In the works of Roddy Doyle and Patrick McCabe, imperialism and colonization become the driving forces for the identity formation of characters in the novels *The Woman Who Walked Into Doors* and *The Butcher Boy*. There are noticeably two forms of dominant culture in these novels: that of the male Irish, and that of Irish society in response to England’s political and economic imperial pressure. The imperial aggressor begins with England’s colonial rule in Ireland, which oppresses Irish society by appropriation and exploitation of political and cultural structures and as Ania Loomba notes, is a “process, which leads to domination and control” (Loomba 7). Imperial pressure in this case creates a hierarchy of subjugation among the subaltern classes leading to the male Irish to also serve as a form of colonizer and metaphor for the effects of colonization on Irish women. Irish society and the subaltern classes made up of lower class Irish men exist in a symbiotic relationship of mutual dependence. The Irish male is the dominant subaltern member of the proletariat society and serves as the primary catalyst through which colonial violence is mediated, specifically with women, or the lower subaltern class. In the hierarchy of colonial rule, England oppresses Ireland society, which in turn visits its oppression on the abject members of its own society, and eventually further in gender relationships between males and females. Irish society looks to England for permission to subjugate the lower classes and the Irish male looks to society for permission to oppress women.
In the *Woman Who Walked Into Doors*, by Roddy Doyle, there is a pervasive force of linguistic violence within the characters interactions with one another, which contributes to a colonizing effort by the dominant male culture. Language, in these terms, is a form of complicity in that it furthers the colonizing endeavors of the subversion of female identity. For example, for the character of Paula Spencer, language becomes the primary means in which she becomes disempowered, because the dominant culture, male Irish or colonizer, imposes fictional accounts of events in the novel on her identity. Linguistic violence manifests itself as another form of enforcing submission initially through notably sexist language, slang, insults, and later more drastic elements including silencing, which lead to physical abuse and the victimization of Paula Spencer. Insulting and naming assigns an identity to a character, especially Paula, by the colonizer. For example, the word “slut” as used in the novel represents a universal insult against women and status as a female (Doyle 45). When Paula uses this language herself, she shows the difference between knowledge and power. By using the language, Paula is complicit in her own degradation because she shows herself as subordinate and is initially unable to use the power of language to change her condition. However, she does ultimately use the power of language in her writing and reflection on her situation. Paula’s character is one whose preeminent notion of self is shaped by a naturally perverse and submissive society, much like the character of Francie Brady in Patrick McCabe’s *The Butcher Boy*. 
In the *Butcher Boy*, Francie becomes the colonized based on Ireland and England’s imperialistic relationship, through the efforts of several characters that impose their gross limited notions of identity on him. Francie is of a low socioeconomic status, and therefore his identity is shaped by the dominant Anglo-Irish culture of society who possesses power through monetary gain and acceptance. The Nugents, for example, represent the high culture of society, or England, and can therefore impose the identity of being a “pig” upon Francie, which marks him for the rest of his life (McCabe 5). The Nugents’ position and economic condition in the community represent a strong link to colonial power where Francie becomes the colonized through their reassigning of his identity of an animal. Linguistic violence and the power of naming destabilize the identities of the colonized subjects of Paula Spencer and Francie Brady. Both characters begin to see themselves as the insults and identities that are assigned to them and react by succumbing to these identities and creating false realities. The characters’ identities show how colonialism is illustrated in an intrinsic way between Paula and Charlo where British colonial presence is more of an immanent power, and an extrinsic way between Francie and the Nugents, where the Nugents represent an intrusive presence and their social power depends on their supremacy of British culture. The roles and positions of colonizer and colonized ultimately shift in these novels as the characters learn to appropriate and rewrite their identities, yet the dynamic remains stable as one character or social group continues to dominate another. Paula learns to free herself through her writing and come to a realization about her intended role in society. While Charlo is present Paula
appropriates her identity, and when he leaves she is able to write and reflect on her experiences in order to see her life for what it was and is in the present. Through language and economic status, the reader becomes aware of the stable dynamics of the colonizer and colonized in identity crisis and formation within these abuse narratives.

In the *Woman Who Walked Into Doors*, Paula Spencer is undeniably the writer of the text. Her story is undoubtedly an abuse narrative of the effects of the colonizer on the colonized. Through her writing, the formation of her identity and colonization by the male culture is evident. Paula’s story serves as a type of Kunstlerroman, because her narrative reshapes the way she perceives the world. Paula edits her own reality to place it in the form of a story and history of her own life. The complexities of Paula’s life writing are manifest in their colonial nature. Paula uses her writing as a form of freedom, separating herself from the dominant culture because she does not internalize her circumstances. Doyle utilizes Paula as the writer of her story to inform the roles of colonizer and colonized and how these roles can shift. In this case, the colonizers are those who establish themselves in a hierarchy through manipulation, fear, and aggression, and the colonized are those who are less aggressive and assertive to do so, thus bending to the will of the colonizer. Paula’s writing can be termed as a form of intertextuality with Irish culture, where Ireland is colonized and abused by the mother country of Britain, and Paula is colonized and abused by the dominant male society. As Ania Loomba notes, imperialism is “the phenomenon that originates in the metropolis,” or in this case, England (Loomba 7). England’s colonial rule in the novel exists as an intrinsic presence in Paula’s relationship with Charlo. Paula’s
situation can provide for the intertext in which the history and culture of Ireland resides or echoes its presence. This also alludes to the notion that the colonized can colonize others, which is essentially what Charlo does to Paula as being a member of the colonized Irish society, as well as teachers, family, and peers. The men of Ireland are colonized members of the country, and therefore establish themselves in a hierarchy in order to form an identity, which allows for them to further colonize the female members of society. As a classic colonial text, Rudyard Kipling’s poem, “The White Man’s Burden,” further demonstrates the notion of colonization and imperialism as it relates to Doyle’s work and characters. In the poem, Kipling addresses that the colonized country essentially sells its culture to the mother country. He notes sarcastically that the burden of man is in fact attempting to colonize a people, assimilate another culture, and impose imperialistic notions on others and the effect it has. He writes, “Your new-caught, sullen peoples” which refers to the entrapment of those who do not assert an identity or those who do not want to be colonized but do not know how to free themselves (Kipling line 7). Doyle shows that Paula essentially sells her own culture and identity to Charlo, which does not give her any claim to power in the relationship, like it would in a trade relationship between countries. A lack of culture and identity is shown in the setting that Doyle provides for his characters and their views of culture.

Roddy Doyle presents in his novel a setting of low socioeconomic status in Irish culture, which lends to the shaping of ideas and expectations of love and marriage because of Ireland’s history of political violence and imperialism. The
setting helps to set the framework for Paula’s sense of self in the novel and identity as the colonized. Paula notes that “if it hadn’t been Charlo—if it had been a lad in a suit with a car and aftershave and a good job with a pension it would still have been the same” (Doyle 119). This illustrates her surrender to her abusive situation with Charlo in the novel, just as she surrenders to society’s standards in the male dominant culture. Paula knows that because of the imposed identity she represents, there is a fixed stasis of what she is able to achieve in the future. Regardless of her interpretation of reality, writing allows for the concrete representation of events in her life. Writing allows her, for the time being, to alter herself and produce changes in how she perceives events in her life, thus imposing her own fictions as well as those Charlo lead her to believe, upon herself. Paula accepts Charlo’s fictions, writing her own fictions that support his as she takes part in writing the text. Charlo instills in Paula that it is her fault that he hits her because she provokes him. She notes that, “I always provoked him. I was to blame. I should’ve kept my mouth shut” (163). Charlo’s power allows for the disfigurement of how Paula perceives that world and herself. Paula accepts Charlo’s fictions for his actions and begins to believe them as truths, thus allowing for her further consent for abuse and colonization efforts by the dominant culture. Writing her story gives Paula the power to expose the ills of society and of her abuser, while also giving a glimpse into her life as a colonized member of a culture. Paula’s identity in the dominant culture is not only a colonizing effort by Charlo, but also by peers, teachers, and family.
Paula provides an early and critical example of the complexities and ways in which verbal abuse is tantamount to colonization and forcible identity formation when she describes her teenage years. She notes, “you were a slut or a tight bitch, one or the other, if you were a girl—and usually before you were thirteen” (Doyle 45). The naming and identity assigning of being a bitch or slut provide for a colonization effort by the male dominant culture. These expressions, while painful, fulfill an important role in society: the formation of social constructs and assigning of identity. In this instance, name-calling or identity assigning becomes a universal identity and insult toward women, regardless of one’s role in society. As Jarmila Mildorf notes “insults confer a certain identity on the person insulted and thus ultimately contribute to the construction of social group;” “giving an insulting name to someone also means putting this person into a certain category of people who are considered to share characteristic features” of that group (Mildorf 109). This conveys the expectation that the person in a particular role with a certain identity must fulfill the requirements of that specific role. The formation of social groups becomes another way in which characters embody colonization. In the novel, women and men present two distinct social groups, where the man presides as the cultural imperialist, imposing his own beliefs, values, and attitudes on the colonized, or women. As Ania Loomba notes, “Colonialism is not just something that happens from outside a country or a people, not just something that operates with the collusion of forces inside, but a version of it can be duplicated from within” (Loomba 12). Paula internalizes her imposed identity based on the ways in which Irish society has internalized British imperial rule. Paula
allows herself to become a part of the subaltern group that is further colonized by members of its own society because she knows that through culture and language she is already a part of that group. Group formation is especially noted in the way Paula describes her early formation of identity in an adult culture. She notes, “before I was a proper teenager, before I knew anything about sex, before I’d even left primary school—I was a slut” (Doyle 47). Before Paula has a chance to create and form her own identity, the hegemony of the male culture dominates her sense of self and her own interpretation of culture. Paula is a part of a power inequality because the language used to describe females colonizes her into a role that she necessarily does not have to fulfill, but does. This terminology is not only used by society in general, but is also prevalent in the home, which provides for a cognitive colonization of women because of the influence of society on men. Paula writes, “my father called me a slut the first time I put on mascara” (46). Her father’s words transition into society’s notions of females being portrayed in every aspect and interaction of daily life in their assigned identity. Wherever Paula goes in the novel or whomever she talks to, she will continue to represent the emulation of a colonized group within the dominant culture: pressure to equalize and negotiate her identity within the dominant culture through a personal colonization, especially through her writing. Paula’s writing is a primary example of this kind of language use in the novel in order to impose one’s own values and beliefs upon another and accept them as truths in order to adopt and emulate an identity.
Male dominance through linguistic abuse is essentially a colonizing effort on women in society in Doyle’s novel. The male characters in the novel, such as Charlo, define women in terms of derogatory language in order to construct sexual power over women. Devaluing women through language establishes a male identity where they are the power holders in the dominant culture of society. Throughout the novel, Paula continually consents to other’s abuse of power, both physically and through language. She is an object of power that male figures in the novel, especially Charlo use to gain their own power. While in school, Paula notes that her male teacher “never let us forget that we were dense, that we were a waste of his time. Another ladies’ man; he put his hand on my shoulder once and he kept it there and kept it there while he bent over and changed Their to There” (Doyle 33). Paula’s school situation represents the colonizing endeavor of both the teachers and the students in the classroom. The male teacher is one who is in essence colonized by the situation of Ireland, and therefore imposes his values and beliefs on students in an effort to gain power in his classroom and especially on his female students because they are considered to be the weaker gender. The students then internalize this concept and impose their own beliefs upon each other. By bending over and changing the words “Their to There” and the meanings on Paula’s paper, the teacher demonstrates how verbal and physical language perpetuates male ideology (33). According to Susan Philips, “female and male differences in language use both express and contribute to the maintenance of male dominance” (Philips 523). Male and female differences are noted in the ways in which Paula succumbs and reacts to her identity. As an object, Paula provides these
male characters with what they need in order to be considered powerful: consent, participation in abuse, and the surrender of her identity as a human being. Paula’s refusal in being sexually available to her classmates results in verbal abuse. She attempts to defend herself verbally by engaging in the same language as men as a defense mechanism or resistance to male dominance and power. This is also a demonstration of the reciprocal effects of colonization, which allow for the detraction of stability among the characters.

Like the other students, Paula, as the colonized, attempts to colonize others through the same abusive language that is imposed on her. During her years at school, Paula describes the verbal abuse she began to engage in with her classmates. She says to a classmate, “There’s a smell of shite off yeh” and then realizes the implications that language has on her own identity formation as a colonized person when she says, “I never said anything like that before; I don’t think I ever did. Now I had to act rough and think dirty. I had to fight. I had to be hard” (Doyle 35). Paula is reacting to abuse with her own abusive language. She attempts to link her identity with a male identity to establish a place in society for herself as a colonizer, because there is no place for her as a colonized subject of the male world. This male identity is best shown in Charlo’s characteristics. Throughout the novel, Charlo symbolizes the dominant male subaltern culture, especially through verbal abuse as he uses language to oppress Paula. Charlo follows the hierarchy of colonial rule since he feels the effects of England’s colonial rule over Irish society as a member who is further colonized by members of his own culture for being lower class. As Tim Gauthier
notes, “each member of the community endeavors to emerge from the colonialist shadow, at whatever cost. Having been subjugated for so long, they, in turn, subjugate whomever they can to relieve or compensate for their own feelings of inferiority” (Gauthier 3). Charlo takes his own external effects of colonialism and internally oppresses Paula because she is of lower status as a woman and the cost becomes their marriage and Paula’s health. Both Charlo and Paula emulate the hierarchy of colonial rule within their own household demonstrating how the dynamic of oppressor and oppressed is stable, yet the roles and positions change. Because of her environment and relationship with Charlo, Paula misplaces her own violent physical and verbal abuses on her own children, making her the colonized and colonizer in the hierarchy within the household. This further demonstrates the deconstruction of identity on the abused through the manipulation of language.

Language is a powerful manipulative tool in Paula’s society. In this society, those with power, or the colonizers, are able to impose gross fictional notions of the world as truths on the passive and obedient. In Paula’s case, Charlo fictionalizes his abuse of her by saying, “You fell” (5). By naming the incident as falling, Charlo obliterates any connections with him and abuse as a deliberate fact, and therefore “violence is linguistically rendered ‘invisible,’ ‘non-existent,’” and Paula is ultimately deprived of her right to define her own reality (Mildorf 115). Paula’s interpretation of the incident then turns into her identifying an expression of “worry and love” on Charlo’s face (Doyle 5). Charlo’s revision of the incident is in fact a colonizing endeavor. He is getting Paula to see herself and her world, as he wants her to and
under his conditions, and is using language to gain that control over her. Verbal power to create identity is practiced by Charlo many times throughout the novel as Paula notes, “He’s making it up as he goes along, making himself believe it; working himself up, building up his excuse. He’s getting ready to let it go (182). Paula and Charlo both pretend that the reality of the situations lies in the excuses Charlo is able to create. Charlo gains and maintains power through redefining Paula’s experiences with his own fictitious language, and as Mildorf notes, “that one of the ways that Charlo gains and maintains power over Paula is through redefining her experience of violence” justifying his deeds and allowing Paula to cope with her experience (Mildorf 114). Charlo employs many strategies of minimizing Paula’s remembrance of experiences with language, and in turn further deconstructs her identity as she becomes more involved in his verbal and physical abuse. This also translates into Charlo’s attempt to control Paula through fear. As the colonized, Paula notes that, “there wasn’t one minute when I wasn’t afraid, when I wasn’t waiting. Waiting for him to go, waiting for him to come […] I was brainwashed and brain dead, a zombie for hours, afraid to think, afraid to stop, completely alone” (Doyle 176). Paula notes that Charlo brainwashed her into accepting his fictions and also conceding her identity and ability to exist as a person. Yet, because of Charlo’s establishment of fear and linguistic violence, when he stops Paula notes, “I was grateful, so grateful, I’d have done anything for him” (177). This further allows Paula to represent a colonized member of society and also a colonized member in her marriage. There exists no equality between the relationship of Charlo and abuser, and Paula the abused. As
Paula attempts to reconstruct her identity, she begins to free herself by recognizing the falsehoods of her own perceptions. According to an essay by Marcia K. Johnson, is it possible for “the products of perceptual experience” to be confused with “the products of imagination” which can create false memories. False memories can easily occur when one has “a vested interest in a certain conclusion” of an event that may cause him or her to dismiss certain evidence that may perhaps lead to a different conclusion (Johnson 761). The relationship between evidence and conclusion is especially noted in Paula’s writing as she remembers events from her life in many different ways as she copes with her colonized identity. She begins to realize years later that she did not fall, but in fact Charlo hit her and notes “I’m looking at it now but that isn’t what I saw then. I couldn’t have coped with it then, the fact that he’d hit me, plain and simple, he’d drawn back his fist and smashed me” (Doyle 163). This shows Paula’s recognition of her own colonization by the male culture. In the past, she was unable to recognize this event as it took place, because her identity would not allow her to do so. At the time of the event, Paula’s identity is colonized and belongs to Charlo.

In an examination of this text as a post-colonial work, Paula demonstrates characteristics of the colonized during and after the colonizer’s effects. According to Tim Gauthier, “the departure of the colonizer leads to a state of indeterminacy that is dictated by two conflicting impulses: to embrace the tenuous promise of prosperity left in the wake of the colonizer, or to imagine a ‘unified’ past and reclaim a necessarily idealized ‘identity’” (Gauthier 196). In her remembering, Paula attempts to create an identity that presents her as a strong female in the end and unify her past. Using
writing allows Paula to note, “My past is real. I could stand on it and it wouldn’t collapse under me. It was there” (Doyle 59). A majority of Paula’s writing takes place after Charlo, the colonizer, has left, which allows Paula to reclaim her past realistically and attempt to interpret an identity of someone who is now free of abuse, but not of the psychological effects the colonizer has left behind. While Charlo is present, Paula is unable to distinguish fact from fiction, because she has not been taught to claim her own identity. Throughout the novel, Paula shifts back and forth between asserting her identity and reality and also accepting what Charlo and society has constructed for her. She knows that her reality has been altered; yet continues to make excuses, demonstrating the psychological effects colonization can have on an individual. She claims, “I fell. I’d been too near him; he hadn’t realized. He’s only been warning me. He didn’t know his own strength. He had things on his mind” (163). Paula minimizes violence in her own language by coming up with these excuses for Charlo’s behavior. Paula uses her writing as a method of remembering and imagining, which gives her power over her own past, yet eventually appropriates to her identity as the colonized by succumbing to the character the insults construct, and giving herself the identity of “the woman who walked into doors” based on Charlo’s colonization of her true identity as a female (187). For this reason, Charlo is still present in her mind demonstrating that the colonizer is never truly gone, and society can still feel the effects years later as Paula notes, “I still think of Charlo. I miss him. I want him to come back” (91). By not indicating reality and verbally
telling what Charlo did, Paula is able to cope with her experience, and can only truly
tell it in her writing as a form of cathartic healing.

If Paula had not been able to write down her experiences, she would remain
invisible and suffer not only from the violence and abuse of her husband, but also
from the neglect and lack of responsibility by medical professionals through their
colonizing efforts of silencing. Paula writes, “no one saw me. I was fine, I was grand.
I fell down the stairs, I walked into a door. I hit myself with the heel of his
shoe” (188). Paula is bitter about the way her identity is being assumed and how her
cries for help are overlooked. Until she is able to write, her situation goes virtually
unnoticed for what it truly is. Language, in this novel presents a unique power
struggle between men and women. Paula initially begins her writing as the colonized
through Charlo’s use of verbal assaults. Charlo uses language to maintain the identity
he created for Paula; an identity, while accepted by Paula and her culture, has bias
effects on the constructed realities in the novel. Paula’s writing is proof that she is
able to shift power and go from being the colonized, to the colonizer and end her
participation on Charlo’s abuse and society’s constructs. She claims, “I wanted the
power” (75). Paula wants the power to assert her identity as a female and end the
colonization of her gender through language. In her desire to gain power, Paula shows
a form of emulation because she desires the kind of power that Charlo held over her. It
is a power that comes with violence and illustrates that violence and abuse is the
central way identities and roles shift in this society. It is not until her own daughter’s identity is beginning to be compromised that Paula does “something good” and removes the colonizer from her life (226). Paula creates and wields her own power because she is able to produce change in herself and her surroundings. Throughout the novel, in every situation where Paula attempts to gain control over her life or fight back against Charlo, he further oppresses her. Her disempowerment is shown when she tells Charlo, “Make your own fuckin’ tea. That was what I said. I wonder what would have happened if I hadn’t said it, what would have happened if I’d gone over and out on the kettle” (168-9). Paula notes that if she had been compliant, perhaps she would not have been abused. By getting rid of Charlo and ultimately saving her daughter from a fate similar to hers, Paula turns a model of power from one that disempowers her, to one that empowers her. Paula and Charlo’s relationship is a metaphor that demonstrates how an intrinsic colonial presence follows the dynamic of colonizer and colonized between genders, where the females in the subaltern class remains a primary target for oppression. A hierarchy of colonialism is also established in extrinsic models as an intrusive presence of British supremacy between members of Irish society in Patrick McCabe’s *The Butcher Boy*.

In the *Butcher Boy*, McCabe presents an abuse narrative much like that of Paula’s based on society’s standards in the dominant culture. While Francie Brady does not write his own text, his story serves as another example of a Kunstlerroman because it demonstrates the intertextuality of Irish history and culture present in his own personal narrative, although it is not applied directly. Francie Brady represents
Ireland’s neocolonial condition and relationship with the colonizer. In this novel, the effects of Britain’s relationship with Ireland and its political implications colonize Francie and the community. However, the presence of the Nugents further demonstrates the effects of colonization and establishes a hierarchy, as they colonize the community, and the community in turn colonizes Francie, allowing for the colonized to colonize others. Upon their arrival back from London, the Nugents establish themselves in a hierarchy within the community and according to Tim Gauthier “represent an economic upsurge and a change in class structure in Ireland” (Gauthier 200). They must return to Ireland to impose their superiority on the community and wield the economic power while also reforming and ideals and opinions of existing Irish society. Socioeconomic status therefore becomes the primary means as to which Francie Brady is the colonized in the novel. Francie’s life mirrors the effects of colonization through his search for identity and idealization with the past. In the novel, Francie comes from a situation of low socioeconomic status, which includes an alcoholic father and suicidal mother. His status combined with the institution of the “Nugents as adopters and representatives of dominant culture values” leave Francie with notions of instability and an imposed identity (Gauthier 197). At the onset of the novel, Francie does not represent any archetype of a strong identity. Because of the dysfunctional relationships of his household, family roles are turned askew, as Francie becomes the caregiver, an adult role taken on by a child. These roles further demonstrate a social positioning in the novel. Throughout the novel,
there is an adoption of a hierarchal positioning of all characters, which lends for the
institution of naming and labeling.

Naming is an important aspect of how individuals construct their daily lives,
but can also deny reality and value on the person, place, or thing being named.
Naming is especially noted upon the moment in the novel, which serves, for the
questioning of identity as Mrs. Nugent proceeds to impose the character of pigs on the
Brady family. Francie notes, “It was hard to believe that all this time what she was
really saying was: *Ah hello Mrs. Pig how are you and look Philip do you see what’s
coming now—The Pig Family!*” (McCabe 5). At this moment in the text, Mrs. Nugent
becomes a colonizer of identity and strips Francie of his character as a human being
and by naming him devalues him as being nothing more than a pig, an animal.
Because of the Nugent’s economic status within the community, they embody the
dominant cultural values and attitudes of how the community should behave, and
perhaps “her [Mrs. Nugent] attack on the Brady’s is meant to accentuate the distance
between her family and theirs and to denote the all-important difference that
distinguishes them” (Gauthier 200). The Brady’s represent what Mrs. Nugent and her
family are not, and by extension, what the community is not nor wants to be. As an
extension of Britain and the colonizer, Mrs. Nugent must position herself in the
community as an authority and also reveals some of her own anxiety about the
instability of her position. She must utilize the Brady’s as a contrast to validate her
own position within the community. Because the Brady family does not fit in with
that dominant culture, they, especially Francie, becomes the colonized and the other in
the community or “that by which they [the community] define themselves” (197).

Without the Brady’s as the “other,” Mrs. Nugent’s beliefs and values would not be dominant in the community and her constructed identity of the Brady’s as pigs would also not be able to exist. The Brady’s therefore, represent an easy target for Mrs. Nugent to begin establishing her role as colonizer among the already colonized members of the community.

Upon Francie being named as a pig, he finds himself in an uncertain environment with the presence of an uncertain authority, and begins to transform in to his new identity, leading to an identity crisis. In referring to Mildorf’s concepts of social group formation and identity categorizing, it can be said that Francie will undoubtedly adopt the imposed identity and characteristics of a pig (Mildorf 109). Like Paula being named a “slut” in The Woman Who Walked Into Doors, Francie, being named as a pig, begins to fulfill the role as a pig because naming him as such reveals that he must represent the fundamental characteristics of that group (Doyle 45). Pigs are often associated with ferocity, violence, dirt, and vulgarity. They are devourers of everything in their path, a menace to framers, and creatures who are omnivorous. Francie notes that “pigs are forever doing poo all over the farmyard, they have the poor farmer’s heart broken. They’ll tell you that pigs are the cleanest animals going. Don’t believe a word of it. Ask any farmer! Yes, pigs are poo animals I’m afraid and they simply will cover the place in it no matter what you do” (McCabe 66). Francie takes the notion of being a pig one step further by personifying every aspect of pigs as a filthy animal. Embodying these characteristics further places Francie out of
the reach of acceptance by the community and dominant culture, especially when he desecrates the Nugent's house. These characteristics that are imposed on Francie, which he now owns, are not those values by the dominant culture, and will continue to colonize Francie as he appropriates them.

As Tim Gauthier notes, “Francie’s ‘piggishness’ has been imposed on him by Mrs. Nugent. Lacking the necessary tools to fight back, Francie’s only recourse is to adopt the identity and make it his own refuge” (202). By claming the identity as his refuge, Francie begins to obsess over his new identity and it infiltrates every aspect of his daily life, as he adopts a role that he necessarily does not have to fulfill, but does because of his lack of a strong identity. Especially, this is manifest when he invents the pig toll tax as a way of venting his frustration with the community. Mrs. Nugent “takes it upon herself to speak for the community” when she names Francie a pig, which “makes her an obvious target for Francie’s anger and frustration” (198). She represents all that he is not, and to him is the source for all of his problems and is compelled to illustrate to her the identity she gives him. When he sees Mrs. Nugent, Francie becomes the identity imposed upon him as he notes, “I got down on all fours on the tarmac [...] you don’t usually expect to come out of your kitchen and see a pig wearing a jacket and trousers crawling round your front step” (McCabe 58). By referring to himself as a pig wearing human clothes, Francie appropriates the identity that Mrs. Nugent gives him. He is not merely a boy acting like a pig, but rather denotes himself as an animal obtaining certain sub-humanness. Francie succumbs to the identity of a pig and does not escape it throughout the rest of the novel, just as
Paula in *The Woman Who Walked Into Doors* succumbs to the identity of being named a “slut” (Doyle 45). The identities of both of these characters, especially for Francie, adopt a certain self-loathing for not being able to change one’s position within the society. However, these identity roles can also be empowering, as both of these characters come to terms and recognize their identities to ultimately produce change; Paula internally through her writing and Francie externally through his extermination of Mrs. Nugent. The identity of a pig is also represented in Francie’s instability with his role as the colonized. In his thoughts, Francie turns Mrs. Nugent and Philip into a pig as a way of coping with his experience with their family and the community. He notes, “I want you all to stick out your faces and scrunch up your noses just like snouts. That’s very good Philip. I found a lipstick in one of the drawers and I wrote in big letters across the wallpaper PHILIP IS A PIG […] so that was the pig school” (65). By placing Mrs. Nugent and Philip in the role as a pig, Francie can come to terms with what his imposed identity represents. Francie assimilates his identity and Mrs. Nugent’s attributes of a pig to the extent that he makes it his own. As well as Mrs. Nugent, the community also serves in the role as colonizer in Francie’s narrative.

Francie Brady adopts or internalizes the dominant culture’s hatred and categorization that represents him as inferior. In the novel, there are two distinct formations of social groups: the Nugents and the community, to both of which Francie does not belong, but yearns to. Upon his rummage through the Nugent’s house, Francie fantasizes and plays out a conversation between Philip and Mrs. Nugent by
saying, “You know what he’s doing here don’t you mother? He wants to be one of us. He wants his name to be Francis Nugent. That’s what he’s wanted all along!” (McCabe 64). His fantasy reveals his secret desires to belong to the dominant culture and the community. As Tim Gauthier notes, “Francie’s desire to be like the Nugents is not unlike the paradoxical relationship between colonizer and colonized. Although the colonized desperately wish to rid themselves of the colonizer, they unconsciously yearn for all that the colonizer has and is” (Gauthier 8). Francie yearns for what Philip has and is because his friend Joe is able to enter that world, leaving Francie behind, yet also wants to get rid of Philip so that he can have his old world back. “All I said was Phillip, and when he turned I swung the chain but I didn’t connect I missed the side of his face” (McCabe 51-2). By getting rid of Phillip, Francie can reclaim his identity and friend because there would no longer be the threat of Phillip intruding on Francie’s community.

Because the Nugents represent a form of Englishness, the Irish component, or the community is subservient. The community has not yet managed to extract itself from English ideals and establish its own identity. Therefore, as Francie continues to embody a pig, the community begins to sense its own inferiority and directs that toward Francie since he is most outwardly affected by the colonization. According to Gauthier, “the value system used to gauge the worth of an individual is entirely based on a structure imposed by the colonizer” (Gauthier 201). The value system that the Nugents place on the community and Francie deem them as secondary citizens, however unlike Francie who adopts his new identity, the community strives to inhabit
the characteristics valued by the colonizer, thus acting as a colonizer toward Francie by not accepting him into the community. His characteristics are not deemed worthy by the colonizer, and therefore not deemed worthy by those who wish to satisfy the colonizer. The community becomes colonized because it lacks the aggressive and assertive distinctiveness that separates the Nugents from Francie. The community strives to illuminate itself from the shadows of colonization, and shows that “the relationship that the community has with the Brady’s, and with Francie in particular, illuminates the transitional world of the aftermath of colonization” (204). In a way, the community becomes responsible for what Francie has become because they do not accept him into the community, but allow for him to be further colonized by the dominant culture. Francie is never able to gain access to the community, partly because of his socioeconomic status and his focus on external factors, like the Nugents, rather than internal ones that could be responsible for his state. Instead he blames his condition on Mrs. Nugent and notes, “it was you caused all the trouble if you hadn’t poked your nose in everything would have been alright” (McCabe 2). His identity is inherently a product of the colonizer and Francie cannot recognize it any other way. Francie attempts to recover from his colonization by searching for his idealistic past, especially in his friendship with Joe as he notes, “There were some good laughs in them days, me and Joe at the river with our noses in the water, hanging over the edge” (10). By yearning for idealistic ways, Francie can attempt to recover from his plight as the colonized and perhaps reform his identity. However, Francie is unable to recover and violence is his only method for coping because his yearning
illustrates nostalgia for life before the Nugents or colonizer arrived. Francie’s violent acts are the only alternative in his struggle against the colonizer and dominant culture.

At the end of the novel the community’s inability to punish Francie proves that, as Gauthier notes, “to do so would be to recognize him as part of the community” (Gauthier 206). Francie will never be able to claim a place in the community because of his appropriation of identity. He remains a colonized subject who symbolizes the notions of an imposed identity of a limited worldview.

In Roddy Doyle’s *The Woman Who Walked Into Doors* and Patrick McCabe’s *The Butcher Boy*, colonization becomes the force in which the dominant culture is able to impose identities on others. Through linguistic violence and socioeconomic status, both authors present characters that undergo colonizing endeavors that lead to a subversion and reassigning of identity. Paula Spencer and Francie Brady are characters that exist in a perverse society constructed by the colonizer. Their stories each serve as a Kunstlerroman because their narratives shape they way they perceive the world and provide for the intertext in which the culture and history of the relationship between England and Ireland echo its presence. Through their identity formation, each of these characters represents characteristics imposed by the colonizer in an attempt to gain control and establish a hierarchy. In Paula’s narrative, language furthers the colonizing endeavors of the subversion of identity through insults, sexist language, slang, and silencing. The dominant culture in this instance represents the male Irish and represents a false reality. In Francie’s narrative, he becomes colonized through socioeconomic status and those who possess power through monetary gain.
therefore shape his identity. Violence through language and as an act of reclaiming identity proves for the instability of the characters because of their role as the colonized and as the colonizer to others. Both of these characters represent the effects of colonialism, however they achieve different degrees of success. Francie and Paula are able to remove the colonizers from their lives, however the effects of colonization shape the characters in different ways. While Paula is able to free herself by recognizing the falsehoods of her own reality and escape into her writing to expose the truth, Francie internalizes his identity and is never able to free himself. His only release is to accept his identity and utilize it in a way where he can claim it and allow this identity to become his own, not society’s. These abuse narratives show how both Paula and Francie appropriate their imposed identities and succumb to what the dominant culture as deemed them and remain in the cycle of social positioning and achieving different degrees of containment.
Works Cited


