delusions, takes the doctor for his uncle and talks to the image of Joe. Eventually, he is taken to a psychiatric hospital for treatment.

Thus, the angst of being left alone exerts such a profoundly damaging effect on Francie’s psychology that he develops an excessive commitment to his inner world where he transforms the realities that perturb him. The fact that his fantasies serve as a means that connects him to the happy times with his mother and Joe points to his suffering from ‘nostalgia syndrome’. Nostalgia, in normal conditions, as Arthur G. Nikelly argues, is associated with “looking back toward pleasant times and places” which “provides temporary solace and security and serves as a defense against the threat of alienation” (185). However, hostile social milieu and “the loss of established patterns of relationships that sustain self-esteem impose[s] a psychological burden” (Nikelly 185) on individual; and this, in turn, may cause an exorbitant consolidation of his/her commitment to the past
and therefore render his/her sense of nostalgia pathological. Nikkely refers to social and individual conditions which are the precursors of pathological nostalgia as follows:

Experiencing discrimination as an “outsider” or a “stranger,” broken family ties, hostility and prejudice from the host country, and low social status all contribute toward detachment from the present as an adaptive response to social stress. … Feeling small, powerless, and subordinate, and facing a bleak future can lead to the yearning for home in order to compensate for discontinuity and alienation. (185)

Under such severe circumstances, nostalgia “becomes pathological when nostalgic persons derive greater gratification from the past than from the present or the future and when physical and psychological features are intense, obsessive, and longstanding and prevent effective coping” (Nikelly 188). It also becomes pathological “when accompanied by hallucinatory scenes of the home” and with the nostalgic person’s “inappropriate acting-out behavior in order to escape the painful experience of being away and as an incentive to return home” (Nikelly 188). All of these personal symptoms as well as adverse external conditions are exhibited and experienced by Francie. As an outsider who is witness to domestic violence and, as will be detailed later, disregarded and abhorred by the community, Francie tends to deny that a happy domestic environment and his cheerful friendship with Joe are no longer available to him; his rejection of the realities and nostalgic wishes to re-establish the past are apparent in that his hallucinations are mostly imbued with his reunion with those whom he loved. Although his friendship with Joe comes to an end, he frequently visits and even sleeps at the hide and chicken-house where he spent much time with Joe. He assumes that his parents had a happy time at Bundoran during the early times of their marriage and, to have a sense of transportation to those pleasant times, he goes there and investigates the past-life of his parents. In a way, he is unable to be released from the hold of the past and progressively loses his touch with the present; as a consequence, the way he thinks and acts is impaired so as to lead him to insanity and to being excluded from the community.
Francie’s pathological adherence to his fantasies and acute nostalgia detach him from the outer world by leading him to aberrant behaviour against the Nugents and restricting him to his inner space. His delusions operate so as to let him satisfy his thirst for domestic happiness, enjoy his friendship with Joe and eliminate the agony caused by the Nugents. For this reason, it is the reversal of these three phenomena what pushes Francie into isolation and alienation from the community. In other words, domestic tragedy, abandonment of Joe and Mrs. Nugent’s degradation undermine Francie’s mental and behavioural health and compel him to move physically to the peripheries of society (as represented by his running away from home and being sent to the industrial school and mental asylum) and psychologically towards the depth of his world of fantasies. And yet, the dysfunctionality of Francie’s family is the essential factor underlying the protagonist’s posture as an outsider. The perpetual senses of anxiety and frustration resulting with inclination to aggression, deviance and violence are all entrenched in his personality and mentality by traumatic domestic circumstances. The external conditions and incidents add to Francie’s deprivation of parental love, care and protection and exacerbate his long-impaired psychology. The Nugent family, in this regard, represents the foremost outer cause of oppression and vexation for Francie.

5.3. External Source of Distress: The Nugent Family

McCabe juxtaposes the misery of Francie’s family with the luxurious life of the Nugent family as a projection of the socio-economic polarization experienced by Irish society in the 1960s. Accordingly, the Nugents stand as the symmetrical opposite of Francie’s family. Contrary to Francie’s father, Mr. Nugent is a stylish businessman who has an estimable job and a mild personality; he is an attentive father and husband who cares about the welfare of his wife and son. Mrs. Nugent is a meticulous personality who keeps her house neat and clean and who is overly protective of her child. As opposite of the despondent and oppressed figure of Francie’s mother, she is a dominant character who
has no marital conflict. Philip is portrayed as a studious, well-behaved and docile boy; on the contrary, Francie is identified with his idleness, aggression and bad language. The two families differ from each other in socio-economic terms as well; the Nugents’ financial superiority is symbolized with such images as Mr. Nugent’s opulent tweed overcoat, Philip’s expensive comic books, blazer with gold braid and crocodile-skin music case, and Mrs. Nugent’s shopping bag. Contrary to the penury and misery prevailing in Francie’s family, the Nugents’ house is characterized by warmth, lavishness and luxury.

However, the fact that the Nugents’ life is the antithesis of that of Francie’s family does not initially engender any trouble between the two families; on the contrary, Francie’s mother and Mrs. Nugent get along very well with each other when the Nugents come to the town. It is the immodest outlook, aristocratic conceit and haughty disdain of the Nugents’, as released during Mrs. Nugent’s call, what traumatize Francie and impose a sense of inferiority on him. Regarding the correlation between trauma and sense of worthlessness, Kai Erikson states that “it is hard for people to resist the sense of worthlessness that often accompanies trauma when other human beings whose power they once respected and whose good will they once counted on treat them with such icy contempt” (465). Therefore, Mrs. Nugent’s unexpected and outrageous disparagement comes as a blow to Francie’s psyche and self-esteem. It also strikes Francie’s mother and plays a crucial role in intensifying her depression and suicidal tendencies; as Francie reports, she is profoundly influenced by Mrs. Nugent’s belittling words and manner: “but it took more out of her [his mother] than it did out of me for her hands were trembling like leaves in the breeze she threw the stick from her and steadied herself in the kitchen” (McCabe, The Butcher 4). Since the mother and son are already dispirited and distressed

37 Rüdiger Imhof states that “whether Mrs Nugent is in fact the despicable, stuck-up person Francie suggests is difficult to decide; we only have his word as evidence” (291). However, the fact that Francie’s mother also implies Mrs. Nugent’s wicked and hypocritical personality and gets depressed by her insults testifies to that Mrs. Nugent in person and the Nugent family as a whole have an undisputable role in inflicting a traumatizing sense of inferiority on Francie and his mother. Besides, Joe’s initial statement of being “in the wars with Nugent” suggests that, Francie’s word is not the only evidence insinuating Mrs Nugent’s antagonism.
by Benny’s ill-temper, their vulnerability and sensitiveness to outer hostility is heightened. Therefore, Mrs. Nugent’s mortifying insults and, particularly, her calling Francie’s family ‘pigs’ leave a profound impact on Francie; he interiorizes his and his family’s inferiority and this presumption becomes a complex tormenting him throughout the novel.

Tim Gauthier construes Mrs. Nugent’s (and the community’s at large) marginalising and degrading manner towards Francie and his family through neo-colonial perspective. According to him, Mrs. Nugent, representing the colonial power, exhibits a desire to treat Francie as the Other and thereby, stabilizes her own dominant position in society (201). Gauthier details his argument as follows:

The Bradys become an all-too-easy target for Mrs. Nugent who needs a contrast to validate her position in the community. The Nugents are not English but are Irish striving to be English, and becoming more imperial than the colonizer. A sense of inferiority, fostered by years of living in the shadow of the colonizer, needs to be constantly assuaged by the subjugation of another. For the community, that Other is the Bradys, who must be ostracized for the new conception of the community to be established; their presence simply serves to recall an Irishness that the new Ireland would rather not acknowledge. If Francie’s parents are Irish stereotypes (the drunken father, the long-suffering mother) it is because they embody truths about the community that it must face, rather than live above, as the Nugents strive to do. (201-202)

In a similar vein, Liam Harte suggests that the fictional landscape established by McCabe in *The Butcher Boy* contains “a postcolonial society that takes formative shape around the displaced and the denied, where the repudiated remains constitutive” (80). Thus, as Gauthier and Harte indicate, Francie’s victimization by Mrs. Nugent, who, in a way, represents the community’s outlook, occurs so as to earn her a sense of superiority. Francie, in turn, forms a fixed opinion that Mrs. Nugent, her husband and son treat him and his family with a sneaky animosity and repugnance. As a consequence, he develops a counter antagonism against the Nugents and struggles to obliterate the stigma of ‘pig’. In this respect, he takes any sign or probability of enhancement in his domestic
environment as an apparatus enabling him to challenge the Nugents. For example, he delightedly imagines that Mrs. Nugent would envy him when she sees him with his uncle Alo:

We'd be coming down the street and there'd be Nugent. She'd be mad for us to talk to her. Who's that woman Alo would say to me in his English accent, she keeps looking over. I don't know, I'd say, I never seen her before in my life. Then we'd walk on until she was a speck standing in Fermanagh Street. Then it started all over again with me and Alo on the Diamond getting ready to set off once more down the street and Mrs Nugent trying to attract our attention. Please Francie, I'll give you anything she'd say. Sorry I'd say, too late. Then I'd cut her off and say: What was that you were saying Uncle Alo? (McCabe, The Butcher 21)

Thus, Francie fantasizes that his uncle, with his eminence in the town, would endow him with a superiority over Mrs. Nugent, which would replace her contempt with admiration at him. Such an imagination is, in fact, the indicative of Francie’s inner hankering for the annihilation of the inferiority inflicted on him and his family by Mrs. Nugent. In a way, he imaginarily reverses Mrs. Nugent’s predominant position and shatters her contemptuous manner by ignoring her. Actually, Francie’s imagination fits into what Adler calls “fictional goal”, that is, an individual’s act of replacing painful realities from which feelings of inferiority emanate with a fiction which provides him with the antithesis of these feelings (The Individual 99). However, as Adler argues, if a child is unable to attain his fictional goal due to unfavourable domestic and social environments he might be exposed to the inferiority complex and, in that case, he will develop an insufficiency and aggression, behave “like enemies” in a suspicious and sly manner (The Individual 118). In Adler’s words, “it is such children who become the criminals, problem children, neurotics, and suicides” (The Individual 119). Francie is precisely such a child who fails to overcome the inferiority imposed on him by Mrs. Nugent because of the dysfunctionality of his family and his helplessness in society. His father’s bad temper and disclosure of some frustrating realities about Alo sharply destroy Francie’s “fictional goal”, that is, his aspirations of making the Nugents envy and restoring his self-respect.
For this reason, his mental strain, which results in his running away from home, is partially created by his sense of failure in subjugating the Nugents and getting away with the identification of ‘pigs’. In a parallel, his abandonment of home can be construed as his denial of succumbing to inferiority.

Hence, Francie’s distress caused by his father’s alcohol dependence and ill-temper and his mother’s mental illness is aggravated by his feeling of embarrassment and abasement generated by the Nugents. As a consequence of his grudge against them, he associates all the entities suggesting their superiority (i.e. domestic order and welfare, parental care and uniformity, and material wealth) with his inferiority and domestic deprivations, which causes him to feel both an inner jealousy of and outer aggression to the Nugents. His mother’s death makes these two feelings exorbitantly intense and, as a result, he trespasses into the Nugents’ house and puts his inner wishes into practice. On one hand he damages their property and defecates on their floor, on the other, he imaginarily substitutes himself with Philp and enjoys his domestic and material comfort. In a deranged state, he tries to escape his sense of inferiority by writing “PHILIP IS A PIG” on the wallpaper and getting immersed into his delusion in which he treats Mrs. Nugent and Philip as pigs (McCabe, *The Butcher* 61). In this way, he fictitiously tries to exonerate himself from the identity of ‘pig’ and establish his own superiority. His delusion, therefore, can be taken as a pathological form of attaining his ‘fictional goal’; yet, ironically, as his frustration of his fantasies about his uncle causes him to run away from home, his deviant fantasies of humiliating Mrs. Nugent and Philip as inglorious pigs again result in his isolation from society by being sent to an industrial school.

One significant role of the Nugents in dispiriting Francie and aggravating his helpless and lonely situation in society is related with the friendship between Philip and Joe, which is another trauma for Francie. Having been Francie’s friend for almost eight years, Joe is the only source of support and happiness for Francie in the outer world;
symbolically, they become blood-brothers in the hiding place which, as already stated, can be taken as a metaphor for womb. Thus, the fraternal bond between Francie and Joe provides Francie with a relief from domestic agony and also a feeling of belonging to the environment encircling him. Regarding the criticality of having a peer in preadolescence, Harry Stack Sullivan suggests that “a chum or a close friend” supplies one with the “diminution of anxiety” (*The Interpersonal* 245), “consensual validation of personal worth” and a substitute source of affection and protection (*The Interpersonal* 251). In this respect, Joe, in Francie’s perspective, is equated with a figure who means more than only a close friend; especially after Alo’s abandonment and his mother’s death, Francie pathetically clings to Joe as the only person whom he could trust, get on with and communicate. Therefore, he becomes oversensitive to any incident or idea suggesting an impairment on his relationship with Joe. For example, at the industrial school, he thinks that his friendship with Joe would be over when Joe learns about what he did on the Nugents. In a profound depression and dejection, he tries to kill himself by cutting his wrists: “there was a gaping hole in my stomach for I knew Joe would have heard all about Nugents by now. I had let him down. I had nobody now that was for sure and it was all my own fault. … I tried to get at my wrists with the jaggy bit of the statue. I managed to get at bits but it was doing no damage you could still be at it in a hundred years time the way it was going” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 69). Thus, due to his excessive devotion to Joe, Francie feels an acute aggression and frustration and becomes detached from the community when his friend abandons him. The Nugents are involved in ending the friendship between Francie and Joe basically in two ways. The first is that Buttsy, Mrs. Nugent’s brother, forces Joe to say that he is not friends with Francie, which infuriates Francie so as to assault Buttsy with a rock; as a consequence, Joe, being frightened by Francie’s abnormal aggression, leaves him. Secondly, the families of Joe and Philip begin to have an intimate relationship with each other, which results in that Philip replaces
Francie as Joe’s close friend. In order to fix his broken friendship with Joe, Francie intends to go to his house and talk to him; but, to his dismay, he sees the Nugents together with Joe and his family:

Mr Purcell closed the car door and folded his raincoat. Then Joe was standing there beside him just looking up and down the street. Then who gets out the other side only Philip Nugent, I went cold all over when I saw him, the hair down over his eyes. Then he goes over and stands beside Joe, opens a book and starts showing him something in it and the two of them laughing away. Mr Nugent opened the other door and then Mrs Nugent got out. He says let me help you there we are. After that they all went inside Purcell’s house and closed the door. It was starting to rain. I crossed the street and hunkered down at the window. I could see the grey glow of the television as it was turned on in the sitting room. Joe was pointing at something. Then Philip Nugent appeared, tossing back his hair. … Mrs Purcell was in great humour, talking away to Mrs Nugent. For a minute I didn't catch on that it was me and Joe she was talking about at all, … It was the best thing ever happened to our Joe said Mrs Purcell he had us worried sick running about with that other fellow. (McCabe, The Butcher 135-136)

As obvious in the extract, Francie, being excluded from the cheerful company of Philip and Joe, remains as an outsider. He feels desperate to lose the only figure whom he could rely on and who could help him hold on to life. He overhears the unfavourable remarks of Joe’s mother about himself and, thereby, his inferiority complex is intensified; in a way, he feels defeated and poignantly acknowledges to be stigmatized as a pig. The severe anxiety of solitariness causes him to lose his mental intactness totally and he is hospitalized for mental treatment. Back from the mental hospital and being entirely on his own as his father is dead too, Francie does his best to re-establish his friendship with Joe; he wishes to make a new start, wears new clothes and goes to Joe’s house but only to be disappointed to learn that he moved away to a boarding school at Bundoran. His fondness for Joe turns to be an obsession which makes him steal a bike and go to Joe’s school. He sneaks into the dormitory and shouts Joe’s name; and when he comes face to face with him, he is devastated by not only Joe’s callous and insolent manner but also to see that he is with Philip Nugent:
All I had to do now was walk right over to Joe and that's what I would have done only for what happened then who was standing right behind him only Philip Nugent. … As soon as I seen him everything started to go wrong because he wasn't supposed to be there … Joe said to me: What do you want? No he didn't. He said: What do you want? It was no use me trying to say I wanted us to ride out Joe I wanted us to talk about the old days …

It was no use me saying that for I knew it wouldn't come out right so I said nothing I just stood there looking at him. He asked me again: What do you want me for? Are you deaf or something? Then he said: Do you hear me. What do you want me for?

I never thought Joe would 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 (McCabe, *The Butcher* 189)

Hence, Francie’s persistent effort to recuperate his friendship with Joe becomes to no avail. His insistence on having Joe back as his friend is related with his longing for the company of a figure who does not treat him as an inferior being. In a way, for Francie, Joe is the single anchor who could provide him with an inner stability and confidence; he represents the last remaining shelter where Francie could take refuge in against outer hostility. For this reason, Francie is shocked and dismayed to confront with the fact that he is not only forsaken by his beloved friend but denied by him in a repugnant manner similar to that of the Nugents. Even though it is Francie’s anomalous aggression caused by his dysfunctional family what impairs the amity between him and Joe, the Nugents operate as the force which reverses the friendly bond between Francie and Joe; as Philip gets in with Francie and Joe, the latter’s humble and tactful manner fades away and he gets assimilated to the conceited higher-class posture. In consequence, Francie once again feels victimized by the Nugents and, resigning himself to the despicable identity of a pig, he is left alone in the outside:

Then he [Joe] left he said something to Philip on the way out and Philip smiled. I stayed there for a minute … the priest said I think its time you were leaving Mr Brady. I said yes, yes Father and they brought me to the gate … then I went off into the dark … I just walked I felt like walking that wasn't Joe I said I don't know who that was but it wasn't Joe, Joe is gone they took him away from me and all I could see was a pair of thin lips saying that's right we did and there's nothing you
can do that will ever bring him back again isn't that true Francis Pig you little piggy baby pig and I says yes Mrs Nugent it is. (McCabe, *The Butcher* 190)

Hence, loss of Joe’s friendship exerts a destructive influence on Francie’s psychology; the darkness which he moves into represents both the hostile outer world characterized by uncertainty and insecurity and his own inner turmoil, depression and melancholy as well. He believes that the happiness and exemption from anxiety which he could attain through his friendship with Joe is taken away from him by Mrs. Nugent. Therefore, his aggression and sense of vengeance against her reach to a climax. He goes back to the town and, from the slaughterhouse, he takes the cart with which he collects rotten food for pigs; he also takes the butcher’s steel, knife and the captive pistol which is used to kill pigs. He goes to Mrs. Nugent’s house and vindictively attacks her: “she stumbled trying to get to the phone or the door and when I smelt the scones and seen Philip's picture I started to shake and kicked her I don't know how many times. … I caught her round the neck and I said: You did two bad things Mrs Nugent. You made me turn my back on my ma and you took Joe away from me” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 195). Then, he brutally kills her with the pistol, cuts her stomach open and writes ‘PIGS’ all over the walls with her blood. He puts Mrs. Nugent’s body in the bottom of the cart, takes it to the abattoir and places the body into a manure heap. The fact that he murders Mrs. Nugent in such a savage and vicious way indicates the intensity and acuteness of his inner aggression and inferiority. Hence, the murder is a cathartic act for Francie which provides him a psychological relief. Furthermore, he kills Mrs. Nugent in the very same way as he kills the pigs at the abattoir; therefore, the killing of Mrs. Nugent also enables him to annihilate his inferiority by ascribing the identity of pig to her.

Thus, the Nugents, with their disparaging and scornful manner as well as their untroubled and comfortable life, worsen Francie’s already impaired psychology and become the external source of anxiety and mental oppression on him. The protagonist’s
domestic trauma is combined with the traumatic impact of Mrs. Nugent’s insults; throughout the novel, he struggles to erase the stigma of pig inflicted on him and his family by Mrs. Nugent, but in this while, he develops a very latent jealousy of their opportunities which gives him an inner sense of guilt as he feels as if he betrayed his mother. Failing in and being frustrated by each of his attempts to vanquish the Nugents, he loses his mental stability and poignantly develops self-abasement; his aggression and tendency to aberrant acts escalate to such a pathological extent that he does not refrain from extreme verbal and physical violence.

Joe’s turning his back on Francie becomes the ultimate trauma for the protagonist; understanding that he is utterly helpless and being in abject agony, he callously kills Mrs. Nugent whom he regards as the figure generating the anguish he undergoes. Yet, the murder causes Francie to be expelled from society perpetually; even though he is imprisoned and forced by the police to tell them where Mrs. Nugent is, he eludes them by tricking them into the chicken house. Then, he goes home, heaps all the staff he finds including family photographs and clothes and sets the whole house on fire while listening ‘The Butcher Boy’ in an extreme mental suffering: “I closed my eyes and it was just like ma singing away like she used to … I was crying because we were together now. Oh ma I said the whole house is burning up on us” (McCabe, The Butcher 208-209). However, he is saved by a sergeant and taken to the hospital as his face is totally burnt. After getting medical treatment, he shows the police the place where he buried Mrs. Nugent’s body and the novel ends with Francie’s being sent to mental hospital again where, after remaining in solitary confinement for a long time, he plays the trumpet and befriends with one of the patients imagining his days with Joe: “so off we went, counting our footprints in the snow, him with his bony arse clicking and me with the tears streaming down my face” (McCabe, The Butcher 215).
Francie’s state of an outsider, engendered by his family’s deformities, Mrs. Nugent’s aspersions and loss of Joe’s friendship, is keenly ratified and espoused by society and its institutions. The essential chasm between Francie and his social milieu, including Joe and Mrs. Nugent, originates from the fact that while Francie still has an adherence to the notion of an ‘arcadian’ Ireland advocated by Eamon de Valera in the period prior to modernity and liberalization, his environment takes on a new outlook which ignores or rejects the traditional perspective, or holds onto it in a hypocritical manner. In fact, the novel, in many ways, is structured upon “the encroachment of the ‘new’ (the culture of global, telecommunicational, postmodern Ireland) upon the ‘traditional’ (the family, the small town, the authorized national narrative, the social and religious character of the state)” (Herron, 168). The traditional, as identified by de Valera himself in his renowned 1943 speech, takes its nucleus from ‘spirituality’; as de Valera states: “the ideal Ireland that we would have, the Ireland that we dreamed of, would be the home of a people who valued material wealth only as a basis for right living, of a people who, satisfied with frugal comfort, devoted their leisure to the things of the spirit” (466). Francie’s initial euphoric mood for being in the countryside partly illustrates this spirituality: “I liked rain. The hiss of the water and the earth so soft bright green plants would nearly sprout beside you. This is the life I said” (McCabe, The Butcher 1-2). Also, Tom Herron refers to Francie’s traditional orientation as follows: “the novel’s narrative, which belongs exclusively to Francie, actually yearns for de Valera’s vision of near Edenic wholeness and simplicity. Traditional Ireland, represented in the novel by recurring ballads and pastoral images, is one which finds an enthusiastic adherent in the shape of Francie himself” (176). Besides, Francie’s spirituality is apparent in that he heartily cherishes such concepts as friendship, parental love and family honour, each of which he keeps above any material phenomena. On the other hand, the figures surrounding him lack such a spirituality; instead, they prioritize material wealth and act
with a sense of superiority and rivalry. This contrast between Francie and the community, exacerbated by the latter’s iniquities, leaves the protagonist as a helpless outsider who is excluded and expelled by not only townspeople but the servants of public institutions as well.

5.4. Social and Institutional Dimension

In an interview McCabe stresses on that “what he [Francie] wants is for one of the things he has been told - even one - to be true” (“Meat” 12). In a similar vein, Richard Kerridge pinpoints that *The Butcher Boy* is “about the way people are constructed by a culture which then disappoints and humiliates them” (11). Both statements point to that, along with the dysfunctionality of Francie’s family and the feud with the Nugents, a critical phenomenon which adds to Francie’s inner distress and undermines his relationship with the outer world is the adverse and insensitive characteristics of society and public institutions; that is, of ‘the culture’ Kerridge refers to. The small-town society and public institutions depicted in *The Butcher Boy* reflect the changing attitudes of Irish people in the early 1960s in various ways. Francie’s interaction with members of society realistically indicates Irish society’s gradual divergence from its traditional identity. They are characterized by their indifference, egoism, consumerism, materialism and disparaging segregation (which began to ingrain in middle-class Irish people’s outlook with the modernization of the 1960s) rather than a spiritual and authentic ethos represented by unity, empathy and goodwill. And Francie’s failure to be attuned to this socio-cultural transformation generates a conflict between himself and his social circle.

As Harry Stack Sullivan indicates, the detriment or complete dissolution of the bond between individual and society impairs his/her mental and personal development; Sullivan stresses on the significance of interpersonal relations suggesting that “developmental history of personality … is actually the developmental history of
possibilities of interpersonal relations” (The Interpersonal 30). Therefore, impairments, insufficiencies and defects in interpersonal relations bring about psychological and behavioural disorders; lack of a healthy interaction and communication with others destroys what Sullivan calls “euphoria” (The Interpersonal 34) and begets an inner pain and anxiety in individual. In this regard, the little town where Francie and his family reside is implicitly portrayed as a place where public’s beliefs and assumptions have a strong hold on people’s lives. Within this locality, rumours and gossip quickly spread and create a prejudgement about a family or person; the community’s readiness to interfere in and publicize others’ private lives exert a pressure on Francie and his family. Therefore, it becomes impossible for Francie to remain indifferent to society’s notion of himself and, especially, his family. The community’s role in leaving Francie as an outsider is mentioned by McCabe himself as well; in an interview he states that, on a great scale, it is “the malignant shame” inflicted on the protagonist what victimizes him (“An Interview” 57).

As the circumstances in Francie’s family worsen and, particularly, after Mrs. Nugent’s insults, Francie turns to be oversensitive to what others think and talk about himself and his parents. Mrs. Nugent’s following statement that her bad opinion of Francie’s family is shared by everybody in the town significantly injures Francie’s self-esteem and interpersonal relations in society: “you needn't think we don't know what goes on in this house oh we know all right! … Pigs -- sure the whole town knows that!” (McCabe, The Butcher 4). These remarks, which function to validate the inferiority of Francie’s family, cause the protagonist to believe that the community, as a whole, hypocritically takes on an upbraiding and degrading attitude towards his family. Being aware of the fact that the issues in his family are a matter of talk within the town, he feels a profound anxiety to maintain his family’s good reputation and honour, as obvious in his effort to let everyone know that his uncle would be coming. In a way, his animosity
towards the Nugents is extended to townspeople whom he regards as foes to be beaten. In fact, Francie’s mother also takes on a similar, inimical attitude against the Nugents as well as the community when she is back from the mental hospital: “she looked into my eyes and said: We don't want to be like the Nugents. We don't want to be like any of them! We'll show them -- won't we Francie? They'll envy us yet! We're the Bradys. Francie! The Bradys!” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 18-19) So, his mother’s words serve to reinforce Francie’s idea that the community, siding with the Nugents, has a principle role in the misfortunes he and his family face with and that his family’s well-being depends on overcoming both the community and the Nugents. In this way, a parochial thinking of ‘we versus they’ is entrenched in Francie’s mind and thereby his sense of belonging to the community is destroyed.

The community’s covert insincerity and callousness in their relationship with Francie and his family is one of the essential factors which detach the protagonist from the outer world. The communal space in *The Butcher Boy* embodies one of the “fictional portraits of rural and small-town Ireland as places that conceal scarifying dysfunction and maddening tedium behind a placid veneer” (Harte 76). Mrs. Connolly, in this respect, is the chief figure representing social hypocrisy. She and some other women in the neighbourhood, whom Francie frequently encounters in the grocery shop chattering about others, embody the flow of gossip and communal pressure in the town. She seems to be an attentive and tactful neighbour who provides succour and support for Francie’s family; but, in fact, she has a hidden wish to leave a good impression of herself upon others. Such a manner of hers is seen when she, with some other women from the neighbourhood, brings Francie’s mother home upon the latter’s mental breakdown: “Mrs Connolly said never mind Benny I'll look after it and she tapped him on the shoulder like a mother then hoisted her skirts and went off upstairs singing” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 8). Mrs. Connolly’s carefree and superficial attitude at such a moment of distress and agony
suggests the inauthenticity of her concern for Francie’s family. Likewise, the other women stand in the house whispering and talking about the town and their families, which indicate that their interest in the issues in Francie’s family arises out of curiosity rather than a genuine sense of solidarity. At another stage, Mrs. Connolly, having cleaned the house of Francie’s family after his father’s death, eagerly expects Francie to show appreciation for her kindness; she also expresses a pretentious sorrow for the lonely state of Francie, which augments the protagonist’s distress rather than mitigating it: “I said thank you very much Mrs Connolly and what did she say then only ah God love you sure who have you now they're all gone I thought what did she have to say that for what did you have to say that for? I looked at her for a minute but then I said no I'll say nothing I just said thanks again” (McCabe, The Butcher 157). The hypocrisy and insensitivity concealed by Mrs. Connolly and other women in the town are well sensed by Francie; because, as McCabe himself puts it, Francie “is hyper-aware of his environment. Although he is inarticulate in some ways, he is cracklingly alive to his immediate environment” (“Meat” 11). Therefore, Francie is deeply affected by the community’s insincere and covertly insolent attitude especially at the moments when he struggles to recover from the traumatic incidents inflicted on him and to make a fresh start on life. For instance, the excitement he feels upon leaving the industrial school and coming back to the town is injured by their reaction to see him as follows:

Into the shop I went and who was there only Mrs Connolly and the women but they weren't expecting me this time you could tell that all right the way they were looking at me: But we thought you were away in the industrial school! H'ho no ladies, I'm back in action yes indeed a puff of smoke and here he is again the incredible Francie Brady – How are you ladies? They couldn't make up their minds who was going to speak. Little coughs and all this and one looking at the other – you say hello to him. No -- you do! It went on like that for a minute or two. I think they thought I was going to pull a machine gun out from under my coat drrr die you dogs. (McCabe, The Butcher 101)
As obvious in the quotation, Mrs. Connolly and the other women treat Francie as a wayward figure who should be shunned rather than sympathetically embracing him and helping him overcome his mental pain related with his family. As Tim Gauthier suggests, the women’s dismissive and isolating attitude towards Francie “contribute[s] to Francie’s progressive alienation” from society; they “become merely another example of the ways in which the community shirks or abandons its responsibilities”\(^{38}\) (199) and leaves the protagonist as an outsider.

Another figure who personifies the misanthropic distance shown by the community towards Francie is Leddy, the local butcher. Leddy’s attitude towards Francie is bereft of any sympathy or affection; instead, seeing that Francie asks for employment from him, he feels superior to the protagonist and boastfully talks about the toughness of the job at the abattoir. He belittles Francie by referring to his despicable state in society as follows: “they're not falling over themselves giving you jobs about this town” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 122). The oppression and authority he establishes on Francie are most intense when he enjoys the cruel act of killing a piglet with a bolt pistol. Witnessing such a traumatic violence, Francie feels an inner anguish: “I could say why oh why did you have to do such a terrible thing to him he never harmed anyone in his whole life you're a cruel cruel man Mr Leddy! and throw myself down on top of the poor little dead little baby pig lying there with his mouth open” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 123). Yet, he hardly keeps himself from revealing his feelings as he does not want to lose the job. Instead, intending to win Leddy’s favour, he cultivates an air of ruthless indifference and kills another pig himself in the same manner with Leddy’s. Thus, even though he hates Leddy and rues the job at the abattoir, society presents Francie no other alternative; the

\(^{38}\) Gauthier situates society’s lack of sympathy towards Francie in a neo-colonial context. He argues that the people of the town, representing an Irish society overpowered by the English for centuries, “in turn, subjugate whomever they can to relieve or compensate for their own feelings of inferiority” (198). Gauthier’s argument is also affirmed by the relationship between Mrs. Connolly and Mrs. Nugent which is characterized by the former’s implicit ingratiation with the latter.
only way which enables him to cling to the world in the outside is the brutal killing of pigs. In time, the job completely destroys the twelve-year-old protagonist’s humane feelings and turns him into a cold-hearted and unfeeling boy. His initial compassion and childhood innocence are overborne by the vicious manner of Leddy. The aggression already stored in him is canalized into the routine acts of killing, cutting and smashing and, as a result, physical violence becomes a part of Francie’s life which leads him to the calm and professional killing of Mrs. Nugent. And yet, as Victoria A. Smallman points out, “despite his [Francie’s] clearly psychotic actions, Francie's desperate quest for affection, intimacy, and recognition obviate reactions of complete revulsion” (Smallman, “Patrick”).

The community’s rejection and disparagement of Francie is exhibited through such minor characters as Doctor Roche as well. Being back from the industrial school and feeling energetic and full of hope, Francie encounters the doctor and tries to converse with him. He asks the doctor how he is and tells about his experience at the school; yet, the doctor scornfully ignores him: “he didn't say anything just looked and that was what I didn't like about Roche the way he looked at you. … I kept waiting for him to say I'm glad to hear that Francie or that's great news, … but he didn't say anything. He said nothing and just wiped his lips with a hankie and then looked at it” (McCabe, The Butcher 105). Francie confronts with a similar disregarding attitude in his dialogue with Mr. Purcell, Joe’s father; when Francie tells him that he wishes to see Joe, Mr. Purcell keeps him waiting on the door step while he talks to a neighbour and then shuts the door behind him as if he were unaware of the presence of the boy. Hence, even though Francie tries to establish an attachment to the outer world, the community’s antagonistic treatment of the protagonist detaches him from the social environment and makes him feel as a stranger in the locality. His domestic depression is aggravated by his failure to find an external recourse in society. As a consequence, “Francie becomes the outsider who can
only peer through the windows at a world that will never let him in” (Gauthier, 205); he moves towards the periphery of social space, as represented by his befriending with a drunk lad, starting to drink alcohol and frequenting the bar. The sense of being excluded and denied is so intensely instilled into him that even at the bar he feels that he would be despised: “I went to the dances but I knew they wouldn't dance with me. I'm sorry but I don't dance with pigs they'd say” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 137). As a desperately forlorn figure, he wanders through the streets and wants to cry out: “*Can you hear me?*” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 140). At one point, he deliberates on his loneliness as follows:

I went out to the river it was bulging nearly ready to burst its banks you could be eyeball to eyeball with the fish. I was shivering with the cold and the wet. I pulled at the grass along the edge of the bank and counted all the people that were gone on me now.
1. Da
2. Ma
3. Alo
4. Joe.
When I said Joe's name all of a sudden I burst out laughing. For fuck's sake! I said, Joe gone! How the fuck would Joe be gone! ((McCabe, *The Butcher* 163)

Thus, having no source of parental or social protection, succour or support and already suffering from the trauma caused by his parents, Mrs. Nugent and loss of Joe’s friendship, Francie remains as an outsider, or, “the unaccommodated man” as Neil Jorden identifies him (27). Being unable to endure the severity of his mental anguish, he pathologically retreats into his world of fantasies and ends up at the mental hospital.

The severity of the impact of being ostracized, humiliates and stigmatized as a pig by the community on Francie’s psychology is clearly seen in his dreams during his treatment at the hospital. He dreams that he acts as a pig and entertains Mrs. Connolly and other women; in his dream, all the figures in the town mock him and his parents and treat them as if they were a pig family: “the whole town was out to watch us going up Church Hill. Hello there Pigs, called Doctor Roche, … and them all standing at their doors with their arms folded look there they go that's them crossing the Diamond. Hey! Hey!
Hullo! Pigs! Pigs! Yoo-hoo!” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 153). Francie’s dream clearly reveals the mental suffering intensified by the community’s derogatory manner against him and his family. The covert repulsion and animosity of people encircling him impairs his psychology to such an extent that he is afflicted with and tormented by the inferior identity of pig in his dream. Thus, the community’s insensitive oppression on Francie exacerbates his loneliness and drives him to his inner space where he loses the touch with reality. He fails to attain a sense of belonging to society and remains as an outsider who is rejected, disregarded and humiliated by others.

Thus, the community’s treatment of Francie as an unlovable and disgusting figure is combined with the protagonist’s pre-established notion of inferiority created by his family’s lower/dysfunctional state. As a consequence, a deep sense of shame is entrenched in him and, in fact, he suffers what Leon Wurmser calls “shame anxiety”; that is, “that type of anxiety evoked by sudden exposure and signalling the danger of contemptuous rejection” (Wurmser, 53). Being despised, condemned and rejected by everyone around him, Francie experiences an intense shame anxiety which causes him to lose his touch with the outer world as well as its realities. For, as Wurmser argues, “shame anxiety has characteristically a ‘freezing’ or, paradoxically, a burning (‘searing’), numbing quality and is accompanied by a profound estrangement from world and self, past and present” (53). Accordingly, Francie’s estrangement from the outside occurs through his pathological immersion into his fantasies; the shame originating from the identity of ‘pig’ forces him into believing in the reality of his delusions as indicative of his psychosis.

Francie’s isolation from society is explicitly indicated towards the end of the novel, just before his murder of Mrs. Nugent. At this stage, all of the figures forming the community are united for one cause, which is their superstitious belief that Virgin Mary would be visiting the town. Hymns are played on the loudspeaker and the phrase “AVE
MARIA WELCOME TO OUR TOWN” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 194) is formed by cardboard letters at Dr Roche’s house; a sense of religious excitement and solidarity diffuses all over the town: “everybody was all holy now, we're all in this together people of the town, bogmen taking off their caps to women, looking into prams and everything. This is the holiest town in the world they should have put that up on a banner. … There was three angels flying over it just in front of the door of the Ulster Bank” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 194). However, this communal unification is both hypocritical and based on a dogma as well. The townspeople seemingly ask for divine mercy and act piously only because it is the time of the Cuban Missile Crisis and there is the risk of a nuclear war; that is, the pervasive atmosphere of piety and devotion is generated out of a momentary fear rather than an authentic and sincere religious orientation. As indicative of their dogmatic perspective, the community is disillusioned by the rumour that the daughter of Mickey Traynor, the TV repairman, had a conversation with Virgin Mary and that the latter would be coming with a sign. Even the drunk lad, who used to frequent bars all the time, pretends to have undergone a religious transformation and asks for a job from a priest.

The community’s insincere interest in religion and Francie’s reaction to them exhibits that the protagonist differs from all the others in that he does not adjust himself in accordance with their superficial and self-seeking characteristics. As Liam Harte puts it, “his [Francie’s] sensibility is irreligious to the point of profanity and much of the novel’s black comedy emanates from his irreverent take on the culture of hypocritical, even pathological, religiosity that surrounds him” (94). This rejection originates from his determination to be himself “against the odds, in the face of a rough world, ill luck, hostile societies and some repellent characters” (Hahn, “Patrick”). Instead of listening to the hymns echoing all around and sharing the community’s ostentatious spirituality, he loudly sings some songs and ridicules the irrational belief of a divine visitation. In a way, his
loneliness and misery contrasts with the solidarity and ebullience of the town. Ironically, his brutal act of murder becomes the ‘holy’ sign which townspeople expect from Virgin Mary. The murder, as an outcome of Francie’s aggressive delusion, operates to confront people with a reality which they ignore or reject; the reality is that, on a great scale, it is their oppressing and alienating treatment of a youth as an inferior and despicable being what turns him into a monstrous psychopath.

The structure of the public institutions in which Francie has an involvement also has an important role in causing the young protagonist to be left in a solitary and helpless state. In fact, if Francie’s dysfunctional family triggers his mental collapse, then the community, with its exclusionary and disdainful aspect, and the institutions, with their ruthless and perverted proxies, offer him a chaotic environment and exacerbate his inner anguish. Therefore, Francie remains “a product of isolation, misunderstanding, and psychopathologies engendered by the abuses and failures of institutions in Ireland and the shortcomings of the community as a whole” (Cotti-Lowell, 94). In this regard, the industrial school and the priests running it leave the foremost traumatic impact on the protagonist’s psychology. Francie and other ‘bogmen’ are exploited, rather than educated, by the school; they are taken to the countryside by the priest in charge for menial work, which illustrates the corrupt and hypocritical system of the school. The fact that Francie easily beguiles the priests by telling them that he hears holy voices manifests the tenuous and immature aspect of the priests in religious terms. Even though they are supposed to help and educate destitute children by means of religious doctrine, their dogmatic and sectarian orientation renders them ridiculous figures manipulated by Francie. The insufficiency and absurdity of the priests and the industrial school as a whole is also illustrated by that Francie calls them with false names: he calls the school “the school for
pigs” or “house of a hundred windows”39 and he addresses the priests as “Father Bubble” and “Father Tiddly”. Furthermore, as indicative of the adverse characteristics of the school, a gardener, who is probably disturbed, befriends with Francie, pesters him with long, heroic stories.

The improper structure of the industrial school comes to a catastrophic state with Francie’s being exposed to the sexual abuse of one of the priests. Father Sullivan, who is a perverted and mentally unbalanced paedophile, molests Francie and gives him sweets and cigarettes in turn. At one stage, the priest forces Francie to tell him the worst thing he did, which refreshes the protagonist’s sense of guilt about his mother’s death and makes him fiercely bite the priest’s wrist. At another point, the priest tells Francie that he wishes to marry him and gives him a woman’s bonnet as a gift; he coerces the protagonist into telling him everything about his life. Francie, getting depressed to remember his delusional attempt to put himself into Philip’s place when he broke into the Nugents’ house, undergoes a crisis and tries to kill the priest with a paper knife. He is interrupted by another priest and, Father Sullivan is sent away from the school. Francie, on the other hand, is asked not to talk about the incident as the priest in charge is afraid of being scandalized. Francie promises to do so and, after a short while, he is let to go back home.

Thus, Francie, as a fictional creation who embodies a personality dispirited by outer conditions, is further exasperated and traumatized by his experiences at the industrial school rather than being provided with protection, affection and moral / ethical education. His psychological and behavioural state, which is already impaired by domestic and social circumstances, is severely smitten with perverted acts of Father Sullivan. The post-traumatic effects of sexual abuse on child’s mentality and behaviour include shame, guilt, hostility, anger, anxiety, depression, interpersonal problems,

hysterical reaction and suicidal behaviour (Malhotra and Biswas, 18); and Francie suffers all of these phenomena which have an immediate influence on his conducts and directly infringe on his inner state. His poor self-esteem created by his family’s dysfunctionality and Mrs. Nugent’s insults and intensified by the community’s disregarding manner reaches to a top level by being sexually exploited by a priest. One of the most injurious outcomes of his exposure to Father Sullivan’s molestation is related with his friendship with Joe. When Francie tells Joe about the Rolos (a brand of candy) that Father Sullivan was giving him all the time, Joe insistently wants to learn the reason for that, which obliges the protagonist to give an account of the sexual abuse he was subjected to. Hearing about the disgraceful occasion, Joe suddenly becomes frightened; he is alienated from Francie as follows:

He [Joe] kept going back to the other thing so in the end I told him and what does he say then he says Francie he [Father Sullivan] didn't really do that did he? I said what are you talking about Joe he did didn't I just tell you?

The next thing I knew I was in a cold sweat because of the way Joe was looking at me. I could see the flattened spot of the grass where he'd been lying he had moved back from it. He was sitting in a different place now. He hadn't moved back too far in case I'd notice it. But I did. It was only for a split second our eyes met but he knew and I knew. Then I said: I fairly fooled you there Joe. Tiddly! Imagine someone doing the like of that! Tiddly! Rolos -- for fuck's sake! I laughed till the tears ran down my face. I fooled you, I cried out. I had a headache and my face was all flushed. Then Joe said it was time he was getting back he had extra homework to do for the weekend. (McCabe, The Butcher 97-98)

Hence, Francie feels embarrassed and anxious to be seen and treated by his best friend as a figure in disgrace. Even though Joe continues to befriending with Francie for some more time, he feels an inner detachment from the protagonist as obvious in his indifferent manner and readily quits his friendship with him after a while. Therefore, Francie’s poignant experience at the industrial school has a crucial role in his loss of Joe’s friendship and escalation of his marginalization in society. Because, as Victoria Connor puts it, “already marked as a ‘pig’, Francie’s self-image is further eroded by the shame he
feels about the abuse he suffered. The institution that was meant to rehabilitate him has only furthered his estrangement from his community and also reality” (184).

Another public institution which similarly marginalizes Francie by treating him as an insignificant figure and in an adverse manner is the primary school. His ebullient and refreshed mood to leave the industrial school and come back to the town is harmed by the fact that he remains at the primary level at school while Joe and the rest of his class move on to the secondary one. Francie’s teacher at the school acts only as another member of the community that considers him a worthless boy deserving no care or concern. He disparages Francie and adds to his estrangement from society as follows: “come out here he [his teacher] says and gave me a crack of the stair rod across the arm. I'll give it to you, he says, you needn't think you'll try any of your tricks with me Brady! Leddy's the man for you, that's the only place you'll ever be any good for!” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 107). Such a dismissive and belittling attitude of the teacher towards Francie cause him to quit going to school and become deprived of an interaction with his peers. It also intensifies the protagonist’s inner distress because he not only interiorizes the sense of inferiority but gets predisposed towards feeling as an alien who is repulsed and abhorred by the community. Hence, the school stands as another source of frustration for Francie rather than helping him mingle with other students and offering him an environment where he gains a sense of belonging. And his teacher, far from being an ‘imago’ who could be taken by Francie as a role-model, behaves as an oppressor excluding the protagonist from communal space. In consequence, Francie is impelled to work at the slaughterhouse where no one wants to work and this paves the way for his murder of Mrs. Nugent.

Along with industrial school and primary school, other institutions where Francie is treated with contempt and prejudice are the police station and the court. In accordance with the adverse qualities of the community, the sergeant of the police station who takes Francie to the industrial school behaves in a way which shows that he lacks an insight
into Francie’s pathetic state: “by Christ if you [Francie] were mine I'd break every bone in your body, he [the sergeant] said” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 64). The sergeant’s superficial, coarse and unfeeling manner towards Francie is manifested by his pleasure retained from the idea that Francie would be subjected to the ill-treatment and oppression of the priests at the industrial school: “H'ho when a the priests get their hands on you [Francie] there won't be so much guff outa ye h'ho” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 66). Thus, the sergeant represents the community’s isolating and denigrating attitude towards Francie in a more explicit way and acts as another figure who aggravates the mental oppression on Francie generated by the outer world.

The community’s and public institutions’ uncaring, inimical and biased treatment of Francie, which hinders the protagonist’s integration into society, is epitomized by the ultimate judgement made by the court about Francie’s motivation to kill Mrs. Nugent. Even though it is evident that the protagonist committed the murder for social and psychological reasons, he is unjustly accused of robbery as follows: “[the judge] comes right up to me there in the box: It was a cold-blooded, premeditated, and deliberate crime -- one that had been cunningly planned and thought over, and above all, it was a murder perpetrated for the meanest and most contemptible of motives -- for the purpose of robbery and plunder!” (McCabe, *The Butcher* 212). Such a distortion of reality practiced by the very authority of justice reveals that Francie is located at an environment where it is impossible for him to have a person or institution to resort to. Once again, he is frustrated to encounter another external hostility which attests to that the society’s odium for him is fixed and widespread. Furthermore, he is sentenced to a solitary confinement at a mental hospital for an indefinite period, which points to that “the forces of law and order rescue Francie from a fiery death in order to inflict an institutional death on him … Thus is the butcher boy banished from the conscience of community and nation,” (Harte, 98).
Thus, by their hypocritical and disdainful treatment of Francie, the public institutions and the community, as a whole, refrain from confronting the reality that it is social and domestic circumstances what damage the young protagonist’s psychology and impel him to deviant behaviour. Therefore, as Laura G. Eldred indicates, through Francie’s experiences, “McCabe suggests that many "monsters" are created by their society. He requires that readers recognize these monsters as scapegoats, not demons … it becomes apparent that the real monster in the book may be the repressive character of the Irish society in which McCabe was raised” (54-55). Being helpless to find a proper way to express the hypocrisy and malignancy of those surrounding him, Francie is only able to demonstrate their follies implicitly by calling them with nicknames. Mrs. Nooge, Father Bubble and Father Tiddly, Leddy the Pig Man, the woman with three heads, Sergeant Sausage and finally Gammy Leg, as Francie calls them, are all figures whose identities are playfully distorted by Francie as a reaction to and self-defence against their hypocrisy and hostility. As Clare Wallace indicates, by means of “'applying' this strategy of substitute-naming more generally, Francie succeeds in deflecting the harshness of the world around him and enabling him to inhabit a comic-strip parallel universe, which is manageably one-dimensional” (“Running amuck”, 159-160). Though in varying ways and degrees, each of the figures surrounding him torments Francie mentally and imposes on him the idea that he is a worthless and inferior being who is not wanted among themselves. And Francie, being too weak to deal with their oppression in a healthy way, adopts a pathetic defiance which has the potential to turn to a sudden and extreme explosion of aggression. Therefore, society’s superficiality and hypocrisy as well as its denial of responsibility in engendering a psychopath out of an already traumatized youth have a pivotal role in leaving Francie as a destitute and solitary figure in the outer world.

In conclusion, in The Butcher Boy, Patrick McCabe gives an account of the ways in which a young boy is victimized by parental, social and institutional circumstances.
Francie Brady, being left as an outsider in the world encircling him, experiences a three-fold trauma; while his family’s dysfunctionality catalyses his mental collapse, the Nugents, the society and, as an extension of it, public institutions exert similar traumatic impacts on his psychology by impeding his struggle to unite himself with the life in the outside. As James M. Smith puts it, the 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” (128). Even though Francie endeavours to enhance his status in society, he remains dependent on others’ succour for his personal well-being. His anguish due to lack of parental affection and protection as well as a friendly relationship is intensified by the society which denigrates, disregards and exploits him in any possible way rather than providing him with a warm and caring environment.

Through the eventful story of Francie, McCabe detects some faults and shortcomings which pervade the world-view and mores of a small Irish community. First of all, the fact that the alcoholic and miserable state of Francie’s father is related with a sense of shame for being left at an industrial school ascertains the role of social pressure and institutional defects in generating the downfall of the Brady family. Benny Brady fails to master his own traumatic memories and sense of inferiority formed by his experiences at the industrial school as well as society’s judgemental and condemnatory manner. His aggression and ill-temper impair the psychology of his wife and son; his adverse characteristics are transmitted to Francie. In this way, McCabe draws attention to the crucial role of family in affecting the life and future of a son. The chain of tragic incidents triggered by Benny’s desperate inner state and violent outer acts give the society the opportunity to satisfy their ego by taking on a controlling, criticizing and insulting attitude in their relationship with the Brady family and, particularly, Francie. This isolating stance, which is initially and most explicitly adopted by Mrs. Nugent, is embraced by every single member of the community.
The fact that the public institutions included in the narrative are only extensions of communal repulsion and ostracization carries McCabe’s satirical tone to a higher level. The uncaring and hostile manner of the teacher at the primary school and the sergeant at the police station evinces that both figures partake of the community’s insensitive and ruthless qualities. The priests at the industrial school, in quite a similar way with the community at the town, are blindly adhered to the dogmas of religion. Religion functions as a source of sensation and dramatization for them rather than a phenomenon which would control them and correct their such misconducts as sexual abuse. The cover-up of molestation at the industrial school testifies to its corrupted structure; and Francie, as a solitary outsider, operates to disclose the realities of this institution where a hidden hypocrisy stands beneath the gloss of discipline and morality. As Lelourec and O’Keefe-Vigneron suggest, “by recounting the fictional Francie’s traumatic experience in the industrial school system, McCabe allows ‘real’ victims to be given a voice and to be heard” (18). The cover-up at the industrial school draws a parallel with the distortion of the realities by the court about Mrs. Nugent’s murder; in both cases, Francie is unjustly and unethically victimized or accused, and, thereby, concealed deformities and deviances in both institutions are strikingly exhibited.

To conclude, by creating such a helpless figure as Francie as an outsider, whose mental state is already damaged by circumstances out of his control, McCabe valiantly foregrounds an Irish community characterized by its readiness to attain a sense of superiority via hypocritical acts of stigmatizing and marginalising. The dichotomy between Francie and the community on one hand renders the protagonist’s alienation but on the other crystallizes the catastrophic effects of domestic dysfunctionality as well as social mistreatment, both of which cause the psychology of the protagonist to be deformed. Francie’s failure to get integrated in the world surrounding him is superficially related with his insanity; but essentially, it is the antagonistic dynamics of the community
what aggravates Francie’s mental impairment and begets his detachment from the outer life. As a result, the castigation, humiliation and alienation which Francie experiences throughout the novel leaves him as an outsider but, at the same time, uncovers the community’s mendacity and duplicity.
The outsiders in *The Dark*, *The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* disclose manifold individual and social realities as well as representing the perspective of their creators to these realities. Each of the three novels presents a literary portrayal of young man’s loneliness in an environment hostile to him and his struggles to attain a sense of belonging by surmounting this hostility. Even though McGahern, Trevor and McCabe differ in their literary style and technique they employ in their works, they coincide in their focus on exhibiting the impact of the outer world on human psyche. They puissantly illustrate such universal humanistic feelings and states as anger, indecision, shame, inferiority and deprivation through the inner distress, helplessness and isolation of their protagonists. By depicting the ways in which the outsiders’ perceptions and outlooks are injured, attacked and insulted by parental, communal or institutional ill-treatment, the authors shed light on the shortcomings which they experienced or witnessed.

In three of the novels, the protagonists are subjected to parental and social strains which damage their psychology and behaviour so profoundly as to lead them to immersing into their inner world as well as taking on some aberrant conducts. Young Mahoney’s exorbitant tendency to masturbation in *The Dark*, Timothy Gedge’s encroachments on others’ lives and acts of threatening and blackmailing in *The Children of Dynmouth* and Francie Brady’s acts of violence which result with a brutal murder in the end in *The Butcher Boy* are all outcomes of external oppression and indifference surrounding them. Each of these protagonists becomes dependent on outer solace and sympathy due to the tyranny or dysfunctionality prevailing their domestic environment; and yet, the communal space where they seek affection and protection serves as a source of anguish for them rather than functioning as a safeguarding shelter. The fact that, on one hand they wish to belong to society (which, in fact, contemnuously ignores them) and on the other they refuse to capitulate to its malicious and hypocritical structure.
renders them outsiders who remain detached from their families as well as the outer world.

As probed in the previous chapters on the novels, the domestic and social circumstances impel the protagonists in *The Dark*, *The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* into solitariness. They are agonized by paternal issues; young Mahoney is victimized by his father’s despotism and cruelty, Timothy is bereft of a sense of fatherly protection and discipline, and Francie is traumatized by his father’s lethargic state and violence. In each case, the protagonists are deprived of an a ‘imago’ whom they could identify themselves with. Their distress is escalated by lack of motherly tenderness and affection as well. Therefore, the psychologies and personalities of the protagonists are damaged though in varying degrees. They are handicapped to be integrated in society initially on account of that they fail to develop proper interpersonal relations, which is instigated by domestic issues. Being exposed to patriarchal hegemony for years, young Mahoney develops a timid and introvert personality; his father’s tyranny diminishes his subjectivity and self-esteem and deprives him of self-confidence that would enable him to feel more secured in the outside. Absence of a father figure and a caring mother in Timothy’s life leaves him on his own in an environment characterized by hypocrisy and affectation. And Francie, being traumatized by his father’s acts of physical and verbal violence as well as by his mother’s suicide, loses his mental health and turns to be delusional. These domestic poignancies embody the conditions underlying the protagonists’ posture as emotionally deprived and mentally harrowed outsiders.

The communities depicted by McGahern, Trevor and McCabe intensify the protagonists’ perturbation by treating them as worthless and inferior beings. In *The Dark*, young Mahoney’s relationship with the church and university highlights the condescending attitude of the proxies of these institutions. Furthermore, his sister’s being exposed to sexual abuse by the owner of the shop where she works sets an example for
the moral corruption of the community. By young Mahoney’s experiences, McCabe illustrates some social realities of Ireland in the 1950s such as moral depravation in the Catholic Church and society in general; in this respect, *The Dark* can be taken as a social document disclosing the ‘darkly’ hypocritical side of an Irish society and its institutions which are ironically distinguished with their religiosity and moral conservatism. In *The Children of Dynmouth*, Trevor’s fictional landscape is populated by Dynmouth people who epitomize hypocritical and self-centred attitude; besides, Timothy’s interaction with them reveals the social inequality he is subjected to. The humdrum of the fictional town and community exhibited in the novel echoes the dullness of Trevor’s childhood Ireland in the 1930s and the 1940s. Similarly, the community portrayed by McCabe in *The Butcher Boy* regards Francie and his family as persons with lower and abominable qualities; such a discriminatory outlook lets them have a disdainful sense of superiority. The fact that the qualities of this community in many ways represent the transformation experienced by small-town Irish societies in the 1960s adds to the novel’s realistic tone and gives it the aspect of a sociological document. So, through marginalized protagonists located at the peripheries of life, the authors, each in their own unique way, present a true view of a conformist world whose inhabitants personify a covert disdain and hypocrisy in their effort to distance the outsider from communal space. They also mirror some shortcomings and flaws of the Irish societies of their time within the literary landscapes they create in their novels.

Public institutions also remain only a part of communal shortcomings and flaws. The church and its members, as the representatives of religious community, are of no avail to the helpless teenage protagonists. While young Mahoney is almost molested by father Gerald, Francie is unable to escape from being subjected to this dark experience. Timothy, on the other hand, appears as a repellent figure to Mr. Featherstone, the town’s vicar, and is continuously denied by him. Hence, rather than safeguarding the protagonists
from outer dangers and threats, men of religion in the novels act in a way that amplifies their anxiety. Furthermore, the university which young Mahoney attends in *The Dark* and institutions of education, rehabilitation, security and justice in *The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* are all depraved places where the protagonists are pushed into further anxiety and frustration. Thus, the protagonists exist in broken social, religious and domestic structures; they lack the feeling of security and belonging, which could be supplied by family, society, religion or public institutions in proper conditions. Therefore, being excluded from society and its communities, the protagonists feel isolated and act as outsiders in the outer lines of society and yet at the innermost of their psychic space.

Even though all of the protagonists in the novels are excluded by their communities, the ways they react to this exclusion differ from each other. While young Mahoney takes on a passive and submissive attitude against figures who abuse or mentally torment him, Timothy and Francie act in a more defiant and aggressive way. Such a difference basically originates from that young Mahoney grows up under the tyranny of his father; he is incarcerated in the ‘darkness’ of a remote house where he is directly victimized by his father’s violence and humiliation. On the other hand, Timothy does not undergo such a paternal pressure due to his lack of a father figure and Francie is not directly oppressed by his father’s mistreatment though he is traumatized by domestic violence generated by paternal circumstances. As a reaction to community’s antagonistic, berating and despising demeanour, Timothy and Francie act in a way that turns others’ lives upside down; while Timothy puts such figures as Mr. Abigail, Mr. Dass and Mr. Plant into mental anguish by threatening them with disclosing their secrets, Francie’s behaviour is based on physical aggression and violence which ultimately cause him to kill Mrs. Nugent. In this way, while McGahern elucidates young Mahoney’s inner burst of anger which he hardly controls, Trevor and McCabe highlight that it is the oddity and eccentric perspective of isolated and disregarded figures that become the most striking
and shocking when unveiled. Yet, the truth in three writers’ outlook is more visible to those whom people ignore and take no notice of; for, they are in the outside of majority, at a point where they are able to have an extensive glance at the realities of the word.

In their narratives, McGahern, Trevor and McCabe, intentionally or not, reveal the role of family and society in creating disrupted individuals whose selfhood is shattered. The fact that their protagonists are at a psychological and behavioural period in which their personality and mentality are newly being formed evinces their proneness to any kind of outer damage. In other words, they are at an age in which the treatment they receive from their parents and society may easily shape or impair their self-image as well as their outlook on life. Therefore, lack of a congenial environment due to domestic dysfunctionality and social hostility not only brings about their sequestered and excluded state but disables them to flourish as individuals who have personal and behavioural intactness. In this respect, the issue of lack of a stabilized identity and a turbulent search for it can be considered the common theme of three novels which, in a way, bring them closer to Joycean legacies of identity crisis and quest for self. Yet, being without an aesthetic and artistic predisposition, the protagonists of McGahern, Trevor and McCabe fail to attain a recourse that could let them have an insight into their identity and subjectivity. Their personal aspirations are annihilated by parental and/or social disregard, derision and restrictions. Being too immature to overcome the adversities they confront, they either remain yielding and endure in silence (as young Mahoney does) or take on a deviant pattern of conducts to deal with others (as Timothy and Francie do), which, in fact, further estranges them from their social milieu; in any case, they are left as insignificant figures whose innermost sense of individuality is crushed.

The fact that, in each of the novels, the protagonists’ outer conducts and relationship with the world are affected by their deformed psychologies involves an analysis of their inner states through the insights gained from such psychoanalysts or
psychotherapists as Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, Carl Gustav Jung, Otto Rank, Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan and Jacques Lacan. Freud’s arguments on primordial aspect of human psyche let the outsiders in three novels be approached through a focus on their conducts as compulsive reactions or motivations generated by their repressions, deprivations or anxieties. In Freudian perspective, young Mahoney, Timothy and Francie can be construed as figures who remain as outsiders for not being able to satisfy their basic need of avoiding from pain. Assertions of neo/post-Freudian thinkers essentially underscore the significance of man’s having a smooth relationship with his environment in mental, personal and behavioral development. Hence, in neo/post-Freudian outlook, the protagonists in *The Dark*, *The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* are distanced from social life due to distresses, anxieties or lacks in regard with their family, friends and the community. Utilization of both points of view in explicating the protagonists’ inner and outer conditions, as carried out in this thesis, not only enriches the insight into their state as outsiders but lets them be fully viewed as fictional personae. Such a dissection can be identified as “psycho-sociological literary analysis” on account of that it comprises both an investigation of instinctual impulses behind individual conducts and an elaboration on the qualities of the bond between man and his environment in unfolding his psychological and behavioral state.

In many aspects, the outsiders, as portrayed by McGahern, Trevor and McCabe and scrutinized in this thesis, are distinguished from other, earlier literary figures identified as outsiders essentially in that they are isolated and excluded by their own townspeople with whom they come from the same socio-cultural background. Furthermore, they differ from such outsiders as Camus’ Meursault or Dostoevsky’s Underground Man particularly in that, being preadolescent protagonists, they don’t have a sense and intellect by which they could make an existentialist questioning. Even though young Mahoney, in some ways, comes near to such a state of mind, his willingness to
belong to a majority (as represented by his orientation to ecclesiastical, scholarly and professional communities respectively) suggests his search for personal security whose attainment corresponds to the dissolution of his subjectivity. Finally, though they might be compared to Joyce’s such outsiders as Leopold Bloom and Stephen Daedalus, the fact that they lack an artistic sensitivity and that their perspective is limited with circumstances affecting their well-being in the mundane world rather than being characterized by an intellectual or aesthetic aura distinguish them from Joyce’s protagonists. Hence, the aspects of the outsiders created by McGahern, Trevor and McCabe let them be situated at a distinctive point within literary sphere. And the point where they exist (or are allowed to exist) in the fictional world of their creators is the outside of social, communal or institutional spaces; that is, a solitariness in which their one and only recourse is their imagination and fantasies. Being vulnerable to cruel, unjust, indifferent, insulting and discriminatory treatment of both their parents and other figures around them, young Mahoney, Timothy Gedge and Francie Brady grow into maturity as the victims of the world surrounding them. Therefore, to highlight their being in a state of idiosyncratic isolation and exclusion due to external afflictions and scourges, the protagonists of *The Dark, The Children of Dynmouth* and *The Butcher Boy* can be described as “victimized outsiders”. Or, regarding the fact that they spring from ‘Irish minds’, and that, to varying extents, they embody Irishness, they could be described as ‘Irish outsiders’. And as Irish outsiders, they embody the isolated, perplexed and distressed Irish youth who become so due to adverse domestic and social circumstances experienced or observed by Irish writers and conveyed by them in their works.

To conclude, dysfunctionality of their families, their consequential perception of inclusion and integration in society as the only possible way to exist, and antagonism and insensitivity of their social environment render young Mahoney, Timothy Gedge and Francie Brady figures adrift in their restricted worlds. Their unloved and isolated posture
as well as injured psychologies are elucidated via the ideas and arguments of Sigmund Freud and prominent neo/post Freudian figures. The outsiders portrayed by McGahern, Trevor and McCabe can be compared to some other protagonists created by Irish novelists. Jennifer Johnston’s *Shadows on Our Skin* (1977), Roddy Doyle’s *Paddy Clarke Ha Ha Ha* (1993), Frank McCourt’s *Angela’s Ashes* (1996), Claire Keegan’s novella *Foster* (2010) are some of the acclaimed literary works coming out of Irish minds and experiences; and they all dissect the ways in which a child or preadolescent remains isolated, seeks for identity and strives to fulfil his-her lacking of a sense of belonging to a community. So, the fact that a number of contemporary Irish novelists draw on outsiders as the protagonists by whom they cathartically express their feelings and thoughts shows that literary depiction of young individual’s exclusion from the outer world is an issue which requires more elaboration and investigation in academic and intellectual sense.
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ÖZET


Anahtar Kelimeler: İrlanda romanı; John McGahern; William Trevor; Patrick McCabe; dışlanmış birey.
ABSTRACT

This thesis investigates representations of the outsider in John McGahern’s *The Dark*, William Trevor’s *The Children of Dynmouth* and Patrick McCabe’s *The Butcher Boy* through views and theories of Freudian and neo/post-Freudian psychoanalysts. McGahern, Trevor and McCabe, being among prominent writers of contemporary Irish literature, limn tenebrous worlds in their novels in discussion and delineate protagonists who struggle to belong to society. These characters, who are children or preadolescents, grow up within dysfunctional families characterized by violence and disparagement; therefore, their psychological and behavioural development is impaired and, consequentially, they become predisposed to develop some aberrant conducts. Immersion into imagination, anxiety disorder, distrust and inferiority complex are some of the conditions undergone by the protagonists due to poignant domestic circumstances as well as depraved fabric of societies in which they try to exist. The ways in which these and some other inner troubles impinge on the protagonists’ behaviour and cause them to be isolated from external world are probed with the insight gained by the ideas of Sigmund Freud, Alfred Adler, Carl Gustav Jung, Otto Rank, Karen Horney, Harry Stack Sullivan and Jacques Lacan.

One of the most critical influences exerted by dysfunctional families over the protagonists is that turbulent domestic atmospheres force them to seek for an external source of recourse to be provided with a sense of security as well as love, affection, praise or approval, which they have hankered after since their early childhood. As they have no relatives or peers from whom they could get support and sympathy, they not only remain alone in society but become reliant on its appreciation and acceptance of them. However, the portrayals of societies in the three novels exhibit that the communities encircling the protagonists partake of some iniquities such as indifference, hypocrisy, selfishness and class-consciousness; the indecent fictional universes of McGahern, Trevor and McCabe, with their such institutions as the church, university and industrial school, serve as only extensions of domestic oppression and anguish for the protagonists. Thus, while striving to overcome their inner distress, these young and helpless figures are disregarded, berated and excluded by their social milieu. As a result, their effort to attain a sense of belonging comes to nothing and they remain as unsheltered outsiders.

Keywords: Irish fiction, John McGahern; William Trevor; Patrick McCabe; outsider.