

Masochist and Sadist Individuals at the Socio-Cultural Crisis in *The Banshees of Inisherin*

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the death drive in McDonagh's *The Banshees of Inisherin* while investigating the functions of self-defense, self-destruction, and self-abasement in the film. The proposed questions include: What is the function of death drive in the subjectivity of an individual destructing himself? What are the possible socio-cultural implications of death drive as suggested in the movie? To answer these questions, the study makes frequent use of key terms associated with self-defense mechanism, death drive in particular, as well as masochistic and sadistic elements to prove different features of self-destruction in various forms. The present research shows that death drive projects itself as masochistic self-defense reaction, which is more often than not characterized with resentment and antagonism.

Keywords: death drive; masochism; sadism; self-defense; self-destruction



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Introduction

Life and death are contradictory terms of high significance in the history of conceptualization of human essence. Anything human beings have ever written and worked out in all forms of art is, ultimately, about death – death of somebody near and dear, death of a relation, death of a dream, death of happy days and happy ways, fear of death, obsession with death, the finality of death, ways to cope with death, all the suffering and loneliness because of death (of all kinds), and possibility of happiness in the face of the certainty of death. Life and death make of the two sides of a same coin – not two different coins – and they are always interlocked together.

Outi Hakola and Sari Kivistö published a book entitled *Death in Literature* (2014) where they thoroughly investigated the concept of life and death and its counterpoint. They state that “Literature can provide us with ways of approaching death and imagining it from different perspectives” (p. vii). Various authors devote their works to define, represent, and/or elaborate these two terms from their own perspectives. Burry discusses Dostoevsky’s *The Idiot* and the way it challenges these concepts throughout the plot while picturing them as compatible qualities of the existence (2010, pp. 256-257). Like Dostoevsky, many other critics and authors argue that life can only be understood through realization of certainty of death and vice versa.

Some authors depict death as a door to afterlife where man finally experience immortality. These conceptions are usually traceable in mythological, science-fictional, and speculative literature. The conflict goes far beyond the conceptual definition of the terms. There are authors and poets who attempted to fight back death making themselves or others immortalized in their texts. One of the most familiar examples of such attempts can be found in Shakespeare's Sonnet 18. He has written that,

When in eternal lines to time thou grow'st:
So long as men can breathe or eyes can see,
So long lives this, and this gives life to thee. (2010, p. 147)

In this sonnet, Shakespeare pictures death as a natural entity which takes over all the joy and beauty of life. Shakespeare knew that death is inevitable to whom he writes for; therefore, he endeavored to immortalize his addressee in his poem. Min Peng published an article on the same topic where he analyzes "the theme of immortality through literature in Sonnet 15, 17, 18, 19, 55, 60, and 81" (2020, p. 86).

The examples presented demonstrate the significance of death as a literary theme. There are also a great number of cinematic works on the same theme. As an example, Andrei Tarkovsky, mostly known for metaphysical themes, attempted to clarify the relation between life and death in *Nostalgia* (1983). In *Eternity and a Day* (1998), Theo Angelopoulos who is referred as the poet of the cinema, deals with the concept of immortality and the link between immortality

and death. There are other examples in both cinema and literature. These groundbreaking works try to analyze the significance of life and death, their relation to each other, and most considerably the hidden dependence of immortality on death.

Here, the object of study is the screenplay of *The Banshees of Inisherin* (2022) written and directed by the British-Irish writer Martin McDonagh. He is well-known for his plays and recently has produced several pictures as a writer-director. To name a few of his better known plays one has to mention The Leenane Trilogy: *The Beauty Queen of Leenane* (1996), *A Skull in Connemara* (1997) and *The Lonesome West* (1997), and The Aran Islands Trilogy: *The Cripple of Inishmaan* (1996), *The Lieutenant of Inishmore* (2001) and *The Banshees of Inisherin* which has not been published or produced. Among his movies *In Bruges* (2008) and *Three Billboards Outside Ebbing, Missouri* (2017) can be named. His 2022 production, *The Banshees of Inisherin* seems to be a rework of the unpublished play.

Psychoanalysis as a field of study concentrates on the functionality of unconsciousness. It argues that any act of the subject in real life has its roots in the unconsciousness of the subject. Theories of psychoanalysis paved the way for literary criticism where they receive positive and negative feedbacks. Death drive was first introduced by Freud; however, Jung claims that the term was firstly defined by Sabina Spielrein, a student of both Jung and Freud. On death drive, Freud states: “the assumption of the existence of an instinct of death or destruction has met with

resistance even in analytic circles; I [...] ascribe whatever is dangerous and hostile in love to an original bipolarity in its own nature.” (2002, p. 310). In order to illustrate the relation between self-destruction and pleasure; Freud used sex as an example and elaborated the relation between pleasure and pain in sex.

Jacques Lacan embraced the theory formulated by Freud regarding death drive. He argues that other drives are there for the aim of death drive, which he later addresses as Drive. In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psychoanalysis* (1977) Lacan says: “to approach the fundamentals of psycho-analysis we must introduce a certain coherence into the major concepts [including death drive] on which it is based” (p. 125). In Lacan’s view, psychoanalysts “understand that [...] the drive, the partial drive, is profoundly a death drive and represents in itself the portion of death in the sexed living being” (1977, p. 205). He argues that all the life drives are partial drives. The unity among partial drives is only understandable through the function of death drive. Although the function of Freudian death drive is due to the practicality of biological self-defense, the Lacanian drive depends on the cultural mechanism of a language structured unconscious (Razinsky 2012, p. 24). Lacan’s definition of death drive is thus more reliance on the social context rather than biological essence of sex.

The present article seeks to analyze the subjectivities of McDonagh's characters in *The Banshees of Inisherin* in light of the psychoanalysis in an attempt to observe whether or not and to what extent self-destruction drive in characters represents the concept of death drive from Lacan's point of view. It endeavors to touch the nature of their act and the significance of the relations in the film. The novelty of the study lies in the psychoanalytical exploration of Lacanian death drive in Pádraic's and Colm's subjectivity formation. The finding of this study can help readers to have a better understanding of death drive and to trace its functionality in the subjectivity of an individual. The research will answer these questions: What is the function of death drive in the subjectivity of an individual destructing himself? What are the possible socio-cultural implications of death drive as suggested in the movie?

In psychoanalysis, as in German idealism, there is a connection between the concepts of subject and freedom, but it is noted that for Lacan the subject is the product of structure. However, it is not a coherent structure (Zupančič 2008, pp. 17-18). The subject is a name for the point of structural incoherence. That is why Lacan says that "There is but the cause of that which does not work" (1977, p. 17). Lacan calls this cause, law, which is different from the cause that has become the central concept of science (1977, p. 22). In *The Four Fundamental Concepts of Psycho-Analysis*, Lacan refers to concepts like freedom, subject, gender, cause, and lamella in the realm of death drive as comical.

Concepts of death and drive – death drive – are frequently referred to in psychoanalytical perception of Lacanian subject. The theory of forced choice is one of the most highlighted theory of Lacan on death. As Zupančič has observed,

The Lacanian theory of forced choice – also when further turned, as illustrated by the revolutionary slogan “Freedom or death”, where the only way to choose freedom is to choose death and thus show that you have freedom of choice – certainly offers many crucial elements that one can use in the critique of the ideological slogans of freedom and of free choice. (2008, p. 22)

Lacan’s conceives life drive as partial due to its indefinability without death drive. Lacan studied the Heideggerian “Being-towards-death” and attempted to comprehend any other “*beings*” including being sexual, being male or female, and being loved in an association with Heidegger’s term. Lacan thus claimed that constitution of reality is ontologically incomplete (Lacan 1977, p. 19; Žižek 2000, p. 55; Zupančič 2008, p. 16).

The film generally represents characters caught up in a circumstance beyond their control as well as the ways in which they cope with despair and futility. The subjectivity status of character in such a condition can be analyzed through the lens of psychoanalytical theories. The study adopted the concept of death drive to scrutinize the subjectivity of Pádraic and Colm. McDonagh pictures a well-ordered Island in the film; however, the orders are challenged through break down of a friendship. Colm decide to not be a friend of Pádraic anymore. The more Pádraic attempt to disclose the true reason for Colm act, the more Colm endeavors to be involve

in the tragic events. Following sections will provide a reading of *The Banshees of Inisherin* with refer to understandings of masochism, sadism, and social, political and cultural aspects of death drive. In Conclusion findings of the present article will be presented and the research questions will be answered.

Masochism: Self-destructive death drive

The present subsection is an attempt in analyzing masochistic features of Colm's self-destructive behaviors in order to explore death drive in *The Banshees of Inisherin*. Masochism and self-destruction are two of the most noticeable concepts of in psychosis studies. As Hyde and Delamater have mentioned, the word masochism is named after Leopold von Sacher-Masoch whose novels express the masochistic fantasies of the author (1997, p. 432). The term heavily relies on receiving pleasure from acts involving the self-infliction of injury or humiliation. *The Banshees of Inisherin* is generally a film based on the conflict between pleasure and pain.

As Roy F. Baumeister has put it, "*masochism* may be a means of escaping from high-level awareness of *self* as a symbolically mediated, temporally extended identity" (1988, p. 28). Colm represents masochistic behaviors in the film. After Pádraic and Colm's break up as friends, all the island members continue their daily life, as if nothing has happened. Pádraic finds out the bond between Colm and his co-player in inn. The inn principal shares a rumor about Colm's

behavior with Pádraic, who begins to blame Pádraic for his dullness. Colm rapidly rejects Pádraic, preventing him from visiting or calling him. One day Pádraic asks his so called friend to let him to know what is the reason beyond Colm's decision. Colm threatens Pádraic that if he talks to him one more time he will cut one of his fingers and throw it at his door as a reaction to Pádraic's dull behavior. This is how Colm expresses his dissatisfaction with the existing situation. As Lacan states: "Up till the advent of psycho-analysis, the path of knowledge was always traced in that of a purification of the subject, of the *percipiens* ... We would now say that we base the assurance of the subject in his encounter with the filth that may support him" (1977, p. 258).

Pádraic keeps ignoring the strict rules dictated and carefully monitored by the Colm. In one scene, he intentionally interrupts Colm which leads Colm to cut his index finger. For Lacan "the distinction between the life drive and the death drive is true in as much as it manifests two aspects of the drive" (1977, p. 257). Colm does not miss a chance or ever hesitate to emancipate himself from conversations with Pádraic. He feels he is forced in or to break the visible and invisible chains put on island members by the tyrannical emptiness and viewers gradually come to interpret his fury as a normal response in the face of perpetual despair.

Colm's masochistic behavior is in fact an act of self-defense. Seán Sheehan says that "death drive is immortal and because it is not part of the human world that registers mortality as part of its consciousness it constitutes the 'inhuman' tension that dwells within the human, a 'self-destructive freedom'" (2012, p. 32). The man hurts herself in order to be away from those who torture, remind, and hurt him. The false security Colm feels, becomes a source of pleasure for him; that is why he decides to choose self-destructive freedom.

In a sequence before Colm commits the self-mutilation act of cutting his index finger as a result of Pádraic talking to him, he and Pádraic engage in an argument where Pádraic functions as the life instinct arguing for 'niceness' and Colm arguing for the death drive 'immortality:'

Pádraic: You used to be nice! ... and now... do you know what you are?... not nice.

Colm: Well... I suppose niceness doesn't last then, does it Pádraic? ... but will I tell ya something that does last?

Pádraic: What? And don't say somethin' stupid like music.

Colm: Music Lasts.

Pádraic: Knew it.

Colm: And paintings last. And poetry lasts.

Pádraic: So does niceness.

Colm: Do you know who we remember for how nice they was in the 17th century?

Pádraic: Who?

Colm: Absolutely no one. Yet we all remember the music of the time. Everyone, to a man, knows Mozart's name.

Here, it is seen that Pádraic, a naïve and somewhat narrow minded person, under the influence of alcohol decides to confront Colm in spite of the threat. Frustrated and miserable because of the

absurd predicament, Pádraic driven by the life instinct (Eros) tries to fix his relationship with Colm by projecting Colm's defect to his face in the bar in front of everybody. He argues that Colm used to be nice, a virtue that is the most important one in his eyes. Colm in order to justify his behavior asserts that no one will remember them as being nice people. He claims that all are going to parish and the only thing that might survive is the music, art and poetry that is created. While Pádraic is driven by Eros, Colm is driven by Thanatos. The naïve character striving to survive, clings to 'niceness,' in other words compassion, whereas the sensible characters with an unconscious desire to die, is preoccupied by 'immortality.'

Days pass by and Pádraic refrains from talking to Colm as he has demanded. This repressed desire for Pádraic accumulates to a point where it needs to be poured out. Pádraic, a healthy man in a Freudian sense of the word –where the pleasure and death principles are at work in his unconscious, in favor of the libido- fabricates a story about a man that he sees one day, telling him that a telegraph has come for him giving the news of his father laying on his deathbed. The man gets anxious and heads toward his home. Pádraic gains a sense of satisfaction from this act which could be related to Freud's idea that "The libido has the task of making the destroying instinct innocuous, and it fulfils the task by diverting that instinct to a great extent outwards -soon with the help of a special organic system, the muscular apparatus- towards

objects in the external world” (1924, p. 163). Thus, Pádraic’s ‘niceness’ is jeopardized as a result of his internal conflict between his life instinct and death drive.

Zupančič argues that “Lacan’s ‘death drive’ is precisely the reason that the subject can never be reduced to the horizon of her death” (2008, p. 55). It means that death is not the danger threatening subjects; yet, death can provide an inspiration for a peaceful life. Colms’s masochistic reactions all expose aspects of death drive as they driven by aggression, fear, and hatred, which backfire on the perpetrator himself. The conversation between Colm and Pádraic, causing Colm to cut his finger, helps viewers to understand the motivation in Colm’s self-destructive act; Colm reveals all the aim and doubt he feels about life and becoming immortal in history. According to Lacan, “what is essential [in the functionality of death drive] is that the movement by which the arrow that sets out towards the target fulfills its function only by really reemerging from it, and returning on to the subject” (1997a, p. 206). Colm confesses that if he were aware of what was happening to him after getting old, he would do the same with Pádraic much sooner. In Colm, consequently, death drive manifests itself as masochistic self-defense reaction, which is more often than not characterized with resentment and antagonism. This is also discernible in other characters; for instance, Dominic’s drunkenness can be viewed as another indication of such self-induced destruction and affliction as a means of liberation and resistance.

Aggressivity: Death drive's sadistic representation

The present subsection attempts to analyze sadistic features of Lacanian aggressivity in order to study death drive applicability to *The Banshees of Inisherin*. Aggressivity is a term frequently used in Lacanian understanding of a subject's life. Sadism represents the fact of gaining pleasure from other's suffering and pain. The term sadism is named after Marquis de Sade in accordance with his experiments and writings on sexual sadism, particularly in his *Justine* (Hyde and DeLamater, 1997, p. 435). Another representation of the conflict between pleasure and pain in *The Banshees of Inisherin* can be observed in characters' sadistic behaviors, apart from masochism.

Sadism is a term frequently referred to in psychoanalytical studies of the self. As Walter Bonime has put it, sadism "has been regarded as a preference for and pursuit of suffering is dynamically misconceived" (1995, p. 33). In *The Banshees of Inisherin*, characters represent verbal and non-verbal sadistic behaviors. There are various acts of corporal punishment in the film which can be considered as non-verbal sadistic behaviors. When police officer, Dominic father, investigate the involvement of Pádraic in drink stealing of the son, he uses corporal punishment of Dominic at home. The viewers, however, come to know that they are watching a loop of physical punishment in *The Banshees of Inisherin*.

In a scene Pádraic asks Dominic's father a sarcastic question when faces him at thwarf. In response to the question, the father slaps Pádraic on the face and beats him up. Richard Boothby considers aggressivity, [agressivité] which has its origins in psychic conflict, as opposed to aggression [agression], which "originates in the frustration of a [biological] impulse" (1991, p. 38). The father's fear of islanders' rumors as a response to Pádraic's question, ends up in the sadist behavior of Dominic's father. He is the object of his aggressivity probably threat triggered by the society. Rabat' says that "such a desire can lead to murderous attacks, the objective of putting oneself under the domination of the sadistic super-ego through an expected punishment but also with a view of getting rid of an idealized image of oneself projected in another person" (2003, p. 20). Since the police officer's sadistic behavior presents an act of getting rid of an idealized image of a well-mannered Father projected in Dominic, it can be considered as a self-defense mechanism triggered by death drive.

In "Kant with Sade" Lacan argues that "the sadist himself occupies the place of the object, but without knowing it" (1989c, p. 185). For Lacan, a sadist is subjected – acted upon – rather than being a subject. In another scene, when Pádraic wants to get rid of Colm's new friends, he acts verbally brutal with Colm's student; he lies about the boy's dying father. Lacan claims that "the executor in sadistic experience ... is reduced to being no more than its instrument" (1989c, p. 61). The sadistic behavior of Pádraic is the result of his fear of Colm

aggressive response to Pádraic's behaviors; Pádraic guesses that Colm's sadistic behavior was probably the only response he will receive in a similar condition. He now imitates what he has been facing in these days. For Lacan, "mimetic identification ... unleashes a powerful aggressivity" (1989c, p. 387). Pádraic is thus just like a mirror – instrument – reflecting other's sadistic behaviors. In fact, death drive is what makes him to reflect other's aspiration in order to be immune from rejection, loneliness, and despair.

There are various scenes in *The Banshees of Inisherin* which disclose verbal sadistic tendencies. There are also scenes exposing the characters' verbal assault of sadistic nature. For example, being a simple and narrow minded man as it is established throughout the film, Pádraic manages to talk to Colm for a second time after the threat. Drunk again, Pádraic smashes Colm's door open finding him dancing with his dog. He is celebrating the completion of the tune that he has been working on. As quoted by Sheehan, for Žižek, Lacanian death drive "is not a wish to die but quite the opposite in the way it constantly seeks something more than mere biological existence" (2012, p. 31). Apart from being an act of self-defense, Pádraic's aggressivity in smashes Colm's door open functions as a self-protection impulses brought about by death drive.

After this interaction with Pádraic, Colm commits the final act of self-destruction and cuts all his left hand fingers throwing them at Pádraic's door when he is not at home. Jenny, Pádraic's

pet donkey, eats the fingers and dies. Pádraic in his way back home passes by Colm bleeding from his hand. When he reaches home he finds Jenny dead and therefore decides to take vengeance. He finds Colm in the bar:

Colm: I don't need your apologies, all right? It's a relief to me. So, let's just call it quits... and agree to go our separate ways, for good this time.

Pádraic: Your fat fingers killed me little donkey today. So, no, we don't call it quits. We'll call it the start.

Colm: You're jokin' me.

Pádraic: Yeah, no. I'm not jokin' ya. So tomorrow, Sunday... God's day, around 2:00... I'm going to call up to your house and I'm gonna set fire to it... and hopefully you'll still be inside it. But I won't be checkin' either way. Just be sure and leave your dog outside. I've nothing against that gom. Or you can do whatever's in your power to stop me. To our graves we're taking this. To one of our graves, anyways.

Colm asserts that it (cutting his fingers) is a relief to him and he does not need apologies. Later, Pádraic gathers some logs and some oil and heads toward Colm's house. He sets fire to the house and right before leaving he checks if Colm is in the house or not. He finds him there sitting and smoking as he peeps through the window. The day after, when Pádraic comes to check on Colm's house, he finds Colm standing at the seashore:

Colm: Suppose me house makes us quits.

Pádraic: If you'd stayed in your house, that would've made us quits. But you didn't, did ya, so it doesn't, does it?

Colm: I'm sorry about your donkey, Pádraic. Honestly, I am.

Pádraic: I don't fucking care.

Colm thinks that it is all resolved with Pádraic, but it seems that Pádraic is not satisfied and he wishes that Colm had remained in the house and had burnt with it. Pádraic even does not accept

Colm's apology and says that he doesn't care if Colm is sorry or not. Pádraic's aggressivity is again represented in a sadistic act.

In another scene after Dominic night standing with Pádraic and, Siobhán, his interaction with Siobhán and her rejection of him includes verbal sadistic tendencies. Siobhán is aggressive due the existing condition she lives in and that is why she wants to leave Inisherin behind to live in city. Her sadistic behavior happens to be the result of her self-defense working for death drive. All the sadistic acts represented in the film reveal the characters' aggressivity. Zupančič declares that "far from referring to something in us that 'wants to dies,' or that aims at death and destruction, the Lacanian notion of the death drive refers to an excess of life itself" (2008, p. 54). The characters in *The Banshees of Inisherin* represent their aggressivity via sadistic performance in order to manifest such "an excess of life" through death drive.

Socio-Cultural Aspects of Death Drive in The Banshees of Inisherin

The present subsection is an attempt to analyze socio-cultural aspects of Lacanian death drive in *The Banshees of Inisherin*. Every individual encounters social and cultural challenges which play essential roles in his/her perception of life. The perception of life is highly relevant to the presence of death drive. Therefore, the study of the cultural aspects of a social system in a community will enable the comprehension of different aspects of death drive in a collective.

In *The Banshees of Inisherin*, the islanders appear to be well-ordered and every behavior is in line with the dominant norms of the society; for instance, the members behave politely whether at home, streets, or inn. The viewer believes that the members must devote to social codes of conducts in order to have normal life. Social practice “calls out the ways people pursue diverse concerns, become aware of new possibilities for action ..., and learn ... to fit demands and structures of local institutions” (Penuel et al., 2016, p. 30). All the order within the film occurs for the sake of peace and security; however, later viewers find the discipline Inisherin quite overwhelming. As Zupančič has argued, “Lacanian psychoanalysis ... never resigned itself to the therapeutic purpose of enabling successful social adaptation. It has also largely resisted the post-modern ... social adaptation and conformism, which advances under the (supposedly opposite) sign of promoting everyone’s exclusive, precious singularity and nonuniformity” (2008, p. 3). That is why the characters actually behave irregularly and outrageously when they are on their own. Not only islanders ever complain about the condition, but also they try to show the condition as normal as possible. For example, Siobhán tries her best to convince Colm that Pádraic would not talk to him anymore. The members of the family accept being rejected, self-destructive, and mistreated. The false consciousness of members in a society happens to be an outcome of self-defense mechanism.

Peace and security are two significant elements in subjects' lives. O'Connor claims that, "the realization of a tensionless state becomes evident in a range of experiences where individuals find ... the ego ... to be unbearable" (2016, p. 440). The only possible way for getting rid of the burden of the ego, in order to achieve a solid state, happens through the balance between the ego and the id. The civil presented in the film are representatives of the super-ego. The characters' behavior and abnormalities, subsequently, bring to the mind the id. Lacan says that *jouissance* is "not purely and simply the satisfaction of a need but as the satisfaction of a drive" (1997a, p. 209). The social practices are the motivations behind the subjects' sexual drive while they seek *jouissance*. According to Vincent, for Lacan, "death is associated with the central role given to the notion of *jouissance*" (2020, p. 52). It can be contended that abnormality in the members and within Ireland community are interlinked. There are other examples of such insufficient social practices in *The Banshees of Inisherin*; for example, the island has been portrayed as a prison. The is trapped by walls of water, the island has an unfriendly and cold atmosphere, and the members reacts indifferently to what is happening among others.

The film reveals the typical domestic life of Irish. Michael Frese defines cultural practice as "shared perceptions of how people routinely behave in a culture" (2015, p. 1327). The Islanders eat in an orderly manner, wear nice clothes, and each member has a daily plan and s/he

is ought to take responsibilities for what s/he does. Zupančič mentions that “If we take ... the division between ‘nature’ [of human life] and ‘culture,’ we could say that psychoanalysis discovered the [death] drive as the point of the short circuit between the two terms” (2008, p. 37). This justifies the relation between the nature of human life and the established cultural practices which ought to be strictly observed by all the members of the community. Lacan postulates that “death constitutes in the subject the externalization of his desire” (1988b, 114). In the movie time and again, it is suggested that the characters’ routine life is characterized by self-destruction and self-abasement.

In Klein standpoint, anxiety “arises from the operation of the death instinct within the organism, is felt as fear of annihilation (death) and takes the form of fear of persecution” (1946, p. 4). The anxiety caused by the fear of rejection, insecurity, and instability is in fact a reaction to death. It can be claimed that death drive is the reason characters being obedient in *Inisherin*’s socio-cultural system in the film. According to Cho, “the Lacanian death drive is immortality as such, that is, a literal life beyond death” (2006, p. 28). Obedience which is manifest in the characters of the film reflects the collective death drive in the Ireland community.

Conclusion

The present research was an attempt to explore the Lacanian concept of death drive in Martin McDonagh's *The Banshees of Inisherin*. Major analyses contained discussions on the notions of masochistic, sadistic, and socio-cultural aspects of the death drive with the objective of assessing the presence of death drive in McDonagh's film. According to Lacan, death drive is simply "the fundamental tendency of the symbolic order to produce repetition" (1977a, p. 326), and it manifests itself in masochistic impulses or hatred towards the self. The study opened with a general introduction of the topic, the director, and the theorist and presented a review of previous critical readings of the film and the related critical terms. The analyses, as the main sections of the present research, sought to answer the major questions of the article including: How does death drive function in the subjectivity of an individual at the time of being rejected? How does *The Banshees of Inisherin* suggest the possible socio-cultural implications of the death drive? Focusing on such key terms as violence, aggression, and self-destruction, the study demonstrated the implications and indications of death drive in the subjects' self-defense mechanism and projected aggressivity and contextualized the possible socio-cultural upshots of death drive in the movie. This article shows that the illusory and fragile security the characters feel, is the main reason for their self-destructive conduct. It displays "an excess of life" through death drive represented as the characters' aggressivity projected in sadistic performance, too. The article also

reveals that rejection, insecurity, and instability have deep roots in dissatisfaction and abnormality, whether in Ireland or elsewhere. Furthermore, it was argued that on the social level, despair and pmtiness may unleash different kinds of violence, hatred, and destruction, which can target both the other and the self. It can thus be concluded that subjects may behave masochistically or sadistically on the account of death drive at the time of socio-cultural crisis.

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