Representing Dissenting Voices in the Digital Press: Victims of Sexual and Physical Abuses in Irish Industrial Schools

Representado Voces Discordantes en la Prensa Digital: Víctimas de Abuso Sexual y Físico en los Colegios Industriales Irlandeses

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Resumen

De acuerdo con Butler, como individuos políticos todos estamos involucrados en constantes relaciones de poder, pero los grupos minoritarios están más expuestos a la violencia; sus vidas valen menos y su reconocimiento en la esfera pública es negado (Butler, *Precarious Life* 20, 34). En Irlanda, esas voces discordantes eran niños que no se atenían al código moral católico siendo apartados de la esfera pública y confinados en reformatorios durante el siglo veinte. Tras su liberación de estas instituciones, donde sufrieron abuso físico, psicológico y sexual, estas víctimas fueron silenciadas y apartadas de la vida pública. Usando la teoría de poder de Butler y estudios de Trauma (Kaplan, Herman, Laub), nuestra intención en este artículo es doble: primero, ver cómo la prensa digital ha desafiado el poder normativo dando visibilidad a los sujetos desplazados y segundo, ver cómo la prensa digital ha pedido a la sociedad y a los responsables una respuesta ética para curar las heridas de las víctimas.
Palabras clave: Escuelas Industriales, prensa, vulnerabilidad, trauma, curación.

Abstract

According to Butler, we are all engaged in constant power relations as political individuals,

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but minority groups are more exposed to violence; their lives are worth less and their recognition in the public sphere is negated (Butler, *Precarious Life* 20, 34). In Ireland, those dissenting voices were children who did not conform to the Catholic moral code of behaviour, being banished from the public sphere, and confined in Industrial Schools during the twentieth century. After their release from these institutions, where they suffered physical, psychological, and sexual abuse, these victims were silenced and concealed in the public sphere. Using Butler's theory of power and Trauma Studies (Kaplan, Herman, Laub), our intention in this article is twofold: firstly, to see how the digital press challenged normative power by giving visibility to displaced subjects and secondly, to see how the digital press asked both society and perpetrators for ethical responses to heal the wounds of victims.

Keywords: Industrial Schools, press, vulnerability, trauma, and healing.

1. INTRODUCTION

During the twentieth century, Ireland was characterised by a strong nationalism, a deep Catholic identity, and a repressive and coercive system subjugating those who deviated from the norm (Smith, Ireland's Magdalen 2; Luddy, Women in Ireland 157-161). A sovereign power, camouflaged under the guise of governmentality, decided who was accepted in society and who was excluded. Apart from that State's power, the Church displayed its authority controlling people's morality and punishing those who deviated from the established code of behaviour. The procedure during the twentieth century was to send marginal sectors of society to reformatory institutions. Among those institutions that crowded the Irish landscape, we could find Magdalene Asylums, Mother and Baby Homes, Lock Hospitals, Mental Hospitals, Workhouses, and Industrial Schools. All of them welcomed those considered "outcasts" such as prostitutes, unmarried mothers, lunatics, and orphans (Smith, Ireland's Magdalen; Finnegan). Our focus in this article is on Irish Reformatory Schools which were created and managed by the state since the 1850s; the first one was established in 1859. By 1870 ten of those schools had been certified, and during the 1870s most of them were reclassified as Industrial Schools. By 1871 the number grew up to fifty-one, and by 1900 seventy Industrial Schools could be found throughout Ireland (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell 23).

Poverty, illegitimacy, orphanhood and delinquency were the main causes of children's confinement in Industrial Schools (Keating 97). The aim of these institutions was to help those in need but given the high rise of imprisonment rates during the first decades of the

twentieth century, these institutions worked as alternatives to the prison. These institutions were recognised under several laws namely, the Youth Offenders Act (1901), The Criminal Justice Act (1914), The Children and Young Person's Act (1908), The School Attendance Act (1926), and the Probation of Offenders Act (1907), among others (Fahey; Groome; Kenny; Lynch and Minton). According to Tony Fahey, schooling was compulsory in Ireland; the 1926 School Attendance Act imposed a fine on those parents whose children missed school and if this practice persisted, offenders were sent to Industrial Schools where they had to remain up to the age of seventeen (Fahey 380). These reformatory institutions played the same role as the prison where they were controlled and punished (Fahey 380). Despite the fact of being founded by the State, it did not take much time for the Catholic Church to manage these institutions (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell 24). Throughout the twentieth century, the Irish Catholic Church took control of the education and health systems and became "the principal provider of social welfare and service agencies and the principal force of consequence in developing social policies" (Crotty 121).

Both the State and the Catholic Church collaborated in the spread of a national identity discourse in which marginal sectors of society did not fit (McCormick 79). Considered a potential threat to society, problematic children's confinement in Industrial Schools was not really meant to reform them but, as Smith claims, "to confine and render invisible segments of the population whose very existence threatened Ireland's national imaginary, the vision of Ireland enshrined in President Eamon de Valera's 1937 constitution" (Smith, "Remembering Ireland's" 112). Yet, the existence of Industrial Schools came to an end in the last decades of the twentieth century. The disclosure of morally doubtful historical facts about the Irish Catholic Church endangered the hegemony of this group especially after the publication of The Ryan and Murphy Reports (2009). These reports investigated cases of abused children by priests in Industrial Schools and offered implementation plans for those traumatised victims. These documents confirmed the rumours about the immoral attitude of religious members who made use of their power to subdue young children.

After the Murphy Report (2009) and the Ryan Report (2009) were published, the press mediated in this social, cultural and political conflict standing on the side of the victims, condemning the Irish Church and the State as perpetrators, and challenging normative power, which established what should be represented in the media. Butler claims that one of the ways of granting public recognition to people is precisely through the media, allowing those who are not supposed to appear in the public sphere to be seen and heard:

> … Media can function as part of 'infrastructural support' when it facilitates modes of solidarity and establishes new spatio-temporal dimensions of the public sphere, including not only those who can appear within the visual images of the public, but those who are, through coercion, fear, or necessity, living outside the reach of the visual frame. (Butler, "Rethinking Vulnerability" 14)

But the press did not only offer visibility and recognition to the victims, it also claimed justice and compensation exposing the trauma these victims suffered. According to Trauma Studies, verbalising trauma is the first step towards the restoration of the victim (Laub 70). In that process, the help offered by the community is of paramount importance (Herman 70). In our case of analysis, the press acted as a supportive device for the victims in their healing process against the silencing attitude of the Church and the State: it encouraged the victims to speak up and claim justice and compensation.

Much literature has been written about these reformatory institutions since the 1990s, but the main focus has been on the abuse these children suffered: Sinead Pembroke analysed in her article Industrial Schools as forms of violence following Foucault's theory of discipline, Harry Ferguson offers a historical analysis of child abuse prior and during Industrial Schools, and Anthony Keating adopts a political stance in his analysis of child abuse in Industrial Schools. Some other scholars have focused on providing a historical overview of these institutions such as Moira J. Maguire, Jane Barnes, and Sarah-Anne Buckley's research. These articles and books have provided us with the historical background to analyse Industrial Schools from a different stance. In this article, we offer the perspective of the journalists, who have also mediated in this social and political conflict, standing on the side of the victims. Our focus in this article is on the representation of this political and social topic in the digital press throughout the twenty-first century. With that aim, we make use of a wide range of digital newspapers such as The Irish Post, The Journal.ie, The Guardian, The Irish News, The NBC News, The Independent.IE, and The Irish Times. However, we have also used non-digital newspapers with an online version like The Associated Press, the Irish Examiner, the Irish Mirror, the Daily News, and The Daily Mail. All these newspapers serve us as sources of analysis where dissenting voices have been given voice and which have allowed the spread of a concealed reality in Ireland for so long. In this digital era, online newspapers have gained momentum against the printed press as accessible sources of information. The possibility to reach a wider audience makes the digital press the perfect tool to discuss international events and to stimulate public debate (Khalid and Ahmed 8). Furthermore, the reader becomes an active part by being able to comment the news and post their opinion (Nielsen et al. 14). Nevertheless, the speed with which articles are posted can make us question the veracity of the news. For that reason, we have selected several

sources to contrast the information analysed here. Anyway, it is undeniable that the digital press has an important role in society nowadays as one of the main sources of information. Most of the papers employed here are Irish, but some of them are also American namely, The Associated Press, The NBC News and the Daily News, which shows that this social issue has great transcendence not only in Ireland but also overseas. Although some of them do not clearly ascribe to any political party, the majority have a centre ideology except for The Daily Mail and The Independent.IE which have a conservative one, and The Irish Times with a liberal one. Taking into account that these snippets were published between 2006 and 2019 when both the centre party Fianna Fáil and the right party Fine Gael governed, this varied ideology present in these newspapers shows that the press put aside their political ideology in order to reveal the truth about a traumatic past Ireland tried to hide. As Khalid and Ahmed claim, "The relationship of the press with the government primarily depends on the existing political order. In countries, which espouse liberal democracy, the press has evolved as an independent institution (the fourth eState) acting as a moderator or watchdog on behalf of the public" (8). Either conservative or liberal, all of them raised awareness of the damage caused to thousands of children in Ireland, as we shall see.

Our intention in this article is twofold: firstly, to see how the digital press challenged the normative power by giving visibility and voice to displaced subjects and secondly, to see how the press demanded both society and perpetrators for an ethical response to heal the wounds of traumatised victims. For the first part, we will employ Butler's theory of power focusing on her idea that some people are less worthy of recognition than others in the public sphere. We will explore Butler's ideas of representation, vulnerability, and power relations in connection with Irish reformatory institutions to see how the press acknowledged the existence of thousands of victims whose voices had been negated. For the second part, we will use Trauma Studies to explore issues such as accountability, restoration, and healing. In this section, we will employ Kaplan's idea of silence as a political mechanism to see how it was challenged by the testimonies of survivors. We will also explore Laub and Herman's concept of witnessing as a healing tool for the victims in connection with the press. We will see how the press recognised the victims publicly and how they helped in their healing process claiming justice and compensation for them.

2. GIVING VISIBILITY AND VOICE TO THE ABUSED

As political individuals constantly engaged in power relations, our bodies are controlled and undone by others. Yet, minority groups are especially vulnerable and more exposed to violence. Their lives are less worthy and their recognition in the public sphere is negated

(Butler, *Precarious Life* 34). Thousands of children in Ireland, mainly orphans and illegitimate children, were ascribed to this minority group and hidden behind the walls of Industrial Schools during the twentieth century. Their recognition in the public sphere would suppose the acceptance that something was going wrong in the Catholic country. Dissenting voices have always been banished from the public sphere otherwise they would destabilise the nation and its foundation (Butler, *Precarious Life* 34-36).

In 2007 James Smith coined the phrase "Ireland's architecture of containment" to refer to the conspiracy of silence in which Ireland has been immersed since the last decades of the twentieth century concerning sexual immorality. The Carrigan Report (1931), which dealt with immoral practises such as prostitution and illegitimacy, was concealed and never published since its findings contradicted the ideal image of the country fabricated in the post-independent period (Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen* 2-7). Instead of looking for solutions to put an end to these social problems such as prostitution, sexual crime, abuse and infanticide, the government, in coalition with the Church, adopted some punitive legislation against women and children by which they were marginalised and confined in reformatory institutions such as the Criminal Law Amendment Act (1935) and the Illegitimate Children Act (1930) (Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen* 17-19).

According to Butler, there is a path towards the dehumanisation of anyone: violence through omission (*Precarious Life* 34). In the case of twentieth-century Ireland, those who did not conform to the Catholic code of behaviour did not only suffer violence through omission during their confinement, but also after their release. Being offered no representation implied the failure in addressing the victims, therefore they did not exist:

> The structure of address is important for understanding how moral authority is introduced and sustained if we accept not just that we address others when we speak, but that in some way we come to exist, as it were, in the moment of being addressed, and something about our existence proves precarious when that address fails. More emphatically, however, what binds us morally has to do with how we are addressed by others in ways that we cannot overt or avoid. (Butler, Precarious Life 130)

Despite the silence surrounding Industrial Schools, the reality behind these institutions finally came to the surface through reports, newspapers, literature, popular culture, and survivors' testimonies at the end of the twentieth century (Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen* 115). The analysis of all these cultural products is beyond the scope of this article. Alternatively, our focus here is on the digital press's coverage of these dramatic events.

Some of the main concerns for journalists have been to break the wall of silence surrounding the abuse of thousands of children under the guardianship of the Church. The fact of incarcerating an individual, either in a prison, in an Industrial School or any other reformatory institution, is a display of power executed by those who can deprive someone of his/her freedom. But, apart from incarceration, thousands of children suffered constant physical and sexual abuses from the part of the nuns and priests who took care of them. Child-rearing used to rely mainly on corporeal punishment which was legal up to 1982 and did not become a criminal offence until 1996, however, the punitive discipline used in Industrial Schools went farther as a display of power over those vulnerable children (Fahey 391; Groome 474-479; Keating 98; Lynch and Minton 79).

Within some of the headlines about Industrial Schools published from 2009 to 2019 we can read the words "abuse" (Kelly; *Daily News*), "raped" (Pogatchnik) and "dead" (Ó Fátharta), which summarise the reality thousands of children lived in Irish Industrial Schools. To break the wall of silence surrounding the wrongdoings of the past and recognise the victims of abuse, the press offered the testimonies of some of them. As examples, *The Irish Post* offered the testimony of Mary Lodato who was sent to an Industrial School where she suffered sexual, physical and psychological abuse (Audley); *The Independent.IE* echoed the death of Fergus who was beaten by a Christian Brother in an Industrial School and died in hospital days after. And, *NBC News* echoed the sexual abuse Tom Sweeney, Mannix Flynn, and Christine Buckley suffered during their stay in an Industrial School (*NBC News*).

These testimonies have been key in the understanding of thousands of children's reality in Ireland. The fact of openly discussing this matter challenges the official version given by the government and the Church about the functioning of reformatory institutions. As we can see, the press recovered banished voices and broke the silence surrounding Industrial Schools and the abuse victims had suffered inside. Butler claims that violent events should be openly discussed to find the roots of the problem, to learn from them and to avoid future violent acts; we must challenge power and tell our stories (Butler, *Precarious Life* 2-3). The challenging attitude of the victims supported by the press did, on the one hand, enable them to break the wall of silence and, on the other, question official versions of what happened inside these institutions. The reality is being revealed and the perpetrators are being accounted responsible for what they did or allowed to happen. By offering the direct testimonies of the victims, the digital press presented a hidden social reality supporting the victims and granting them a space to talk freely.

In recent years, we have also discovered that further damage to these children was exerted by the Church and the State, which experimented on some children who inhabited Mother

and Baby Homes. Carried out by the pharmaceutical company the Wellcome Foundation, they investigated the response the children had to diphtheria, whooping cough, tetanus, polio, and rubella (Ó Fátharta). These vaccine trials were firstly investigated in 1997. In 2000, the report came out—the "Report on Three Clinical Trials Involving Babies and Children in Institutional Settings, 1960/61, 1970 and 1973". Yet, when the hearings were going to start, they were stopped following a 2002 Supreme Court sentence (McDonagh). As McDonagh's article shows, thousands of victims are still claiming justice for the damage caused to them during their childhood. These experiments carried out on them should be considered a violation of their integrity since they did not give their consent (Ó Fátharta). But instead of persecuting the perpetrators of this crime against humanity, the State drew a veil over the issue. Contrary to the silencing attitude of the government, which stopped the investigation of this issue, the press unveiled this scandal by bringing it back and by allowing the survivors to speak up. Some examples are the *Irish Examiner* which offered the experience of Mari Steed as a victim of these trials, and *The Independent.ie* which echoed the desire of the victims to be compensated: "The victims' basic requests appear to be far from unreasonable; an apology for what was done to them; full medical screening to see if they have suffered any damaging long-term effects from the trials; and psychiatric counselling to help them get over their ordeal" (McDonagh).

The latest news about Irish reformatory institutions concerns Mother and Baby Homes and the adoption business that existed in Ireland during the twentieth century. The public discussion of this event granted by the press, which had been concealed for many years, should be considered another example of social denounce and of giving voice to the victims. Illegitimacy and unmarried motherhood were the main concerns for the Irish government since the 1930s. Maternity out of wedlock in Ireland was considered a sinful act contravening the religious morality of the time and bringing shame to the family (Luddy, "Unmarried Mothers" 109-126). As a result of the high rates of illegitimacy from 1923 to the 1970s, different laws were enacted to control and regulate women's sexuality (Luddy, "Unmarried Mothers" 111). After the enactment of the Adoption Act (1952), Magdalene Laundries helped with the adoption of illegitimate children given the prohibition for their mothers to raise them (O'Sullivan and O'Donnell 130; Smith, *Ireland's Magdalen* 53). During World War Two, a black market of adoption was set in America and they found Ireland a potential country to obtain babies (Milotte 22). Sean Ross Abbey in Tipperary, St Patrick's Home in Dublin, Castlepollard in Westmeath, St Patrick's Guild in Dublin, St Clare's in Stamullen, Co Meath, and The Sacred Heart in Cork were some of the adoption societies Mike Milotte highlights in his article; these institutions were involved in the business of

sending Irish illegitimate children to America until the single-mother's allowance in the 1990s ended with this black market (Milotte 83, 186).

In January 2019, the *Irish Mirror* covered the social campaign initiated by survivors of Mother and Baby Homes. These women started to put pressure on the government to inquire into these institutions and the illegal adoptions carried out by religious orders (Pownall). As this article claims, survivors are still seeking restitution and help from the government and the Church. Yet, some children were not lucky enough to be adopted, some of them died inside these institutions. The Tuam scandal came out to light in 2017 when the excavation of a burial site revealed thousands of human remains. After that, survivors claimed a meeting with the Taoiseach to inquire into the deaths in Mother and Baby Homes (Carty). Two years later, the *Irish Mirror* put on the spotlight the scandal surrounding the Tuam Mother and Baby Home again, where thousands of infants died and were buried in unmarked graves (Flanagan). This article outlines the mistreatment and malnourishment thousands of women and their illegitimate children suffered inside these institutions. In the same line, the *Irish Examiner* highlights from the records that 470 infants and 10 women died in Bessborough between 1934 and 1953, and that were 269 deaths between 1934 and 1967 in Sean Ross Abbey (Ó Fátharta). Most of those women and children were buried without even being recorded. Their bodies were concealed under unmarked graves and their lives and identities negated. This silence and lack of recognition may be considered a kind of violence against them, a deprivation of these children's identities and histories. In Butler's words, "… obituary functions as the instrument by which grievability is publicly distributed. It is the means by which a life becomes, or fails to become, a publicly grievable life, an icon for national self-recognition, the means by which a life becomes noteworthy. As a result, we have to consider the obituary as an act of nation-building" (Butler, *Precarious Life* 34).

As *The Daily Mail* claims, the victims "long demanded that the truth of their experiences be documented and made public" (Kelly). Thanks to the publication of these snippets, Amy Coles affirms in the *Irish Mirror* that all Irish society is aware of the past now; in this article the voice of Irish people commenting on the baby home scandal is heard. The victims' willingness to tell their stories contrasts with the silencing and concealing attitude adopted by the State and Church. Hence, it should be considered a proof of the generally accepted idea that the perpetrators have hindered the victims' discussion of these events. In that process of revealing the truth about a hidden past, the press challenged normative power by giving visibility, legitimacy as well as recognition to displaced subjects and by allowing them to raise their voices.

The challenging attitude of the digital press revealing a truth hidden by the government, makes us question these newspapers' political ideology. Either with a conservative (*The Daily Mail* and *The Independent.IE*) or centre ideology (*The Daily Mail,* the *Daily News,* the *Irish Examiner, The Irish Post, NBC News*, and the *Irish Mirror*), these snippets reveal the damage caused to thousands of children in Ireland against the silencing attitude of the Church and the State. This attitude leaves clear the newspapers' involvement in the spread of a social reality away from the political influence.

It is true that in the process of rehabilitation after trauma, the victim loses his/her voice when the witness speaks in their name; in that case, the victim is objectified, as Fassin claims (517). Moreover, these oral and life narratives are shaped by the presence of an interviewer who conditions the performance by interpreting the oral testimonies and by focusing on those aspects he/she wants to emphasize (Gray 13). Yet, in our case of study, the press did not objectify the victims but empowered them; the victims have been given all the possible resources to recuperate their voices and identities against the homogenising discourse, which objectified them. Finally, all these snippets from the press have given us a complete view of this historical event, which came to light thanks to the active participation of the press in it.

3. TRAUMA VICTIMS: SOCIAL AND POLITICAL RESPONSES

In the healing process of any traumatised victim, Herman affirms that the response of the community is of paramount importance:

> … The response of the community has a powerful influence on the ultimate resolution of the trauma. Restoration of the breach between the traumatized person and the community depends, first upon public acknowledgement of the traumatic event and, second, upon some form of community action. Once it is publicly recognized that a person has been harmed, the community must take action to assign responsibility for the harm and to repair the injury. These two responses- recognition and restitution- are necessary to rebuild the survivor's sense of order and justice. (Herman 70)

Irish society has been involved in the spread of Industrial Schools' reality trying to give recognition to the victims. To help them, several political and social demonstrations have been held throughout Ireland. In 2009, Justice for Magdalenes organisation started its campaign to achieve a State apology and a compensation scheme for the survivors. Although they focused on Magdalene Laundries, they also gave voice to those who were confined in Industrial Schools. This response can be explained using Kaplan's concept of "vicarious trauma", defined as the empathetic response a witness experimented when bearing witness

to a traumatic event in the media (Kaplan 87-90). After reading about these traumatic events about the children in Industrial Schools, Irish society felt the ethical commitment of helping the victims.

Concerning the role of the perpetrators in healing the wounds of traumatised victims, the Church still negates its accountability and conceals the records:

> Victims of the system have long demanded that the truth of their experiences be documented and made public, so that children in Ireland never endure such suffering again. But most leaders of religious orders have rejected the allegations as exaggerations and lies and testified to the commission that any abuses were the responsibility of often long-dead individuals. (Daily News)

After the publication of the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (2009), the Church denied the abuses and refused to appear in public (Pogatchnik). As an example, the Sisters of Bon Secours denied the existence of the burial pit at Tuam when the investigation started (Gold). Some of these institutions' records were made public, like Sean Ross Abbey's one. These Mother and Baby Homes' records registered the death of 269 children, but the death of many children, whose bodies were discovered, had not been listed (Ó Fátharta). As a result of the demand to make the names of the perpetrators public, the Church continued to protect the identity of those accused of abuse (*NBC News; The Daily Mail*). The fact that both centrist (*The Associated Press, The Guardian,* the *Irish Examiner*) and conservative (*The Daily Mail*) newspapers criticise the Church's avoidance of responsibility leaves clear, once again, that the main premise of the digital press was to denounce the abuses children suffered and to claim justice for them.

As for the State, it turned its back on the victims denying their collaboration with the Church. The publication of the Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (2009) did not alleviate the uneasiness among victims due to its biased nature. Mentioning the report, *The Irish Times* claims: "The Residential Institutions Redress Board process was badly flawed– it was a goldmine for lawyers while damaged survivors were aggressively subjected to humiliating interrogation and intimidation" (*The Irish Times*). The inconsistencies found in the report led survivors to attack it. *The Associated Press* and *NBC News* highlight that despite the body of evidence existing about children's abuse inside reformatory institutions, and the State's recognition of those abuses, these religious orders involved were not taken to prison. Therefore, there has been neither social nor penal justice for the perpetrators which increases the damage caused to the victims. As we said before, Herman claims that recognition and restitution are two main responses to heal the victims, however, the lack of justice granted to the victims hinders their recovery. The lack of accountability from the

part of the perpetrators and the concealment of the victims' identities reduced the possibilities of overcoming a traumatic past.

Moreover, no real names, whether of victims or perpetrators, appeared in The Report of the Commission to Inquire into Child Abuse (2009) final document. Instead, the victims would receive economic compensation as long as they did not sue the State and the Church. This subornation, as we can interpret it, reinforces Smith's idea of "Ireland's architecture of containment" which is still existent today. The silencing of the Irish past works in detriment for those victims whose voices and identities were being negated. However, the Irish State finally acknowledged its responsibility by offering a public apology and a compensation scheme. Yet, it changed nothing for the victims: "Some victims emphasized that nothing—not even criminal convictions of their long-ago tormentors—would ever put right their psychological wounds and make their nightmares go away" (*NBC News*). The fact that the perpetrators have not been criminally persecuted supposes the avoidance of responsibility towards those affected (Pogatchnik). In commenting the Tuam Home scandal[1], *The Guardian* claims that many women were placed outside the scope of the inquiry, which supposed the impossibility to achieve justice and compensation (Gold). Given this lack of commitment towards the victims, the press made a call to the Irish society to achieve justice. According to Kaplan, silence and forgetting are the common mechanisms used by traumatised people to survive (74). Added to that, the imposed silence from the part of the Irish Church and the State contributed also to the invisibility of Industrial Schools' victims. As Kaplan affirms, silencing is encouraged for political and social reasons since acknowledging the truth could damage whole nations (74). In the light of the persistent silence surrounding reformatory institutions, the press initiated a restorative project aimed at revealing the truth and claiming justice for the victims.

In the complex process of overcoming the traumatic experience they suffered during their stay in an Industrial School, some of the victims have found the courage to raise their voices against the injustices committed. As examples, Mary Lodato published an autobiography about her time in an Industrial School and the abuse she suffered there (Audley), and Mary Collins—a survivor—wrote a book entitled *Stolen Lives* about the abuse hundreds of children suffered in Industrial Schools (Brown). These survivors' testimonies are forms of actions which liberate them; in Doris Laub's words, " … repossessing one's life story through

[1] The Tuam Home scandal refers to the discovery in 2019 of hundreds of children's remains who had been buried in unmarked graves in the Mother and Baby Home in Tuam run by the Bon Secours Sisters.

giving testimony is itself a form of action, of change, which one has to actually pass through in order to continue and complete the process of survival after liberation" (70).

Following Trauma Studies, one response to trauma is resignation, but the most common one is action, that is, finding the perpetrator and demanding justice and compensation (Laub 70). In these testimonies gathered by the press, the victims pinpoint the State and the Church as the responsible ones and urge them to recognise their fault. As examples, Christine Buckley says to the *NBC News*: "I do genuinely believe that it would have been a further step towards our healing if our abusers had been named and shamed" (*NBC News*). In commenting The report on the Commission to Inquire Into Child Abuse, John Kelly, from victim group Irish Survivors of Child Abuse, criticises the government for not having taken care of them as children and for allowing the Church to have control over their lives (Kelly). Finally, Derek Leinster, of Bethany Home Survivors group, criticises in the *Irish Mirror* the government's inaction and the necessity to pursue the perpetrators legally (Pownall*)*. Herman affirms that by making a public complaint or accusation, the survivor defies the perpetrator's attempt to silence and isolate her/him, and she/he opens the possibility of finding new allies (210). In the case of Industrial Schools' victims, they found in the digital press a tool to be able to talk about their traumas and claim restoration.

These survivors' testimonies have been echoed by the press, which became a supporting device for spreading their truth and for helping them with their healing. Herman claims that when others bear witness to the testimony of a crime, they share the responsibility for restoring justice (210). The first witness that can be pointed out is the journalist. Once he/she listens to the victim, they develop a sense of commitment and responsibility towards the sufferer. The journalist's response is to publish the victim's story and to claim compensation; the press asked the perpetrators—Church and State—and the whole society for ethical responses to heal the wounds of victims as well as to restore and recognise their identities. The tone used by Finlay and the attack he makes to the Church and the State, reveals the necessity to name the perpetrators of this crime and claim justice and restoration. Moreover, Finlay's attitude confirms Laub and Herman's idea that no observer can remain untouched when bearing witness of traumatic events (Herman 7; Laub 66):

> As someone who has always believed in the public service and will tend to come to its defence when it's attacked, I find that deeply shocking. The thought that anyone could allow terrible, unspeakable things to happen to children and young women, and then try to hide their own mistakes behind bland generalities and formulaic apologies, is a betrayal of everything public service is supposed to be about. Justice cannot be done to Grace, and to other children whose names are seldom mentioned but whose lives were also terribly damaged, unless we know who, and why. If people

> in the public service or in politics were complicit in any way with what happened, they must be identified and prosecuted. (Finlay).

The words "never forget", "reveal", "justice", "shame" and "scandal" in the following headlines display the press's attitude towards this event and the necessity to remember: "We must never forget terror of industrial schools" (*The Irish Times*); "We must stop claiming that 'we never knew' about child abuse at Catholic institutions" (Dwyer); "Survivors of Ireland's mother and Baby scandal deserve justice" (Gold); "Catholic Church shamed by Irish abuse Report" (*NBC News*). The main claim of these newspapers was one of justice revealing the abuses hundreds of children suffered under the guardianship of the Church. Within these articles, journalists criticize the role of the State and the Church in not recognising the victims of sexual abuse in Industrial Schools, those who were separated from their mothers, and those who died inside and were buried in unmarked graves. As Herman claims, "remembering and telling the truth about terrible events are prerequisites both for the restoration of social order and for the healing of individual victims" (Herman, 1). After that, "a social context that affirms and protects the victim and that joins victim and witness in a common alliance" is needed (Herman 9).

In this healing process, the digital press has recognized and restored the victims offering them a platform to spread their truths. Taking responsibility is what these snippets claim not only for the perpetrators, but also for the whole society: "As a society, Ireland needs to address this fact that many knew of the abuse of children and ask why they did not or could not act. This will involve looking at the historic role of the Catholic Church in shaping ideas around morality and sex which made discussion of sexual abuse very difficult" (Dwyer). As Gold and Finlay put it in *The Guardian* and the *Irish Examiner* respectively, "The community doesn't want a hierarchy of victims with so many left behind, but justice for all" (Gold); "If people in the public service or in politics were complicit in any way with what happened, they must be identified and prosecuted" (Finlay). By knowing the truth, more pressure was exerted on those who denied their fault.

After the response of the victim to blame the perpetrators and to claim justice and compensation publicly, a restoration process was initiated. In our case of analysis, reconciliation is not a possible alternative for these victims since they have not been recognised and helped by the government and the Church. However, these survivors have found support in the press, which has been completely involved and determined to bring this issue to light. As witnesses, journalists have contributed to the empowerment of the victims as one requisite for the victims' recovery, as Herman claims (133).

Thanks to the digital press, some survivors of Industrial Schools have had a happy end since they have found their biological mothers, as it is the case of Cathy Crabb, who was reunited with her mother 62 years after she had given her in adoption (*Irish Mirror*). This article's story is a reflection of thousands of women who are still looking for their lost babies in Ireland. As Kaplan claims, trauma can never be completely healed, especially when the perpetrator still denies his/her fault (19). But the press, no matter their political ideology as we have seen, helped Industrial Schools' victims in coming to terms with their past and in their healing offering them recognition and visibility. To avoid silence, forgetting and denial, and to promote the healing of traumatised people, a political movement that supported and listened to those people is required (Herman 9). If an apology was offered to these victims in 1999, and a Redress Board was set up to give economic compensation to these victims in 2002, why is the press still persistent in claiming justice and restoration for the victims? The answers are varied: it seems that nothing has been restored to the victims who still urge compensation after more and more cases of abuse come to light; many of these victims fell out of the compensation scheme, and the Church still negates its implication in this historical crime. Hence, a long path is still to be trodden until a full acknowledgement and restoration of these victims is achieved.

4. CONCLUSIONS

Catholic moral rigidity during the twentieth century supposed the stigmatization of thousands of children in Ireland. Their confinement in Industrial Schools for their moral reformation was supported by several laws so the State was also accomplice of the damage caused to them. Butler's focus on vulnerable bodies and the invisibility of particular sectors of society produced by those in power serves us here to realise how thousands of marginalised children—illegitimate, truants, delinquents, poor and orphans—were confined and abused during the twentieth century in Ireland. Considered deviant from the religious perspective and delinquents from a legal point of view, they were excluded from society and their lives and identities negated.

During the 1970s, when the Industrial Schools system came to an end, the abuse and ill-treatment of thousands of children within these institutions were revealed. The Ryan and Murphy Reports (2009) were published out of the necessity to restore the victims, however, not much justice was granted to them. The silence surrounding institutional abuse is still persistent nowadays which hinders the restoration of the victims. The victims' lack of recognition and representation from the part of the Church and the State were translated into further damage. In that process of recognition of the wrongdoings of the past, the press

acted as a mediator between the victims and the perpetrators. By allowing the victims to speak up and to appear in the public sphere, the press challenged normative power that decides who is worthy of representation and recognition. The testimonies of survivors, together with the information provided by the press, have offered a new version of events which contrasts with the official one. The adoption business, the vaccine trials and the abuse of children are some unresolved issues in the history of Ireland, which have been concealed for fear of damaging the image of the country. Yet, the victims' necessities to come to terms with their pasts have brought them to light.

The wall of silence surrounding the institutionalisation of children built by the Irish State and the Church contributed to the invisibility of and damage to these victims. Yet, the press broke that silence rising awareness of the past and claiming now justice for these damaged people. In the complex process of overcoming the traumatic experience of having been confined in an Industrial School, the victims have raised their voices supported by the press. It did not only spread the truth of survivors, but the press also covered every step the victims have taken such as the social demonstrations carried out. As witnesses, journalists have joined the cause and have helped the victims to achieve justice and compensation.

We could say that the press offered those victims the possibility to be acknowledged gaining back their denied voice and agency. It also contributed to the individualisation of each victim against the homogenising and discriminatory discourse that existed. Furthermore, the press contributed to the easiness of the victims' healing caused by the trauma left on them after a life of sexual, physical and psychological abuse from the part of those who were supposed to take care of them. Journalists have not only spread the news, but they have also asked the responsible parties to compensate the victims. Yet the healing process is not still completed since the perpetrators still deny their accountability and many children have not been compensated yet. As we have seen, there is still much to do if we want to fully recognise, compensate and heal those victims.

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