



**Universitat de les
Illes Balears**

Facultat de Filosofia i Lletres

Memòria del Treball de Fi de Grau

Ireland's Abortion Law: Travel and Trauma in Tara Flynn's "Three: three".

Amy Quinn

Estudis Anglesos

Any acadèmic 2018-19

DNI de l'alumne: X3363341-M

Treball tutelat per Dra. Aida Rosende Pérez
Departament de Filologia Espanyola, Moderna y Clàssica

S'autoritza la Universitat a incloure aquest treball en el Repositori Institucional per a la seva consulta en accés obert i difusió en línia, amb finalitats exclusivament acadèmiques i d'investigació	Autor		Tutor	
	Sí	No	Sí	No
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Paraules clau del treball:
Abortion, Ireland, pro-life, pro-choice, literature

Abstract

The 25th of May 2016 marked an important historical event in Ireland for women's rights and reproductive rights after a staggering 66.9% of Irish civilians voted in favour for the annulment of the 8th Amendment. Despite this seemingly positive advance for Irish society, the campaigning for the referendum was a brutal and ruthless time, especially for those who had undergone terminations prior to the event. Before the referendum, an average of 3,000 women a year seen themselves forced to travel, mainly to the United Kingdom, to undergo legal and safe abortions as this was completely inaccessible within Ireland and was considered a federal offence. During the referendum, 'pro-life' supporters used these women's stories as a way to support the 8th Amendment and attack 'pro-choice' supporters and campaigns such as Together For Yes. This dissertation provides an in-depth analysis of Tara Flynn's text "Three: three" which juxtaposes the story of a woman who is travelling to the UK in order to terminate her pregnancy, with the negative backlash received by those who are against abortions. By looking into this text, the following work reflects on the emotional and psychological impact that travelling for abortions has had on women, combined with the fear of how others will react to their choices. Furthermore, it illustrates the fact that this is not an option that is easily accessible for everyone as it requires a heavy financial cost. After putting the reader in the shoes of this woman, it then contrasts her emotions with the negative and vicious backlash received on behalf of pro-life supporters, including those whose opinions are based on religious, Catholic beliefs. Finally, it touches upon the impact of the internet and social media as a way to dangerously call out and attack women for their choices, before also looking into the positive aspects of this, such as the spread of objective information to voters.

Key concepts: abortion; Ireland; pro-life; pro-choice; literature

Table of Contents

Introduction 1
Historical Overview 2
Travel and Trauma 4
Compulsory Motherhood and Religion..... 6
Patriarchal Values and the Media..... 9
Conclusion..... 11
Works Cited..... 13

Introduction

In May 2016, Ireland voted yes for the legalization of abortions in the country which meant the annulment of the 8th Amendment, ratified in the Irish Constitution in 1983. On the run-up to the referendum, the nation was divided in two between those who were in favour and those who were against the cause. The call for the referendum emerged partially as a result of several cases of women who were let down by their country's government when they pleaded for abortions, each for their own reasons, but were denied because they did not meet with the legislation at the time. The demand for change spread like wildfire and during the campaigning for the referendum there were continuous marches and debates held by each party, who expressed their needs and concerns regarding the 8th Amendment. Sanctioned in 1983, it reflected the state's acknowledgement to "the right to life of the unborn and, with due regard to the equal right to life of the mother, guarantees in its laws to respect, and, as far as practicable, by its laws to defend and vindicate that right."¹ Since the referendum, the new Health (Regulation of Termination of Pregnancy) Act of 2018 grants the termination of a pregnancy in the case of "risk to the life, or of serious harm to the health, of a pregnant woman", in the case of "the presence of a condition affecting a foetus that is likely to lead to the death of the foetus either before, or within 28 days of birth" or without questioning when "the pregnancy concerned has not exceeded 12 weeks."² Thus, there has clearly been a dramatic change in the constitution in less than 50 years, however, what has been the cause of this shift in perspective? The Repeal the 8th movement, alongside campaigns such as Together For Yes, emerged as a response to several different cases of women who were neglected by the government of Ireland when needing an abortion and to promote a well-informed vote for the approval of legalized abortions. Thence, the Repeal the 8th campaign and the demand for change came as no surprise for the people of Ireland who had already been debating the Amendment for several years prior to this.

Irish actress and writer Tara Flynn was one of the leading campaigners throughout the whole movement in favour of legalized abortions and reflected her dedication to the cause by revealing information on her background and her own personal experience with having to travel outside her country to access a legal and safe abortion. She was praised for her bravery throughout the campaign after having received endless abuse by the public on different social media platforms, who attacked not only her but also her family. After the referendum, she

¹ Irish Const. of 1983, art. 40, amend. 8, §3.

² Irish Const. art. 1, § 10:1; 11:1; 12:1.

contributed to Una Mullaly's book *Repeal the 8th*, by writing the short narrative "Three: three" which includes three dramatically different testimonies in relation to the abortion law in Ireland. The text, named after the article 40:3:3, raises awareness of the discourse used by pro-life³ campaigners, from a legal and cultural perspective, and reflects on the impact this has had on women within Ireland who have had to travel for abortions. Tara Flynn uses the text to juxtapose the two sides in the referendum campaign to give cultural voice and literary representation to the women who have seen themselves forced to travel in order to access safe abortions and to reflect on the emotional and psychological toll of this experience. Furthermore, it attempts to break a general misconception surrounding the campaign, which has often been considered a battleground between anti-abortionists and a supposedly homogeneous group of pro-abortionists who call for abortions at any point in the pregnancy and thus tries to reflect a middle-ground situation. The purpose of this paper is to examine the different perspectives in relation to the termination of pregnancies in Ireland by analysing Flynn's short story and also looking into different short films which touch upon similar issues. It firstly begins with a historical overview of the legalities in Ireland related to the termination of pregnancies and exposes three cases of women who were neglected by the Irish government. It then deals with "abortion tourism" (Gilmartin and White 2011, 277) and the implications this has had on the women who have seen themselves forced to travel abroad for abortions. It exposes two different views of anti-abortionists, one basing their opinions on out-dated values and the other expressing his outrage and misogynistic view towards women because of external and possibly subjective information. Finally, this paper takes a look at the mass influence of the internet which was a key factor in the referendum for both parties, before adding some final conclusions and opinions.

Historical Overview

From a historical perspective, abortions have been illegal in Ireland since 1861 with the Offences Against The Person Act, which stated that any woman who caused herself a miscarriage by any means or underwent an abortion would "be guilty of felony, and [...] to be kept in penal servitude for life."⁴ Furthermore, anybody who assisted her in said act would also be prosecuted. This last aspect is still visible in the current constitution, that is, that anybody who assists in an abortion that is not within the guides of the constitution may be prosecuted. Years later, as previously stated in the introduction, Article 40:3:3 was passed in 1983 after a

³ Term used by the Irish Pro-Life Advocacy Organization.

⁴ Irish Const. of 1861, chap. C, § 58.

referendum in which “66.9% of voters voted in support of the 8th Amendment” (De Londras and Enright 2018, 1), resulting in a victory for pro-life campaigners at the time. Similar to the Act of 1861, the amendment condemned any women who underwent, and any practitioner who assisted in, an abortion in Ireland. There was a shift in ideology, however, after the X Case which sparked an important campaign not only from a national perspective but also internationally as “in January 1992, newspapers throughout Europe reported that Ireland's attorney general prevented a pregnant rape victim and her family from travelling to England to obtain an abortion” (Taylor 1990, 208). The teenage girl was suicidal and thus pregnancy was putting her life at risk, however, she was issued a nine-month travel injunction on behalf of the high court (Taylor 1990, 208) which completely ruled out her chances of travel. This international coverage forced the Irish government and the Supreme Court to take action and rectify the 8th Amendment. It developed a test, reflected in the Protection of Life During Pregnancy Act of 2013, whereby the termination of a pregnancy was accessible when the life of the women was at risk, including suicide, and was only preventable by a termination (De Londras and Enright 2018, 4). Thus, the X Case was one of the initial sparks of debate and call for a new system to be implemented in relation to the termination of a pregnancy.

Two other, more contemporary, cases of women let down by the Irish government which initiated heated discussions and conflicts in regard to the 8th Amendment were those of Savita Halappanavar and the case of Miss Y. Savita was a dentist of Indian origin living in County Galway. Seventeen weeks into her pregnancy her amniotic fluids ruptured putting her health at risk. Alongside her husband, they pleaded for the termination of her pregnancy “but were denied because the foetal heartbeat was still present and because, they were told, Ireland is ‘a Catholic Country’” (Lentin 2013, 105). She developed septicaemia as a result of this and died before giving birth. The events moved the nation and had an even heavier impact because she was an immigrant woman fighting a patriarchal, predominantly Catholic-oriented nation. The aftermath of Ireland’s reaction was such, that there is a mural in her memory in Dublin City, which was commemorated at the time with flowers and hundreds of post-it notes with several messages from individuals who expressed their outrage and mourning over her unnecessary death (Holland 2018). The case of Miss Y was another which created a sense of shock across the country. Miss Y was an asylum seeker who discovered she was pregnant shortly after entering Ireland. Although the details of the case are rather vague and confidential, it is known that her pregnancy was the result of a rape prior to her arrival in Ireland where she immediately expressed her need for an abortion (De Londras and Enright 2014, 97). She was denied the termination which as a result, caused her to become suicidal. Subsequently, she had

been led “to believe that if she accepted hydration and nutrition voluntarily [...] she would be granted an abortion [however, the baby] was delivered by C-section in the 25th or 26th week of her pregnancy” (De Londras and Enright 2014, 97). Thus, these cases reflected serious negligence on behalf of the Irish government and the protection of women. Having seen these cases published, it was understandable that the people of the nation began to question the worth of the 8th Amendment from a health perspective, both physically and mentally, as opposed to looking at it with a moral or even religious point of view.

Travel and Trauma

The first part of Tara Flynn’s text, entitled “Three: one” attempts to put the reader in the shoes of one of the thousands of women who have had to travel abroad to seek legal and safe abortions and who, as a consequence, have suffered an emotional and psychological trauma which they will possibly carry throughout their lifetime. This emotional cost is made visible, for instance, in the woman’s fear of how other people are going to react to the choices she has made and is seen at the beginning of the short story travelling to the United Kingdom to undergo an abortion. She feels a sense of guilt in her actions, and she stresses the irony of loving a country that demands pride but banishes those who make the smallest of wrong moves (Flynn 2018, 182), already expressing her need to travel as her only resort because of the legislation in Ireland at the time. She evokes a sense of loneliness in the text but stresses her relief after the ordeal saying: “this is awful. I’m so glad I’m here” (Flynn 2018, 184), thus emphasizing her need to carry out the termination, despite all the possible repercussions this can have. The fear of how others are going to react to her decisions is an important factor in the text because it is related to the discourse used by pro-life supporters throughout the campaigning for the referendum. An example of this is the author herself who was often attacked personally by pro-life supporters who used her story as a way to defend the 8th amendment (Flynn, 2019). The narrator explains how “at home, everyone knows everyone. Or if they don’t, they assume. Fill in the blanks for who you are probably are” (Flynn 2018, 183), evoking a sort of anxiety and a sense of dehumanization which come hand in hand with other people’s reactions. When she arrives at the clinic, she also fears the demonstration being held outside by those who are against abortions explaining that there are “not too many of ‘them’” (2018, 183). The fear felt by women towards pro-life campaigners is not a hypothetical one or a fear they are generating in their heads, but a real one which has serious emotional and psychological implications on these women. This is confirmed towards the end of the narrative when the voice shifts to that of a man who explains that women who have undergone abortions “should be ashamed” (2018, 189), which further

contributes to this emotional cost that is implied in travelling for an abortion when faced with no other option or way forward within their own country.

Travel and fear are two terms which go hand in hand when speaking about abortion in Ireland because prior to the referendum, travel was one of the only ways forward for many women, who would then have to deal with the aftermath of their decision. This idea is clearly represented in Natasha Waugh's short film *Terminal*, which sheds light on the emotional trauma that comes with not only undergoing an abortion, but also with having to travel for it. It shows two women, a teenager and a more mature woman, who are sat in an airport terminal waiting to board a flight to the UK. When they discover that they are both there for the same reason, that is, to undergo abortions, they share their feelings and emotions in a bid to support each other. The older woman attempts to comfort the teenage girl by telling her that she "did nothing wrong – it happens" (Waugh 2016, 6:51), after she tells her how she feels ashamed and irresponsible (2016, 5:12). The film was exceptionally influential because it physically visualized something that people had refused to speak about or address in previous years. In fact, abortion is not mentioned at any point in the film but is very clearly implied by the conversation that the women are having. This could possibly be a criticism at the fact that the sheer idea of abortion had become a sort of taboo over the years which people avoided talking about at all cause. The feeling of shame and feeling like a criminal in one's own country is explicitly mentioned in the film and is an important notion because these ideas had a heavy psychological impact on women. As already explained previously in this work, abortion within Ireland was considered a felony and one could be prosecuted as a result. Travelling outside of the country for a termination was not punishable, however, women still felt like criminals and were treated as such by those who did approve of their actions.

The text attempts to reflect on the fact that travelling for abortions is a decision which is not taken lightly, nor is it an option which is accessible for everyone on the grounds that it involves a heavy financial cost which cannot often be covered. Furthermore, it reflects the difficulties of accessing this due to the fact that "while every Irish woman has the right to travel, not every Irish woman has the right to do so" (Gilmarten and White 2011, 277), that is, the unattainability of travel for some women as a consequence of matters related to visas or passports, or other legal reasons which hinders their possibility of travel. The narrator makes several references to the financial cost of having to travel abroad for an abortion, often speaking about the money she is spending, emphasizing how she has had to separate and organize her funds to ensure that she has enough for the whole trip. She explains that she has her "train money" (Flynn 2018, 183), her "taxi money" (2018, 183) and so on. Thus, this reflects that

having to travel abroad for abortions is not a decision taken lightly by women in Ireland, despite the general opinion. It is a decision that requires a heavy financial cost and is not something that is available to everybody, which results in much more dangerous and less effective methods of ‘backstreet’ abortions. Today, these alternative methods of abortion, include abortion pills which are becoming more accessible through the internet, as is shown in the *Repeal Short Film*, in which a young girl resorts to this, unable to afford the costs of travel, or cannot travel freely between countries (Sheldon 2016, 90).

Although not explicitly mentioned in the text, another of the more important costs of travelling abroad for an abortion are the health implications this can have on women. In a bid to avoid becoming stigmatized by their choices, “many Irish women, fearful of the reaction to previous abortions or unsure what the legal situation is [chose to] conceal their health history” (Byrne and Urquheart 2019, 109). This can have several serious consequences on women later in life should they have to undergo any medical procedures or if they suffered any untreated secondary effects from the abortion itself, as “an untold number of women have had to deal with the pain or other complications [...] and have been too scared to seek help upon their return” (2019, 110). An example of one these cases is that of Caoimhe Anglin who, in 2017, had travelled to Manchester to abort and who suffered severe haemorrhages after the procedure but was too afraid to seek help from the Irish healthcare system, putting her health and life at risk (2019, 109). Thus, the health implications, physical, emotional and psychological, as well as the financial cost of travelling abroad for an abortion are often overlooked and clouded by peoples own, uninformed, opinion of the situation. Women have been made feel like they are breaking the law and if they speak out they will forever be condemned of a crime.

Compulsory Motherhood and Religion

Traditional and out-dated values in relation to gender and gender roles contributed to the stigmatization of women who opted for terminations. During the Irish independence, women were seen as the bearers of the men who fought bravely and were remembered, as Sara Gerend points out saying that “instead of viewing women as participants in the public realm of nation-building, literary nationalists construct the ideal Irish woman as a mother confined to the domestic sphere” (2016, 36). Thus, with this mentality still predominant in the mind of many, the idea of abortion would seem an unforgivable act which breaks with the traditional roles intended for women. The first of these oppositions presented in Flynn’s text comes from the voice a fifty-year-old mother who “thinks solely in absolutes” (Flynn, pers. comm, March 26, 2019) and is given the spotlight to speak and verbalize her ideas. When initially introduced to

this character, her traditional and old-fashioned mentality are the first thing to stand out. She speaks of something as simple as moisturizer and explains that if the one she uses was “good enough for her mother, then it’s good enough for [her]” (Flynn 2018, 184), already reflecting her trust in her mother’s out-dated beliefs. Furthermore, she proudly expresses that her life is dedicated to being a mother and housewife. She explains that “with three almost-grown up kids still at home and a full life, time alone is a luxury” (2018, 184), stressing how she has motherhood down to a fine art. She represents the notion of compulsory motherhood which reflects “the valorisation and idealization of the female subjects as a selfless protector of children [and] prescribes motherhood as the patriotic goal for Irish women” (Gerend 2016, 35-36). The way she embraces motherhood as the centre of a woman’s life leads to her harsh criticism and outrage towards pro-choice supporters for “wanting to end inconvenient pregnancies” (Flynn 2018, 186), and not appreciating the “gift they have been given” (2018, 186). Thus, it reinforces this out-dated patriarchal value reflected in the Irish constitution, which, “by allowing the words ‘woman’ and ‘mother’ to be interchangeable implies that the role of the Irish woman is that of a nurturer” (Ryan *et al.* 2018, 128), which was further reinforced during the campaigning for the referendum on behalf of pro-life supporters.

Pro-life campaigners reinforced this notion of compulsory motherhood by using gruesome and gory images plastered across the country which illustrated visual and cruel images in order to coerce voters, often going beyond the central issue up for debate. The text makes reference to the “gory pictures” (Flynn 2018, 183) held by pro-life campaigners that a woman travelling for an abortion was faced with outside a clinic in the United Kingdom. These gruesome pictures were a key factor in the campaigning for the referendum on behalf of pro-life parties. They included ultrasounds and images of developed babies questioning how people were capable of aborting them. These images were, however, confirmed to be inaccurate by medical practitioners who said that it was not possible to abort that far on in the pregnancy and that abortions were carried out before the foetus had even begun to develop. These images and slogans on behalf of pro-life campaigners also sparked questioning because some of them moved beyond the central point of the matter, which was whether or not to allow the access to legal and safe abortions in Ireland and began attacking women as the culprits. Many of the pro-life campaigning posters found in newspapers and on the streets often included patriarchal slogans such as “men save lives, vote no” (Lauder 2018), which implied that women were a danger to future lives, despite being the ones to carry and produce said lives. Furthermore, the campaigners went as far as using nationalistic propaganda to ensure votes to save the 8th Amendment. “In England, 1 in 5 babies are aborted” and “In Britain 90% of babies with Down

Syndrome are aborted”⁵ were just some of the posters which thrived on Irish pride and attempted to coerce voters into voting to conserve the 8th Amendment in order to maintain Ireland distant and different from the United Kingdom. These forms of propaganda created an unsettling feeling to the public who, understandably, began to question their own morals and beliefs, as well as possibly creating an even more negative view towards women who had undergone terminations. They further contributed to the fear felt by women who had previously left the country to undergo an abortion and their constant need to keep this information at bay.

The text reinforces the idea that the oppression of Irish women, mainly on behalf of the church, is not a contemporary issue but has been prevalent throughout history, the aftermath of which is still visible today. The speaker in this part of the text emphasizes the Irish Church’s wrongdoings, however continuously defends them explaining how it was all with the best of intentions (Flynn 2018, 184). Although not explicitly mentioned, the woman makes reference to “the laundry” (2018, 186) which leads to believe that when speaking of said actions taken by the church, she is speaking about the infamous Magdalene Laundries. However, because she speaks of “recent revelations” (2018, 185) and given the context of the text, she could have also been speaking about the discovery in 2017 of a mass unmarked grave which held the bodies of hundreds of babies and children, victims of Tuam’s Mother and Baby home (Orr 2017, 115). Thus, Flynn takes the opportunity to include two relevant and recent issues within the same text which had sparked many debates among the country in recent years. The Magdalene Laundries, a darker and more brutal side of Irish history which is often avoided, were places for fallen women, “an institution to control and rehabilitate prostitutes and vulnerable populations of women [...] [which] was embraced by Catholic Ireland (Record and Jones 2017, 170). Although the Magdalene Laundries had been active since the 18th century, the most recent of events occurred in 1993 when the bodies of 133 women were discovered after the convent of the sisters of Our Lady of Charity sold off a portion of their land (McCarthy 2010, 8). The women who were sent to this inhumane place were considered “a threat to the social and spiritual ‘moral’ code” (McCarthy 2010, 8) and were physically and psychologically abused. Many of them were coerced into given up their children, several of which were sent to the USA through informal and illegal adoptions by means of altered birth certificates (Davis and Sethna 2019, 125). The impact of this was so devastating to the nation that in 2013 the *Taoiseach*⁶ at the time, Enda Kenny, issued an official apology to the women who had spent time in the

⁵ These posters were witnessed personally.

⁶ Prime minister and head of government of Ireland.

laundries and to their families. In his speech, he stressed the reality of the situation that deeply apologized for the suffering and the treatment of the women who spent time in the Laundries (O'Regan 2013). This was an important step forward in Ireland for the recognition of women's rights which gave them the agency that would eventually allow them to voice their needs for more reproductive rights.

Patriarchal Values and the Media

Patriarchy continuously plays a highly influential and dangerous role in the lives of women and is directly affecting the advancement of women's rights, especially on behalf of pro-life supporters, which has already been exposed in other parts of this research paper. This influence of patriarchal values is exceptionally ironic since it is an issue which directly affects women and interferes with basic human rights and female bodily authority. As mentioned, the third part of the text titled "Three: three" takes a serious change towards a darker, more violent tone. The text is narrated by her son (Flynn, pers. comm, March 26, 2019), used by Flynn to exaggerate the fact that despite this character's misogynist view towards females, he is the son of a woman. He begins by explaining how he attacks a girl online, most likely from a false account because of his reference to "catfish" (Flynn 2018, 187), thus reflecting his inability of doing this in real life. He uses a large number of crude and vulgar words to denote women such as "whore", "slut" and "bitch" (2018, 187) amongst others. His male superiority is further illustrated as glorifies himself as a sort of male saviour who will "get things back to how they were" (2018, 188), that is, returning to this previously mentioned idea of compulsory motherhood and going back to the old-fashioned, less liberal roles of women. He reflects on how it is the duty of men to rectify the current situation in relation to the legalization of abortion, also alluding to the fact that these women could probably only be forgiven by men, repeatedly explaining how he will save these women and will be the strong hand that will guide them. However, he also speaks about his mother and praises her for never having had an abortion saying she "would never have killed [him] [...] and never looked back" (2018, 189), which represents the single type of woman that he shows appreciation towards as well as the binary opposition of what he considers to be a good or bad woman. Thus, patriarchal values and mentality also played an important role throughout the campaigning for the referendum, causing outrage among men who were so tied to their traditional, moral values that they were unable to see the harm and dangers of the 8th Amendment.

The story reflects on how the internet and social media also played an important role in the campaigning for both parties because it allowed for the spread of propaganda and ideology

to a wider audience. The text itself focuses more on the dangerous and dark side of the internet, and how it easily allowed for people to target women and call them out for their abortions. As mentioned, the narrator of this part of the text uses derogatory words to refer to women but also admits to only doing this online and his inability to do so face to face. This is a clear example of the incredibly dangerous impact that the internet and social media had on women during, and even after, the campaigning for the referendum. Because people were able to hide behind the comforts of their computer screens, never needing to reveal their identities, violently targeting women became even easier. Flynn may have included this part of the text in order to call out and criticise these cyberbullies by including much irony in the text. An example of this is the narrator explaining that he does not “like posting harsher stuff when [his] Mam’s downstairs” (Flynn 2018, 188) reflecting on this kind of double standard in relation to women. He shows incredible respect towards his mother, possibly because he knows her, and he sees her on a daily basis, but at the same time, he feels no shame in attacking women online whom he has most likely never met in person. Despite threats online not being physical, the emotional and psychological trauma and impact these kinds of behaviours had were particularly heavy since the use of social media allowed for public shaming. This contributed to the fear women who had undergone abortions may have felt, and the worry of their personal and private affairs being made public.

The internet and the media, however, had their positive aspects as they contributed in giving agency to women who underwent terminations or who were forced to travel to access abortions with short films which have addressed previously argued issues by physically visualizing them as a way of creating empathy. The internet allowed for the public to be much more well-informed on the topics and thus allowed them to be sure and knowledgeable about the votes they were casting. An important short film that emerged during the campaigning was the *Repeal Short Film* by Karl Callan which told the story of three individual women and their neglected and rejected need for an abortion. The stories are true testimonies of women and include references to the case of Savita Halappanavar and Miss Y. The film started a trend and soon several different short films emerged focusing on all different aspects of abortion. One of the more well-known short films, which was broadcast on RTÉ, was that of Natasha Waugh’s *Terminal* dedicated to “the many Irish women who have made the journey abroad to seek a safe and legal abortion” (Waugh 2016, 9:25). As previously mentioned, it tells the story of the conversation between two women at the terminal of an airport waiting to board a flight to Manchester. The Film reflects many of the issues which were argued in relation the part of Tara Flynn’s text, “Three: one”, such as the fear of travelling, the feeling of having committed a

crime and being a criminal in one's own country or feeling ashamed of the choices being made. The film was so polemical that RTÉ had to pull the broadcast and postpone it till after the referendum in order to not seem bias towards the cause (Rogan 2018), however, it still won Best Irish Short Film at the Indie Cork Film & Musical Festival in 2016. Thus, it visualized the situation of women who seen no other way to move forward with their lives other than proceeding with an abortion. It gave agency to these women by showing their fears and emotions in a bid to show that there is a middle-ground position in relation to the issue and that these women are not seeking abortions because a child may be an inconvenience or that their pregnancies were results of irresponsibly.

Conclusion

The referendum of May 2016 marked an important breakthrough for women's rights and reproductive rights in Ireland. It gave agency and a voice to those who had been oppressed throughout history and contributed to the entry of Ireland into a more liberal and modern world. Despite this important advance for Ireland's society, the aftermath and wounds of the campaigning for those women who had undergone terminations or had travelled abroad prior to this, are still visible and raw. The idea behind Tara Flynn's "Three: three" was to contrast a real situation, lived by thousands of women in Ireland throughout the years, with the abuse and backlash received by those who are against the termination of pregnancies. In doing so, she attempted to place the reader in the shoes of a woman who is carrying out the horrendous trip abroad and thus expose the heartache, anxiety and fear of the whole ordeal. She reflects on the different emotional and psychological costs of travelling and stresses the fact that this is not an option which is viable for everybody, as it assumes a heavy financial cost for those who cannot afford it. This goes without including women who cannot freely move between countries and thus resort to alternative, often dangerous, forms of 'backstreet abortions.' She contrasts said emotions and feelings with the voices of pro-life supporters to reflect on the backlash received by these women and thus expose how an already difficult situation is worsened by general misconceptions and out-dated beliefs.

Flynn reflects on the influence of religion in the minds of some people and how this has affected their judgements in relation to abortion. This approach to religion also allows to shed light on the fact that female oppression, especially on behalf of the church, has been an ongoing issue with cases such as the Magdalene Laundries, the consequences of which are still visible today. She then allows for the voice a young man whose hatred towards women is influenced by the masses and by what he has come across on the internet, touching upon the dangers of

social media as a way to personally and publicly attack women without having to do so face to face. Nonetheless, the internet played an important positive role in the Repeal the 8th movement because it allowed for the spread of information in order to ensure that voters at the time would be knowledgeable about the cause. It also contributed to this agency given to women because, through several different short films distributed on the internet, it visualized the pain and suffering that women have to deal with alone and in silence. It raised awareness of their fears and allowed them to publicly defend themselves and the reasons behind their actions, in a bid to hopefully make people understand their situation from an objective point of view. Flynn's text also reflects the dangers and influence of patriarchal values and misogynistic views in relation to the termination of pregnancy and also refers to gender roles and the idea of "compulsory motherhood" for the women of Ireland. Abortion in all situations is the extreme opposite to the complete prohibition of abortions and thus the text attempts to create a middle-ground stance in which abortion in certain cases ought to be accepted, legally and socially. In doing so, it has reflected on the emotional pain and psychological implications as a result of this misconception of understanding the Repeal movement as a binary opposition between abortion in all cases against the complete illegalization of this.

Finally, the text can be understood as a way to make readers understand that abortion is not something that affects some people but can affect those who are closest to you. It attempts to break the stigma surrounding women who have opted for abortions and also possibly stress the fact that, despite abortion having been legalized, it is still not as easily accessible as one would think due to the regulations and restrictions which continue to surround this. Furthermore, the fact that Ireland, a traditionally Catholic-oriented nation, has come through in its constitution, it may serve as the starting point for other countries and nations who have still not given attention to female and reproductive rights such as certain states in the USA or Malta.

Works Cited

- Callan, Karl. 2018. *Repeal Short Film*, Ireland: Hootenanee Productions.
- De Londras, Fiona and Enright, Mairead. 2014. “‘Empty Without and Empty Within’: The Unworkability of the Eighth Amendment after Savita Halappanavar and Miss Y.” *Medico-Legal Journal of Ireland*: 85-93.
- De Londras, Fiona and Enright, Mairead. 2018. *Repealing the 8th: Reforming Irish Abortion Law*. Great Britain: Policy Press.
- Earnar-Byrne, Lindsey and Urquhart, Diane. 2019. *The Irish Abortion Journey: 1920-2018*. Switzerland: Palgrave Pivot.
- Flynn, Tara. 2018. “Three: three.” In *Repeal the 8th*, by Una Mullally, 181- 189. London: Unbound Publishing.
- Gerend, Sara. 2016. “‘Magdalene Versus the Nation’: Ireland as a Space for Compulsory Motherhood in Edna O’Brian’s *Down by the River*.” In *Motherhood and Space: Configurations of the Maternal through Politics, Home, and the Body*. New York: Palgrave McMillan.
- Gilmartin, Mary and White, Allan. 2011. “Interrogating Medical Tourism: Ireland, Abortion, and Mobility Rights.” *Signs* 36, no. 2 (Winter): 275-280.
- Holland, Kitty. 2018. “Flowers, notes and messages placed at mural of Savita in Dublin.” *The Irish Times*. Last modified May 27, 2018. <https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/flowers-notes-and-messages-placed-at-mural-of-savita-in-dublin-1.3509950>.
- Jones, Michelle and Record, Lori. 2014. “Magdalene Laundries: First U.S. Women’s Prison.” *Journal of the Indiana Academy of the Social Sciences* no.6: 166-179.
- Lentin, Ronit. 2013. “A Woman Died: Abortion and the Politics of Birth in Ireland.” *Feminist Review*, no 105: 130-136.
- McCarthy, Rebecca Lee. 2010. *Origins of the Magdalene Laundries: An Analytical History*. United States of America: McFarland & Company Publishers.
- Orr, Judith. 2017. *Abortion Wars: The Fight for Reproductive Rights*. Great Britain: Policy Press.
- Rogan, Aaron. 2018. “RTÉ pulls ‘Pro-Choice’ film over referendum bias fears.” *The Times*. Last modified April 21, 2018. <https://www.thetimes.co.uk/article/rte-pulls-pro-choice-film-over-referendum-bias-fears-ldg99kchf>.

- Ryan, Áine, Ging, Debbie, Kamp, Annelies and McSharry, Majella. 2018. "Irish Television and the Assemblage of Personal Narratives of Teenage Pregnancy and Abortion." In *Re/Assembling the Pregnant and Parenting Teenager*. United Kingdom: Peter Lang Limited.
- Sethna, Christabelle and Davis, Gayle. 2019. *Abortion Across Borders: Transnational Travel and Access to Abortion Services*. United States of America: John Hopkins University Press.
- Sheldon, Sally. 2016. "How can a state control swallowing? The home use of abortion pills in Ireland." *Reproductive Health Matters* 24, no. 48: 90-101.
- Taylor, Judith. 1999. "Case X: Irish Reproductive Policy and European Influence." *Social Politics: International Studies of Gender, State and Society* 6, no. 2: 203-229.
- Waugh, Natasha. 2016. *Terminal*. Ireland: Fight Back Films.