

The Language of Evaluation in the Narratives by the Magdalene Laundries Survivors: The Discourse of Female Victimhood

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Drawing on Martin and White's Appraisal Theory, we study the language of evaluation in a corpus of interviews selected from the archives of *The Magdalene Oral History Project*. Apart from being deprived of proper food, clothing, and their identity, many of the women who spent their lives in Ireland's Magdalene institutions had been, or were, sexually assaulted, and physically and psychologically abused. Their criminalization led them to long-lasting incarceration for no apparent reason and, years further on, prevented them from developing any active social voice. Thus, the discursive patterns in these texts can be seen as the symptom of 'the discourse of female victimhood', which is mainly characterized by their difficulty to express their emotions and their opinions, and their tendency to avoid mentioning what happened to them and who the agent was. The Magdalene survivors felt both hatred and remorse, and seemed to be able to speak about their painful experience only by silencing others' liability, while making self-reproach and sympathy go hand in hand in their construal of both their past and themselves.

INTRODUCTION: THE MAGDALENE LAUNDRIES IN IRELAND

In 1993, the corpses found in several unmarked tombs in the premises of a Dublin convent helped prove the abuse that thousands of women had been suffering in the Magdalene Laundries for over a hundred years, often with the complicity of families. Later on, the population reacted to this scandal. In 2004, survivors, relatives, scholars, and activists founded the *Justice for Magdalenes Research Group* (<http://jfmresearch.com>). They aimed to achieve a redress scheme for those women along with the provision of primary care and hospital-based services.

From 1765 to 1996, it became an acceptable practice to incarcerate women in Irish nun-run establishments (Smith 2004, 2007a). The Roman Catholic Church was claimed to save the lost souls of prostitutes and single mothers, or

to take care of the weakest members of society such as orphans or the mentally handicapped. [Smith \(2007b: 138\)](#) describes what these women endured as an exemplar of Ireland's 'architecture of containment'. The function of these asylums changed gradually as well as the interval spent there. At first, they rescued so-called 'fallen women' from prostitution; later on, the nuns accepted women at moral risk and women with any difficulty ([Bartley 2000: 119–121](#)). In those workhouses, morality was controlled and repressed, and no payment was given for the work carried out for hospitals, department stores, the Bank of Ireland, and Government Departments or State Agencies ([Finnegan 2001: 10–11](#)). On top of that, physical punishment and psychological torture were systematically deployed there ([McCarthy 2010](#)).

In line with the Ryan Report ([Ryan 2009](#)), the McAleese Report ([McAleese 2013](#)) established the Irish State's involvement with the Magdalene institutions, in the hope that this could serve to address the human rights breaches in Ireland's industrial and reformatory schools. Its more than thousand pages demonstrated that the laundries had signed contracts with the State for their services; and that in those places there existed a pattern of sexual, physical, psychological, and verbal abuse. These findings, however, did not result in the prosecution of the parties involved. Although, on 19 February 2013, Ireland's Prime Minister issued a public apology on behalf of the Government, the Catholic Church was not formally charged with the crimes committed inside those buildings.

The above captures well the essence of the Magdalene Laundries. Its history sometimes has been simplified into the following elements: The women were sent to those places because their affection towards a young boy might have led, or might lead, to an unwanted pregnancy (Ex. 1); and, although they were mistreated by the religious orders, they did not blame it on the nuns, for whom they had the greatest respect (Ex. 2).

- 1 'I was very much in love with a boy and they locked me up in case I got pregnant' (MAGOHP31)
- 2 '[I] still had that kind of respect for the nuns because that was the Reverend Mother' (MAGOHP04)

Not only have historians shown interest in unearthing this topic; research by theologians, anthropologists, and psychologists (e.g. [Shield 2006](#); [Cismas 2014](#); [Killian 2015](#)) pinpoint what this has meant socially or politically. Furthermore, literary critics (e.g. [McCormick 2005](#);) have dealt with how it has been portrayed in various artistic media. Finally, special mention must go to a discourse analysis of the victims' interviews compiled for *The Magdalene Oral History Project* by [O'Donnell et al. \(2013\)](#) (see section 'Data and Method' for more information). In the latter study, [Benítez-Castro and Hidalgo-Tenorio \(2018: 120\)](#) conclude that the Magdalenes' negative self-conceptualization depends on their metaphorical self-construal 'as rubbish to be disposed of, as inexpensive goods for sale [...] as containers ready to

explode or that could break easily, and as fragile animals lacking in freedom and intelligence’.

In the present article, we will report a more in-depth examination of the interviews mentioned above. We regard this corpus as truly representative of the discourse of trauma and abuse survival. More specifically, we analyse the language of evaluation in *The Magdalene Oral History Project* with the goal to discover the most frequent discursive patterns used by the women when they reflect upon their experience in the laundries and they show how they felt about that. For such a purpose, we describe emotional, ethical, and aesthetic evaluation in the discourse of self-report of abuse. Specifically, we aim to categorize what emotion and opinion markers (Bednarek 2009a) are scattered throughout the texts, and by extension to figure out what coping mechanisms the survivors deploy in their attempt to get over maltreatment. For instance, although the interviewees are describing their feelings, they tend not to use AFFECT resources but instead use JUDGEMENT; and, when they express their view on events, situations, or individuals, they do it implicitly and agency is not ascribed. In this corpus-based study, our approach combines both quantitative and qualitative research paradigms.

From here on, we discuss the theoretical framework this article is based upon, list our research hypotheses, detail our data and the method employed, and comment on the answers to our research questions. To finish up, we summarize the most relevant conclusions drawn from our findings.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Appraisal Theory (Martin and White 2005) has become one of the most popular models for coding and explaining the expression of attitudinal meaning in discourse. Evaluation (Hunston 1993; Thompson and Hunston 2000), stance (Hyland 2005), and sentiment (Wiebe *et al.* 2005) are near-synonyms originated with disparate traditions that refer to interconnected approaches where subjectivity, viewpoint, and alignment altogether play a key role. In this article, we will adhere to the principles of Systemic-Functional Linguistics represented by Martin and White, and its elaboration by Thompson (2008), Bednarek (2008, 2009b), and Martin (2017).

The Appraisal framework shows the mechanisms whereby the interpersonal meta-function operates, helping construe individuals’ social personae whilst social relationships are formed. It consists of one major sub-system, ATTITUDE, and two other subsidiary ones, *viz.*, GRADUATION and ENGAGEMENT. Broadly speaking, ATTITUDE has to do with how emotional (AFFECT), ethical (JUDGEMENT), and esthetic and social (APPRECIATION) evaluation is articulated. GRADUATION is used to strengthen or diminish the meaning of evaluative utterances (FORCE), or to specify the degree of definition or indeterminacy of their boundaries (FOCUS). The term ENGAGEMENT is used to describe how the author engages with their proposition’s truth-value; ENGAGEMENT resources include those of modality,

interpreted in this context as a means to enhance the author's viewpoint or to allow for other voices to be heard.

Within APPRECIATION, we can distinguish between reaction (i.e. the extent to which one entity can grab one person's attention), composition (i.e. the extent to which one entity is more or less formally congruent) and valuation (i.e. whether one entity is worthwhile or not). There are two main classes within **judgement**: one has to do with actions that are socially un/acceptable (i.e. social sanction); the other, with human conditions society dis/approves of (i.e. social esteem). For a full account of these categories, see [Martin and White \(2005, chapter 2\)](#). As for **AFFECT**, in this article we deploy a refined model for the analysis of emotion taken from [Benítez-Castro and Hidalgo-Tenorio \(2019\)](#). This draws inspiration from two linguistic theories, i.e. cognitive semantics ([Talmy 1988](#)) and the natural semantic meta-language paradigm ([Wierzbicka 1999](#)); and four psychological approaches to emotion, namely, basic emotion theory ([Ekman 1999](#)), appraisal theories of emotion ([Ellsworth and Scherer 2003](#)), construction theories of emotion ([Barrett 2017](#)), and the neuroscientific approach to emotion ([Lang and Bradley 2008](#)). Benítez-Castro and Hidalgo-Tenorio's proposal addresses some of the inconsistencies detected in the AFFECT sub-system. One of its most salient contributions is the importance given to goals for understanding the nature of emotion as one adaptive mechanism regulating human survival and development ([Bazzanella 2004: 56–57](#)); instead of goals only applying to the category *dis/satisfaction*, in this model, they become the backbone of AFFECT. Furthermore, this taxonomy includes the category *pleasure* as one emotional parameter rather than as one emotion type only. Accordingly, we can find three emotion classes: The key to understand goal-seeking emotions is the extent to which one stimulus is relevant to someone's goals and needs, and the motivation it engenders (or not). In goal-achievement emotions, what matters is whether one individual can/not succeed in attaining and maintaining their goals, and its subsequent consequences. Finally, goal-relation emotions have to do with how much someone feels attracted or repulsed by one particular stimulus. See [Figure 1](#) below.

RESEARCH HYPOTHESES

The texts under scrutiny are the transcripts of the interviews carried out in the framework of the Justice for Magdalene Research Project. Since this corpus is a collection of the accounts from survivors, relatives, and other witnesses, the interviewees' replies seem to be characterized by a distinctive use of evaluative discursive patterns. Below we interpret these patterns in the light of previous work on trauma, survival, and evaluative language, namely:

- RH1: Abused women feel hatred towards the system in the abstract ([Hayati 2012](#)), and especially towards specific members of the religious orders;
- RH2: Their feeling of remorse ([Proeve and Tudor 2016](#)) may lead to guilt ([Bernstein 2011](#)) and shame ([Pattison 2000](#)) in a variety of ways;

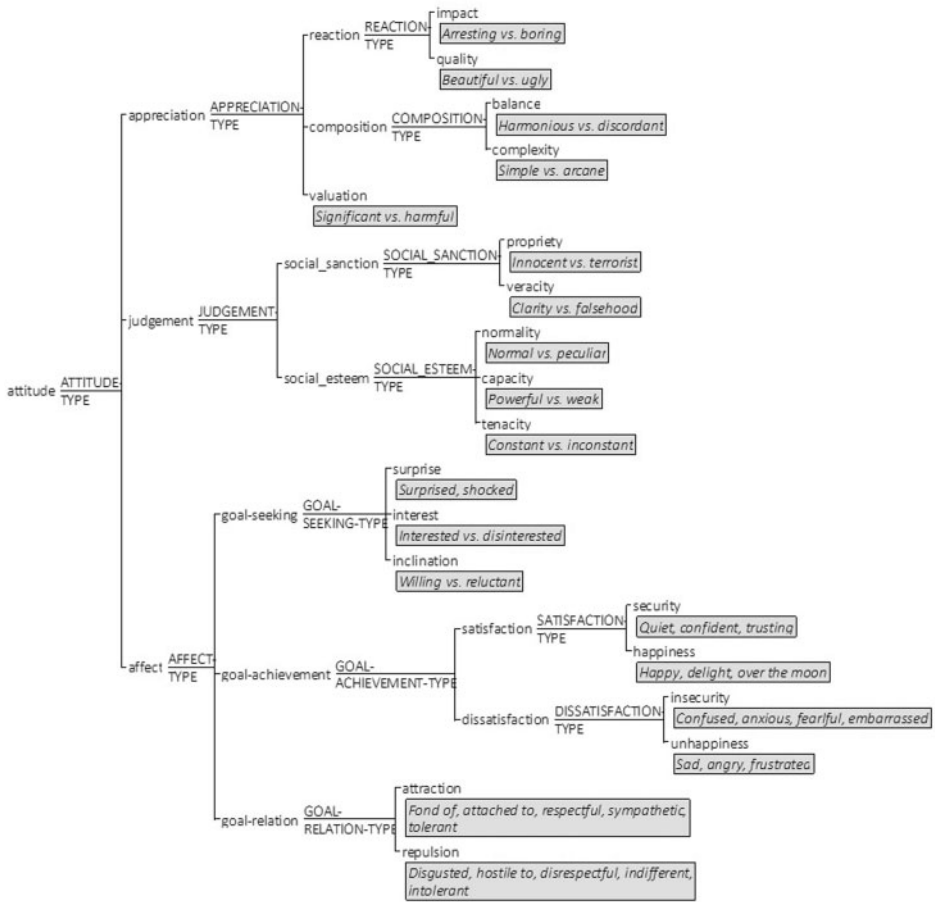


Figure 1: A bird's eye view of the ATTITUDE sub-system

- RH3: It may be hard for them to speak about their past (Canfield 2000) and, when they do so, their construal of reality is shaped by trauma (Wilson 2004), that is, the conditions and effects producing human suffering, both mental and physical scars;
- RH4: They convey emotions explicitly, through emotion talk (Bednarek 2008); and, implicitly, by means of the negative judgement of people's behaviour (theirs included).

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

Based upon the aforementioned, we intend to answer the following research questions:

- RQ1: What is the attitudinal evaluative load of the Magdalene Laundries survivors' narratives?

- RQ2: How do Magdalene Laundries survivors tend to express their emotions and their opinions?
- RQ3: What type of evaluation prevails in the narratives by these abused women?

In short, we will try to explore into which words trauma is translatable, and this will mean to see how the language of evaluation operates. Before, we devote some room to describe our data and method.

DATA AND METHOD

In 2017, the Office of Ireland's Ombudsman releases an official document in which Peter Tyndall summarizes the investigation into the Department of Justice and Equality's administration of the Magdalene restorative justice scheme. In the first lines, we read that the survivors were subjected to forced labour and that Irish society was unable to react in time to support them (Tyndall 2017: 4). In the Ombudsman's words, although this scheme had been designed 'to bring healing and reconciliation', for some it was a cause of distress (Tyndall 2017: 5). Interestingly, language was essential here. Before the publication of the report for the establishment of an ex-gratia scheme for the abuse-surviving women, Mr Justice John Quirke (2013) advised to avoid the word 'survivor' in order not to hurt the women; by the same token, the McAleese Report dispreferred terms such as 'penitent' or 'inmate', and used instead 'admitted to and worked in a laundry' (McAleese 2013). As Tyndall (2017: 7) indicates, one of the problems with the implementation of this scheme was the meaning of the two latter verbs. There was disagreement between the State and the victims over how to interpret where exactly they had been working in or admitted to (i.e. a convent, a laundry, a section of a laundry, or a Domestic Training School). It was of no help that there existed little evidence to prove it; in fact, there were very few or no electoral registers, or school, and social insurance records, and the congregations were reluctant to respond to the investigators' queries (Tyndall 2017: 9).

Many survivors admitted to or working in the Good Shepherd Sisters, Sisters of Mercy, Sisters of Our Lady of Charity, Religious Sisters of Charity, and Sisters of Charity had been previously interviewed by a team coordinated by Katherine O'Donnell, from University College Dublin. *Magdalene Institutions: Recording an Oral and Archival History* (O'Donnell et al. 2013) is a collection of testimonies of survivors, their families, regular visitors, or members of the religious orders. The scripts are structured very similarly: the interviewees answer 90 questions concerning their background, the circumstance of their entry into the laundry, its living and working conditions, the system of discipline in operation there, how they interacted with nuns and other girls, their communication with people outside the laundries, when and how they left the convent, their life and survival in the outside world, and their views on redress. In this article, we focus on the transcripts of eight survivors'

interviews (in particular, only the interviewee's utterances). These texts produced a total of 110,631 words. When mention is made of any of them, we use the code designed by the interviewers as reference (e.g. MAGOHP57). When individuals are discussed, we will also use their names, which often are pseudonyms (e.g. 'Lucy').

For the annotation of our corpus, we have employed UAM CorpusTool (O'Donnell 2016), a state-of-the art environment that enables researchers to apply statistical tests to the data. Although we could have used some in-built annotation schemes, we have created our own. In our annotation scheme, apart from ATTITUDE (i.e. AFFECT, JUDGEMENT, and APPRECIATION), we have annotated the following categories: valence (i.e. degree of un/pleasantness of an emotion), axiology (i.e. gradient between positive and negative opinion), polarity (i.e. distinction between yes and no choices), modality (i.e. modalization, or degree of likelihood of a proposition, versus modulation, or degree of obligation and readiness of proposals) and graduation (i.e. quantification, intensification and enhancement, or degree of intensity of nominal, adjectival and verbal groups, respectively). The list below (a–k) provides an example of each category:

- a. Pleasant emotion: 'We were happy when it was just Mum' (MAGOHP10)
- b. Unpleasant emotion: 'I was very, very sad' (MAGOHP46)
- c. Positive axiology: '[...] another brother who used to comfort me' (MAGOHP07)
- d. Negative axiology: '[...] the nun would [...] box you across the face' (MAGOHP31)
- e. Assertive polarity: '[...] he was the one that loved me' (MAGOHP07)
- f. Non-assertive polarity: 'I don't know is it right or wrong' (MAGOHP50)
- g. Quantification: '[...] heard that in many, many stories' (MAGOHP04)
- h. Intensification: 'I've been very lucky' (MAGOHP04)
- i. Enhancement: 'I really hate them' (MAGOHP12)
- j. Modalization: 'That may have happened to some' (MAGOHP04)
- k. Modulation: '[...] you should learn how to type' (MAGOHP04)

The reader must be aware that, for the sake of simplicity, each lexical item underlined above is taken to be representative of only one single layer; in our analysis, though, we have considered them all. For instance, one sentence such as 'Your mother must have been lovely' (MAGOHP31) has been annotated as assertive polarity, positive axiology, and marked modality. This annotation decision helps identify the individual described by the survivor as beautiful and attractive, and/or good and friendly; furthermore, it shows that, given the existing evidence, the speaker's degree of certainty as to the information provided is high. On the other hand, in an alternative example such as 'Your mother may not have been lovely', the negative particle *not* and the modal verb *may* change the meaning of the original example to something like 'To my eye, it is possible that your mother's behaviour or physical appearance

were neither beautiful, attractive, good nor friendly'. One annotation scheme that only includes the ATTITUDE categories would miss out some relevant details of the corpus (i.e. the emotional overtones of the text or the real opinion of the person who is talking about a particular event). That is the reason why our scheme also encompasses emotion components (i.e. the trigger causing the emotion, and the emoter, or entity experiencing such an emotion). The forms that triggers and emoters can take are numerous; nonetheless, what interests us is whether they are the author or anyone else whose voice is reported by the author. Likewise, we can annotate opinion components, which can also be authorial or non-authorial; these are the appraised, or entity assessed by someone, and the appraiser, who is generally a sentient being who can make judgements about the ethics and aesthetics of individuals, institutions, places, and happenings.

In/compatibility is another variable we have annotated. The positivity or negativity of attitudinal meanings is treated in terms of the compatibility (or lack thereof) of trigger/appraised and emotion/opinion with social and/or personal systems of values. In the case of interpersonal emotions, the trigger is a person, and what is socially in/compatible is the process with which that person is associated. Thus, in 'He loves his sister', *loves* can be analysed as personally and socially compatible in contemporary Western culture, and, therefore, in a positive light, if the loving is restricted to a brother's strong feeling of affection for his sister. However, in the present day, if that 'love' is expressed as sexual attraction, it would be censured, and the example would be annotated differently. Whilst there are certain lexical items that have a positive or negative nature regardless of the context (e.g. *cruel*, *grieving*), most expressions of evaluation must be interpreted contextually (e.g. *to kill a 5-year old child* vs. *to kill the virus that causes COVID-19*). This is something that our current annotation scheme allows the researcher to indicate.

The degree of explicitness of evaluative meanings is the last aspect we will mention in this section. The terms employed in the literature are *invoked* (implicit) and *inscribed* (explicit) attitudinal meanings. As [Martin and White \(2005: 67\)](#) report, explicit JUDGEMENT of someone's ability in performing an action may imply APPRECIATION of the outcome of the action; likewise, where any action is explicitly appreciated by someone, this person may also be judging the individual who accomplished it implicitly. To the latter, they add a key statement proving how closely connected the three ATTITUDE categories are; in their words, 'something we approve or disapprove of can be treated as affectual inscriptions invoking (i.e. implying) judgement or appreciation' ([Martin and White 2005: 68](#)), and the other way around. Based upon our corpus, we have incorporated in our scheme the following potential realizations of inscribed meanings:

- a. Explicit realization of APPRECIATION by means of an epithet: '[...] two beautiful girls' (MAGOHP46)
- b. Explicit realization of JUDGEMENT by means of an attribute: '[...] was really unjust' (MAGOHP04)

- c. Explicit realization of JUDGEMENT by means of a circumstantial adjunct: '[...] ruled with an iron fist' (MAGOHP07)
- d. Explicit realization of AFFECT by means of a mental process: '[...] I was you know, always wanting to keep busy' (MAGOHP07)
- e. Explicit realization of AFFECT by means of a grammatical metaphor: '[...] it was my mother's fault and my... my... anger was with her' (MAGOHP07)
- f. Explicit realization of AFFECT by means of an epithet: '[...] a really happy family' (MAGOHP07)

In line with Kövecses (2000), we have also annotated other examples, specifically of emotion, instantiated through metaphorical utterances, and through physiological reaction, action tendency, and motor expression (i.e. face, voice, and body gestures). We have classified the latter under the category *metonymy* since these can stand for the emotion itself by association. Generally, most are linked to one specific category even though the readers were not provided with any context. See *cry* below:

- g. 'Like you know, other people it would be, "where is their parents?" and all this and that like. [Begins to cry]' (MAGOHP50)

When the interviewee tries to answer the question concerning the effect her experience in the laundry may have had on how she has approached family life, she can hardly reply. As the transcript indicates, she began to cry at that moment. Generally, if we are unhappy or hurt, we can produce tears from our eyes. Nonetheless, to be fair, when we feel a strong emotion (pleasure included), we can also produce a loud sound, we can cry. The British National Corpus (BNC) data (see [Online Appendix Table A1](#)) show that people can cry from pain and fear; that, when facing the possibility that something incomprehensible takes place, they may not know whether to laugh or cry; or that they can do it when they suffer mental or physical agony or worry, or out of despair. Therefore, the relationship between crying and emotional unpleasantness seems to be clear, that is why the category *metonymy* is generally included under the umbrella term of *explicitness*. Nevertheless, in the appropriate situation, humans are also likely to let out a cry of triumph or of relief. The context will help us know to which emotion this is related.

Similarly, metaphorical meanings (Lakoff and Johnson 1980) may serve to express emotion and opinion explicitly and implicitly. The example below illustrates the former.

- h. 'Awful. I was dumped there, I had no contact with anybody' (MAGOHP04)

The target domain here is one of the Magdalene survivors whose pseudonym is 'Mary'. The source domain she is compared to is something society

regards as worthless, the waste material people get rid of and is put somewhere in a careless untidy way or buried under the soil because they do not want it. Then, the reader's interpretation of the text may be guided by the mappings of this metaphorical utterance. Nevertheless, there are other less straightforward examples, which reinforce our view that this figure of thought can both inscribe *OPINION* and invoke *EMOTION*. See below:

- i. 'They kind of . . . it was like they were robots' (MAGOHP07)

The definitions of the *Longman English Dictionary Online* can help us comprehend the possible reading of (i). When the woman under the pseudonym 'Lucy' describes some people as robots, the reader may infer that they were like machines that can move and do a person's work, and are controlled by a computer. At first sight, the mapping does not have to be disapproving of the target domain; in the survivor's words, these people were like machines, and machines can perform all sorts of tasks in a more consistent, precise, and faster fashion than humans. However, it is the context that clarifies how to interpret the metaphor. In her attempt to encourage Lucy to judge the nuns, the interviewer asked the following question: 'And can you tell me actually . . . what made a Sister good or bad?'. As a result, she retrieves from her a statement rich with metaphors. Mary draws parallels between the nuns and machines not because of their efficiency, but because they were identical in their behaviour, and displayed no emotion, especially joy. The *THEATRE* metaphor is applied later to justify her answer; in her view, the sisters pretended to look happy only while people visited the laundry. The subsequent *JOURNEY* metaphor explains how, once the visitors left, they would go back to normal.

- j. ' . . . they were all the same. [. . .] we never saw the fun side of them the only time you would see the kind of . . . to me the nuns were kind of like actresses. When people were around they were able to put on this persona that that they were happy [. . .], 'look at us, aren't we great?' But as soon as people went it would be diverted back to being the baddies again' (MAGOHP07)

As explained above, metaphor, and metonymy can be both taken as explicit and implicit expressions of emotion and opinion depending on the extent to which contextual information is required to make intentions cognitively accessible. We can derive from this fact that realization is a challenge (sometimes, a problem too) for the annotation process. Therefore, based upon our data, we have made the effort to categorize as many potential cases of implicitness as possible. Sometimes, the trigger (e.g. *My dog has left*) is preferred instead of the emotion caused by such an entity (e.g. *I feel very sad*). Sometimes, it is the opinion about the trigger (e.g. *My dog was so nice*) that is mentioned instead of the emotion itself (e.g. *I miss her*).

To finish this section, we will mention a cornerstone of our methodology. We are convinced that the more fine-grained the annotation scheme is, the more comprehensive the analysis will be; however, granularity and the existence of a many-tiered system can make it more difficult to reach inter-coder agreement. In order to improve the degree of reliability, our annotation protocol relies on [Fuoli and Hommerberg \(2015\)](#). Thus, we have selected and configured our scheme carefully; we have drafted an annotation manual based upon the above; and, after assessing the reliability of our annotation, we have refined our coding instructions, annotated the corpus, and revisited both our annotation criteria and scheme, once again ([Fuoli 2018](#)).

Having clarified the what, the why, and the how of our research, we proceed to answer the research questions posed at the beginning, and highlight the contribution of this article to our understanding of the Magdalenes' experience.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

As mentioned above, from this point on, we will look into some of the most outstanding features of the discourse(s) construed out of the violence against the Magdalene survivors. We will start by reflecting upon the first question posed in the corresponding section of this article.

What is the attitudinal evaluative load of the Magdalene Laundries survivors' narratives?

As we mentioned above, historians have proved that the Magdalenes were sexually, physically, and psychologically abused. This fact is supported by the keyness analysis in [Table 1](#) below, which gives an indication of how the women's language is influenced by the violence and hardship they had to face. As one would expect, it reflects a markedly negative evaluative flavour in the study corpus. When compared to the reference corpus of recounts by witnesses, in the interview corpus we can see the following: except for *protector*, *safe*, and *aunty*, most lexical items in the list may be associated with a negative attitudinal value. Examples such as *hunger*, *hell*, *slop*, *beatings*, *dumped*, *damage*, *abuse*, *prison*, or *hole* describe the circumstances of their suffering concerning others' ethics, society's perception of the women's conduct, and the aesthetics of the places where they were incarcerated. *Awful* and *terrible*, by contrast, refer to the emotional reactions of shock, fear, and unpleasantness caused in them by the laundries, the regime enhancing the institutions and their actual location.

In [Figure 2](#), we see the attitudinal evaluative load in our corpus. The results provide evidence for the arguments made above. Clearly, there are twice as many examples of negative axiology (opinion) and valence (emotion) as positive ones.

Table 1: Keyness analysis in our corpus

Words data for:

Words	<i>N</i> (Text)	Percentage (Text)	<i>N</i> (Reference corpus)	Percentage (Reference corpus)	Propensity	Chi- squared	Log- likelihood	Sqrt (Propensity – 1 × Chi- squared)
Protector	7	0.079	3	0.002	41.75	83.53	38.58	58.34
Hunger	8	0.091	4	0.003	35.79	90.18	41.70	56.01
Really	73	0.828	218	0.138	5.99	227.83	140.19	33.72
Hungry	14	0.159	19	0.012	13.18	90.78	46.36	33.26
Hell	10	0.113	12	0.008	14.91	70.80	35.39	31.38
Awful	17	0.193	29	0.018	10.49	92.03	49.18	29.55
Control	10	0.113	13	0.008	13.76	66.91	33.90	29.22
Aunty	4	0.045	2	0.001	18.39	45.09	20.85	28.00
Slop	4	0.045	2	0.001	18.39	45.09	20.85	28.00
Weapon	4	0.045	2	0.001	18.39	45.09	20.85	28.00
Prostitute	4	0.045	2	0.001	18.39	45.09	20.85	28.00
Sexual	5	0.057	5	0.003	17.89	39.88	19.41	25.95
Safe	6	0.068	7	0.004	15.34	43.30	21.55	24.92
Refused	6	0.068	7	0.004	15.34	43.30	21.55	24.92
Terrible	12	0.136	21	0.013	10.22	63.57	34.16	24.22
Vulnerable	4	0.045	4	0.003	17.89	31.90	15.52	23.21
Sex	7	0.079	10	0.006	12.53	43.67	22.51	22.44
Fought	4	0.045	3	0.002	12.43	37.54	17.71	20.71
Beatings	9	0.102	16	0.010	10.07	47.03	25.36	20.65
Ladies	7	0.079	11	0.007	11.39	40.53	21.29	20.52
Dumped	3	0.034	2	0.001	13.92	29.85	13.96	19.64
Shawls	3	0.034	2	0.001	13.92	29.85	13.96	19.64
Throne	3	0.034	2	0.001	13.92	29.85	13.96	19.64
Gardens	3	0.034	2	0.001	13.92	29.85	13.96	19.64
Damage	5	0.057	7	0.004	12.78	31.67	16.26	19.32
Almost	7	0.079	12	0.008	10.44	37.73	20.18	18.87
Food	21	0.238	61	0.039	6.16	67.56	41.21	18.67
Fed	6	0.068	10	0.006	10.74	33.11	17.60	17.96
Abuse	12	0.136	29	0.018	7.40	47.03	27.30	17.35
Prison	9	0.102	19	0.012	8.48	40.28	22.60	17.35
Whole	5	0.057	8	0.005	11.18	28.53	15.04	17.05
Department	5	0.057	8	0.005	11.18	28.53	15.04	17.05
Line	6	0.068	11	0.007	9.76	30.53	16.57	16.35
Wants	3	0.045	6	0.004	11.93	24.03	12.50	16.21
Abused	8	0.091	18	0.011	7.95	33.67	19.19	15.30

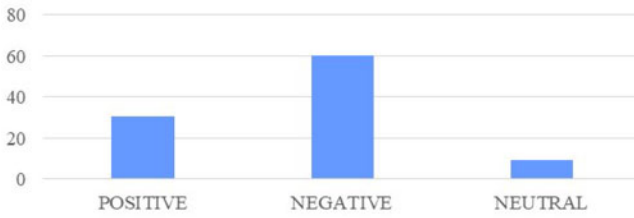


Figure 2: Attitudinal evaluative load in our corpus

Additionally, in many cases, as we can infer from the co-text, what appeared to be positively biased was not so. In MAGOHP04, *kissing*, an affectionate expression of love, or a mark of respect, for someone turns to be a signal of humiliation and domination (Ex. 3). Likewise, a non-assertive item such as *nobody* transforms one utterance that could encapsulate a deep emotional state of devotion (i.e. ‘... does want me’) into a lament on rejection and loneliness (Ex. 4).

3. ‘[...] they used to make you kiss the floor’.
4. ‘[...] I used to write to my mum and she never answered. [...] I’d begin to think well nobody does want me.’

Contextual information again was instrumental in comprehending better the survivors’ mindset. A vulnerable young Lucy talks about the conditions at home, and compares physical abuse to sexual abuse; she had not only been deprived of care, food, and support by her father, she had been beaten by her elder brother and raped by another sibling; however, that 14-year-old girl described it as *getting a bit of affection* (Ex. 5).

5. ‘The beatings I don’t know which was the worse, the abuse or the beatings I think... when we... when we were being kind of... sexually abused like, it kind of felt like that you’re... you’re special, that... that was the only time you were getting a bit of affection, like that’s what I thought’ (MAGOHP07).

Given the aforementioned, we had to pose another question: *In which ways does polarity play a role in the interpretation of valence and axiology?* This is very important for two reasons; firstly, because of the annotation decisions taken; secondly, because, as already noted, the interpretation of one utterance depends on its co-text, and polarity can make the meaning of the clause vary.

As Figure 3 indicates, a strong tendency in the corpus is the preference for assertive contexts. The women mainly judge what did happen in their homes (Exs. 6 and 7) and in the laundries (Exs. 8 and 9). Sometimes, their recollections give us a real insight into the emotions they had experienced in the past (Exs. 10 and 11). They can also make clear how they evaluate the impact, makeup, and relevance of entities both inside and outside the convents (Exs. 12 and 13).

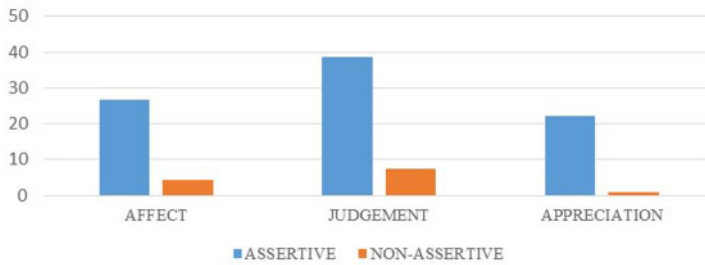


Figure 3: *ATTITUDE and polarity*

6. 'My father raped me' (MAGOHP04)
7. 'We were his [my brother's] slaves' (MAGOHP07)
8. '[...] they [the nuns] took your freedom' (MAGOHP04)
9. '[...] I was actually being used and abused in ... with the Magdalene Laundries' (MAGOHP07)
10. 'I was so happy to be away from the nuns' (MAGOHP04)
11. 'I was scared of these women [the nuns]' (MAGOHP07)
12. 'But they'd let you walk around the gardens, the nun's beautiful gardens' (MAGOHP04)
13. '[...] it was all filthy dirty' (MAGOHP07)

Finally, when they choose a negative or non-assertive word, they ensure that we get the full picture of everything they were prevented from having. Their past life is characterized by lack of support (Ex. 14), lack of all sorts of resources (Ex. 15), and lack of freedom (Ex. 16); furthermore, they regret their own lack of capacity to endure it (Ex. 17).

14. 'I used to write to my mum and she never answered' (MAGOHP04)
15. '[...] there was no money in the house' (MAGOHP07)
16. 'You were never allowed out' (MAGOHP04)
17. 'I couldn't cope with the hunger' (MAGOHP07)

How do the Magdalene Laundries survivors tend to express their emotions and their opinions?

When it comes to studying mistreated people's coping mechanisms, the issue of how individuals express emotion and opinion is of paramount importance. The title of a paper by [Downes \(2017\)](#), 'It's not the abuse that kills you, it's the silence', summarizes the tendency of victims of sexual abuse not to talk about their traumatic experiences ([Bartley 2016](#)). The reasons are manifold. As [Ahrens \(2006\)](#) reports, they often think that the family will get hurt once the sexual abused suffered by them is known, and that people will not believe them and will blame them for it. [Koutselini and Validinou \(2013\)](#) note that it is not unusual for the person who has been victimized to imagine that the

victimizer was not really bad and to try to protect their image as role models, or to construe themselves as the individual who is accountable. In our case, not only has Irish society remained silent about what happened and, as a consequence, tolerated violence against disempowered women, it also took the women long to challenge the silence and recover their own (previously ‘Othered’) voice (Pérez-Vides 2016: 13).

In the interviews, the survivors talk about not talking. For example, Lucy (MAGOHP07) recalls that they were not allowed to converse with the other girls in the laundry:

18. ‘[...] to make sure that we didn’t talk or to give the impression that it was a... a... family gathering’.

She also explains that speaking about her life came to be very hard after leaving the asylum because it would lead to more permanent social isolation out of lack of empathy:

19. ‘... I don’t know what to talk about because for me my life is just, full of pain [...] and I don’t want to tell them because when you tell people how you are or what you’re feeling and what you’ve been through they actually don’t want to know you anymore.’

Although scholarly research tackles the problem of silence, no mention is made of the discursive strategies present in this type of narratives once the victim decides to talk. Actually, the example below displays a pattern that is relatively infrequent in our corpus.

20. ‘[...] I’m just absolutely exhausted. And I do wish that I could [sighs] oh God I wish I could kind of let go and like I wish I could of unburden all this but no matter who I talk to, no matter how many counsellors I talk to it’s... the pain is still there.’

Ex. 20 illustrates a persistent pattern in Lucy’s interview, that is, a feeling of desperation resulting from unhappiness. Apart from metaphor (i.e. *exhausted*, *unburden*), her attitude as an abuse victim is expressed through an automatic response often linked with sorrow or longing (i.e. *sighs*), and through two emotion terms, that is, *wish* or *pain*. In Scholer and Higgins’ (2008: 492) words, the former is related to the promotion orientation, which ‘regulates nurturance needs and is concerned with growth, advancement, and accomplishment’; and, therefore, people ‘in a promotion focus are striving towards ideals, wishes, and aspirations and are particularly sensitive to the presence and absence of positive outcomes (gains and non-gains)’. On the other hand, Rozin (1999: 112) defines pain as an action inhibitor, a counterpart of pleasure, ‘a negative experienced state [affecting both mind and body] that we avoid and that we try to reduce or eliminate’. Lucy depicts her anxiety or distress unequivocally. Likewise, the survivor under the pseudonym ‘Pippa Flanagan’ also describes the mistreatment inflicted upon the women in the



Figure 4: *ATTITUDE and degree of explicitness in our corpus*

laundry in an explicit manner. In Ex. 21 below, by reporting the nuns' behaviour towards herself when she was a kid, she exposes her (and everybody's) vulnerability and the unethical behaviour of the religious order.

21. '[...] me mother was unmarried and then she had to pay 2/6d a week into the school. She stopped paying that and that's why I was getting punished, all this battering' (MAGOHP46)

Nevertheless, as Figure 4 shows, if the survivors finally tell others how they feel, or what they think about the ethics or the aesthetics of any entity, either their families, the Irish Government, the laundries or the Catholic Church, they do it implicitly.

In the particular case of Mary, we will highlight some patterns that can be perceived with interesting connotational colouring (Partington 1998). In Ex. 22, she refers to a common practice in that context: when the women escaped from the asylums, their relatives felt the obligation to tell the police.

22. 'It was her auntie who told the police that we were there' (MAGOHP04)

As Figure 5 below reveals, a query in the BNCweb proves that *to tell the police* has positive and negative profiles depending on who does the telling and on whom the telling has some impact. From the perspective of Irish society, if anyone failed to comply with this standard of conduct, they should feel disquiet and blame themselves on their lack of commitment with norms; by contrast, if they did, they would be seen as a model citizen helping protect the established legal order and endorsing the politics of containment observed in the laundries. From the perspective of the women, however, *telling the police* that they were somewhere other than the laundry was something bad because, as a result, they would be sent to that place again and their rights would be stripped away from them. The relatives' reporting the incident to the police makes them look indirectly disloyal to the girls for whom (we learn indirectly, as well) they must have had no affection. Identifying this peculiarity, then, is essential to interpret how emotion and opinion are articulated.

Mary makes use of other patterns that serve to show what Macken-Horarik and Isaac (2014: 67) call 'a cline of implicitness'. If above we saw that she uses neither intrinsically judgemental terms nor emotion/al language, below we

Your query "told the police" returned 69 hits in 50 different texts (98,313,429 words [4,048 texts]; frequency: 0.7 instances per million words), collocating with *He* (16 hits)

No	Filename	Hits 1 to 16	Page 1 / 1
1	AAJL528	fix the plane?" Schmit, 19, of Lierstal,	told the police
2	B7K104	take the case to a higher court. When arrested, Curtis	told the police
3	CR0325	Stato SpA, in the minister's study, Giacalone has already	told the police
4	CS1922	In the Sun's report, the accused was alleged to have	told the police
5	E9L668	100 millilitres of breath. The legal limit is 35. Roberts	told the police
6	E9L874	the accident was walking home with fellow student Cedric Xavier. He	told the police
7	QWB435	was beginning to thin and there was watery sunshine. He	told the police
8	QWB435	was beginning to thin and there was watery sunshine. He	told the police
9	QWG1513	see how the evidence against Pascoe was accumulating. Pascoe had now	told the police
10	HRW3916	driver for refusing to drive a defective and dangerous vehicle. He	told the police
11	K221400	be all over his wife's car's steering wheel, and he	told the police
12	K242272	All three men have denied manslaughter. In another interview, Smith	told the police
13	K4W1587	David Dunton, of Brattisham Avenue, Easterside, Middlesbrough. He	told the police
14	K4W11621	discharge for 12 months. Andrew Clarkson, prosecuting, said Siddle	told the police
15	K3D1306	a number of shots at the gunman. A fourth taxi driver	told the police
16	KRM392	a police station in London. As a result of what he	told the police
		that he pushed the buttons in the cockpit because he was trying	
		that he had obtained the mushroom spores for £3 from an American	
		that he passed the money on to representatives of the Republican party	
		that he struck the victim naked and cut off one of her	
		that he had drunk five cans of beer. Mr Chris Hayward	
		they normally walked to their accommodation in Forest Road by a different	
		he was already in bed when I got home. '	
		he was already in bed when I got home. '	
		what he had told her, about a fierce row with MacQuillan	
		that the vehicle concerned had a virtually bald front nearside tyre and	
		she's been violent and upset when he left him. The	
		he was fed up of lying for Harper, it was Harper	
		they were wearing dark clothing. He braked hard and managed to	
		he had bought the video from a man in a pub and	
		he escaped a murder attempt in north Belfast a short time later	
		, his wife Caroline's body was found in their home in	

BNCweb (CQP-edition) © 1996-2011 You are logged in as user "hidalgot1967"

Figure 5: Concordance of 'told the police' retrieved from the BNCweb

can observe that, when she does use that language, she avoids pointing at her object of criticism. Thus, whilst she describes the children's exposure to harshness, she does not condemn the nuns for the role they played in their suffering, perhaps in an attempt to redeem the religious sisters. This cline goes from no indication as to who acted improperly and who was affected by this action (Ex. 23); through explicit indication of who was affected by an agentless inappropriate action (Ex. 24); to examples like 25, where nobody is claimed to bear responsibility for the pain caused to the women, but the place to which the individual is metonymically related. Mary's preference for existential clauses (e.g. *there was...*, *there were...*) and ideational grammatical metaphors (e.g. *neglect*, *beatings*, *punishment*) is indicative of the tone of the interviews: the woman talks about the happening of certain events or about the existence of certain circumstances as if they were deprived of agency, which forces the interlocutor to find out contextually who the agent is.

23. 'There was neglect'
24. 'There were beatings on some children'
25. '... but the Magdalene Laundry... was just... it was punishment'

What type of evaluation prevails in the narratives by these abused women?

Figure 6a below displays the most common evaluative patterns in our corpus. As the examples cited so far reveal, the survivors tend to evaluate the outer world ethically and aesthetically more often than to give vent to their emotions. In 46 per cent of the cases, they judge others' behaviour; in 23 per cent, they judge the quality and composition of any entity or the reaction it provokes. This is not surprising taking into consideration that the women talk about uncaring people, horrible deeds and events, and unbearable conditions. It is worth noting that these figures can simultaneously underpin our view on

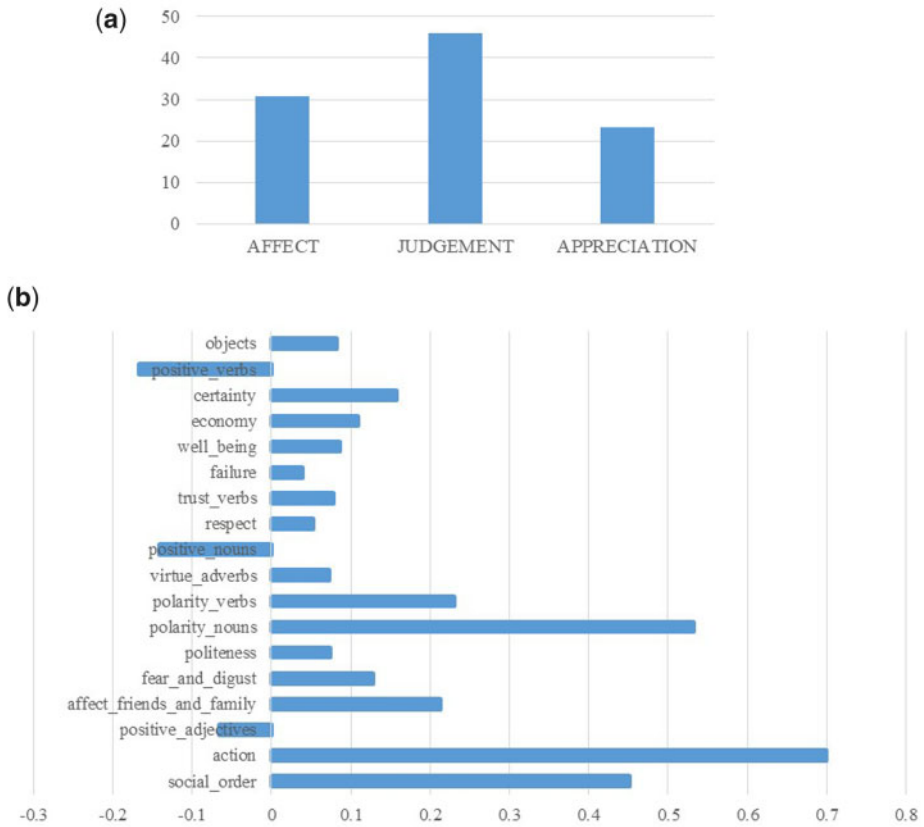


Figure 6: (a) ATTITUDE categories in our corpus. (b) SEANCE component scores in our corpus

implicit meaning; namely, JUDGEMENT and APPRECIATION can be interpreted indirectly as AFFECT. If one place is too dark, we can conjecture that people may feel insecure there; if something is not beautiful, people may not like it; if someone is destructive, they may not be loved or admired.

We are aware that the analysis of ATTITUDE can be enhanced if other components and core indices are considered. Some of the findings generated manually with UAM CorpusTool are confirmed after using a freely available text analysis tool such as the Sentiment Analysis and Cognition Engine (SEANCE) (Crossley et al. 2017). The latter is designed for automatic measurement of features related to sentiment, cognition, and social order, and classify positive and negative reviews in two test corpora. The results demonstrate that the women do not use positive verbs, nouns, or adjectives. In the interviews, there is a tendency for positive polarity, ethics verbs, need verbs, and rectitude words, as well as ought verbs, try verbs, travel verbs, and descriptive action

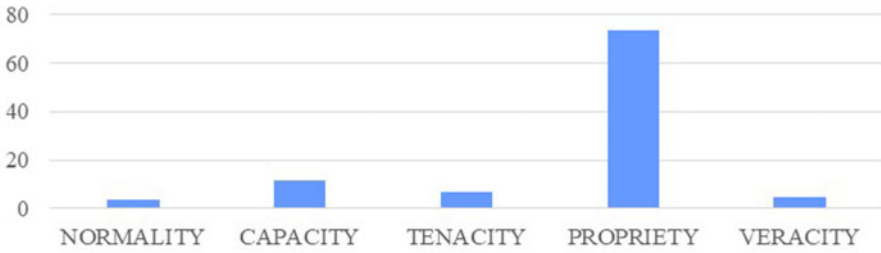


Figure 7: *JUDGEMENT* categories in our corpus

verbs. Additionally, based upon these results, certainty, affect, well-being, fear, anger, and disgust seem to be the most frequent emotion categories in the corpus.

What are the most frequent *JUDGEMENT* sub-categories in our corpus? The most frequent category within *JUDGEMENT* is propriety (see Figure 7). Many examples above illustrate this point; below, we will add a few that summarize the tenor of the corpus. Although the survivors were systematically beaten, raped, and abandoned, it is infrequent for them to ascribe blame, except to blame themselves for what their mind construes as immoral (Ex. 26). Nevertheless, exceptionally (see Ex. 27), they describe what the nuns did to them as a law transgression deserving, by the same token, to be criticized, as well as punished.

26. '[...] at the age of ten ... I was a prostitute for food' (MAGOHP07)

27. 'It's been a terrible crime against ... against the Irish people, what they did' (MAGOHP04)

The attitudinal load of most of the opinions they express is negative for obvious reasons; nonetheless, we have found that there are a few examples that refer to individuals who, for a change, behaved properly in a context where this was neither expected nor rewarded. In Ex. 28, one survivor recalls with fondness the nun who, unlike the rest, encouraged the young woman to learn; in Ex. 29, the person who acted well with her is one teacher who showed willingness to help the girl calm her hunger.

28. '[...] one nun that was really nice [...]. She got me into typing' (MAGOHP04)

29. '[...] this particular teacher she used [...] offer me food' (MAGOHP07)

What are the most frequent *APPRECIATION* sub-categories in our corpus? As displayed in Figure 8, more than half the examples coded as *APPRECIATION* fall into the subcategory of reaction; the remaining 40 per cent belong to valuation.

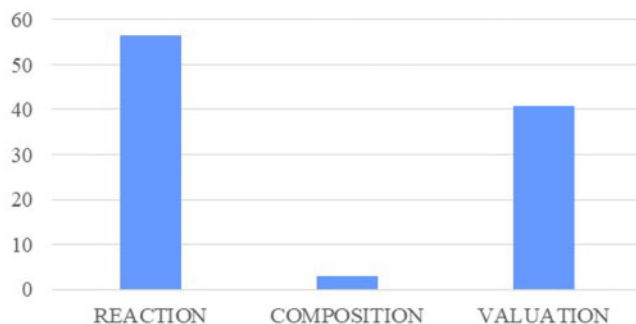


Figure 8: APPRECIATION categories in our corpus

Again, emphasis is put on how disagreeable, painful, or discomforting some entities are to them, namely, working and living conditions (Exs. 30 and 31).

30. '[...] working conditions were appalling' (MAGOHP04)

31. 'But the ... the worst part for me was the hunger' (MAGOHP07)

Understandably, when it comes to a positive portrayal of their environment, what the women attach more importance to is tranquillity. They equate tranquillity with not being at home (Ex. 32), a place where their physical integrity was at risk; and with not working in the same slave conditions as others (Ex. 33). That is the reason why we can infer from Ex. 34 the suffering caused to the survivor by the nuns' lying about taking her somewhere safe.

32. '[...] get out of the house we used to go there and it would be kind of like a shelter' (MAGOHP07)

33. '[...] they put me in the lace department – they had a really nice lace department' (MAGOHP04)

34. '[...] they made out that they were going to take me somewhere safe' (MAGOHP04)

What are the most frequent AFFECT sub-categories in our corpus? To finish up this section, Figure 9 provides data on which are the most frequent AFFECT sub-categories in the interviews. The data show that these are inclination, sadness, insecurity, and attraction. In Núñez Perucha (2006), we can learn about victims' psychological reactions in the domestic abuse context. Although this is not exactly the context all the survivors relate to the interviewers, many were abused by their relatives and what happened in the laundries somehow reminds us of such experience. As the author reports, the victims blame themselves for disrupting their family or depending on the aggressor, and feel guilty for not being able to change the situation, which results in their feeling sad. The corpus evidence supports the above.

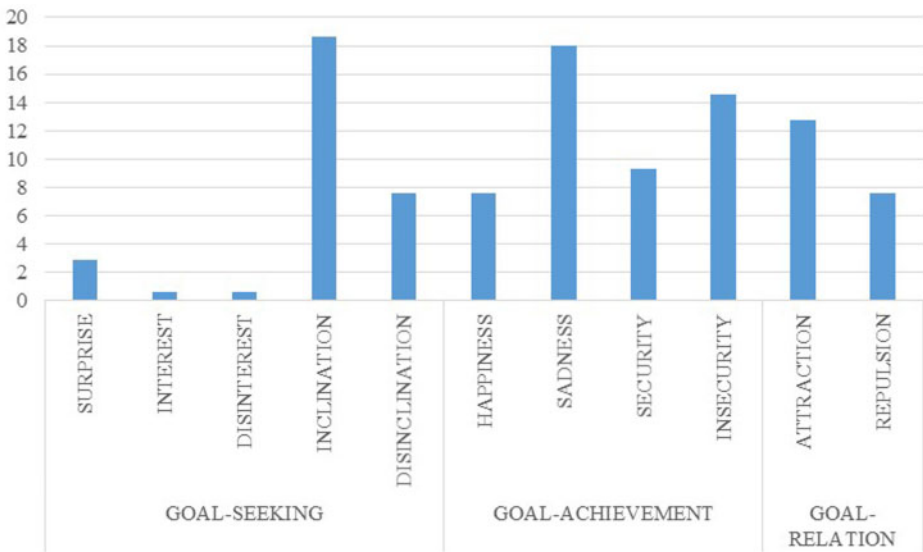


Figure 9: *AFFECT* sub-categories in our corpus

In Ex. 35, we see how unexpectedness could surprise the women and make them feel upset. Mary Smith had already spent some time in one Industrial School, where she had endured hardship. When she is sent to a Magdalene Laundry, at the same time that she complains about why she is there, she shows her inability to make anything about it.

35. '[...] I just went into shock because I knew I was never, never going to come out' (MAGOHP31)

More than 26 per cent of *AFFECT* has been annotated as inclination or disinclination; this needs some clarification. In the case of these goal-seeking sub-categories, we acknowledge how important polarity is, inasmuch as negative polarity transforms desire into unwillingness. In fact, except for those few utterances when the women express their wish to leave the laundries (Ex. 36), what they generally do is to reject anything associated with the system (i.e. food, rules and orders, enforced containment, and their loss of identity through renaming). That is the reason why it is crucial for them to get detached from Ireland (Ex. 37). So, when they are asked to recollect their life, the women make reference to what they refused to do (assertive disinclination) (Ex. 38) and what they were not inclined to do (non-assertive inclination) (Ex. 39), in other words, disinclination.

36. 'I kept saying, "I want to get out of here"' (MAGOHP04)

37. '[...] I would never want to go and live in Ireland' (MAGOHP04)

38. '... I said, "[...] I refuse to do this"' (MAGOHP07)

39. '[...] I kept saying, "I don't want to go..."' (MAGOHP31)

Furthermore, other people's desire is also covered during the talk. As the women report, what the nuns and relatives wish shows their real emotions towards the survivors. In Ex. 40, we read that they wanted these women to be removed or dealt with so as to be no longer a hindrance. In the end, these people considered them as likely to cause problems, to need too much attention and to be annoying.

40. 'So, they wanted me then ... out of the way' (MAGOHP04)

As *Lench et al. (2016)* propose, sadness is an emotion that helps the emoter deal with goal loss and find assistance in goal attainment. Given the harshness of the conditions in which the survivors find themselves, they opt for various expressions of sadness, such as negative existential clauses (Ex. 41) or emotion attributes (Ex. 42). In Ex. 43, Pippa Flanagan summarizes how they felt after one of their mates left. As we explained earlier, since they were not allowed to talk with the girls with whom they spent hours and hours working physically side-by-side, they could not become friends with them; they were twice confined (literally) in the laundry and (metaphorically) in themselves; the impossibility of knowing each other and the possibility of losing them resulted in unhappiness.

41. '[...] there was no joy there anyway' (MAGOHP50)

42. 'Yeah. I felt lonely' (MAGOHP10)

43. 'Never said goodbye. I was very, very sad' (MAGOHP46)

But, not only did they feel sad; they also felt insecure. Insecurity (confusion, fear, worry, and embarrassment included) is the second most frequent goal-achievement emotion sub-category reported in the corpus. This feeling was justified by the impression that something bad might happen (or was already happening), like imminent danger (Ex. 44), and by the actual force causing imminent danger, namely, the religious sisters (Ex. 45). Sometimes, the consequence of this constant emotional tension is anger. Anger is conceptualized as another goal-loss emotion that, in contrast to sadness, is based upon the potential for removing the obstacle triggering this sensation; for instance, someone's unfair action against someone else may trigger anger. In extreme cases (Ex. 46), when injustice is unbearable and the trigger cannot be blocked, the individual's solution involves blocking the only entity she has control over (i.e. herself) through self-harm.

44. 'And also my first recollection of life [...] was actually standing at a big hole and the fear' (MAGOHP31)

45. 'Horrible woman Mother Bernadette [...] everybody was scared of her' (MAGOHP04)

46. '[...] and they [the nuns] were denying that any of this ever happened, so I was so, so... so angry I laid in bed and lit up a cigarette and just put all the butts on it [wrist] 'til it all came off in big blisters and then I used a knife to cut the blisters off [...] when I cut myself I felt better' (MAGOHP46)

Finally, we will illustrate the data of the goal-relation emotion category, and see when the women talk about love and its opposite term, that is, attraction and repulsion. We expected to find many examples whereby they described how much they loathed those who had made them feel so much pain (Ex. 47); but this is not that common. Remarkably, what they remember is that they hated inanimate entities, like their uniform, the food they were provided with, or the jobs they carried out (Ex. 48), not the agents accountable for what happened to them. The annotation of negative polarity proves useful again in this case (Ex. 49); in MAGOHP04, we can see that it is the nuns who are portrayed as presenting hostility towards the interviewee by not liking her (non-assertive attraction).

47. 'I hate religious orders' (MAGOHP07)

48. 'I hate the colour brown' (MAGOHP04)

49. 'She [Mother Bernadette] didn't like me anyway'
(MAGOHP04)

Once we have discussed the most outstanding findings in our research, we will summarize below the conclusions we have drawn concerning our theoretical and methodological approaches, and the corpus under analysis.

CONCLUSIONS

Although we think that this article may be regarded to be of significance, in this section we first must acknowledge some limitations concerning the method, the sample and the degree of generalizability of this research. We are aware that more work still needs to be done on our annotation protocol in order to reach the highest degree of inter-coder agreement. In addition, we must admit that, due to how arduous it is the annotation process, we have not been able to analyse all the interviews that were available online after we started this research, which would have probably made our findings more robust. Moreover, if we could have compared our corpus with other abuse corpora, we know that we could have had the opportunity to check whether all victims in general use the same resources in the same circumstances; unluckily, this has not been possible.

Nevertheless, despite all the shortcomings mentioned, here we have been able to do an analysis of the language of evaluation of the Magdalene Laundries survivors in a very careful and detailed manner. As regards our theoretical model is concerned, we have demonstrated that JUDGEMENT leaks when the women express their emotions, and so does AFFECT when they appraise a person or an entity. Our method has proved to be rather successful in our application of this thesis to this particular collection of interviews. In such an enterprise, we have been able to probe the efficacy of a more delicate system of description of attitudinal meaning and its codings in discourse; moreover, we have identified some clues to implicitness, which makes our analysis more

complex but more comprehensive as well. For example, we have detected the following interrelationship between emotion and opinion:

- a. Ethical judgement about someone's veracity or normality may be read as goal achievement emotion_satisfaction or goal achievement emotion_dissatisfaction, as well as goal relation emotion_liking or goal relation emotion_disgust. For instance, if someone claims that *Some politicians are honest or normal*, they may implicitly mean that they believe in them or that they like them; if they say, instead, that *Some people are deceptive or odd*, they may implicitly mean that they feel very insecure about them, or that they dislike them;
- b. Aesthetic appreciation may be read as goal relation emotion_liking or goal relation emotion_disgust. For instance, if someone says that *An object is beautiful*, they may implicitly mean that they love it; if they say, instead, that *One person is ugly*, they may implicitly mean that they are not very fond of that particular human being;
- c. Ethical judgement about the propriety of someone's actions with an impact on the emoter may be read as goal relation emotion_affection or goal relation emotion_antipathy. For instance, *They have taken care of his niece* may implicitly mean that they love her; instead, *They have hurt that old man* may implicitly mean that they acted that way because they hated him;
- d. Ethical judgement about someone's tenacity (or capacity) be read as goal relation emotion_respect or goal relation emotion_disrespect. For instance, if someone says that *The young woman was brave*, this may implicitly mean that they admire her for her courage; if they say, instead, that *The young woman was lazy*, they may implicitly mean that they feel contempt for this female on account of her laziness.

Last but not least, with respect to our corpus, we are clear that, by delving into the perception these abused women have of their inner and outer worlds, it is easier to understand how they present their past and how they represent those who were involved in these past events. Interestingly, they tend to tell their stories in the same fashion. Their evaluative language can be seen as the symptom of 'the discourse of female victimhood'. This is mainly distinguished by their use of emotional language to share and not to search for compassion; their difficulty to express their emotions explicitly; and, subsequently, their tendency to avoid mentioning what actually occurred and, in particular, who was liable for those atrocities. In this article, we have illustrated the distinctiveness of their discursive construction of all their feelings, either their need for safeness and warmth, or their sense of inferiority and low self-esteem. We have also observed the different coping mechanisms they resort to in order to channel their anger at the injustice they had witnessed and suffered; and the culpability they felt for having had 'to do wrong', or rather, for having had to like what they hated doing.

This research demonstrates how their feeling of self-shame intermingles with that of understanding; and describes their own construal of cruelty and violence. Like many other individuals suffering a traumatic experience, they felt both hatred and remorse, and could speak about their painful experience by judging places, people, and events ethically and aesthetically, whilst silencing actors' responsibility. This may be interpreted as an index of respect, instilled fear, or intellectual forgiveness.

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SUPPLEMENTARY DATA

[Supplementary material](#) is available at *Applied Linguistics* online.

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