Disrupting the 8th: Aesthetics, Protest, and the Struggle for Abortion Rights in Ireland

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Abstract

The campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment utilised a variety of aesthetics in an attempt to achieve greater access to abortion care in Ireland. Using Jacque Rancière's work on *dissensus* and Judith Butler's work on the performativity of protest as foundation, this paper will map out some of the creative strategies used by the campaign in order to disrupt the established notion of Ireland as an abortion-free country. These examples are described and contextualized within theories on the space of appearance, politics of aesthetics, agonistics, dispossession, and performativity. Through a combination of discourse, visual, and cultural analysis I will demonstrate the disruptive nature of these aesthetics. These examples are provided along three main themes – embodied resistance, agonism between different sides of the campaign, and emotive images. I will explore how embodied protests such as *Strike4Repeal* and the *Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment* succeeded in breaking open the space of appearance and revealing the unseen abortion-seeking women. Using Chantal Mouffe's work on agonistics, I will discuss the clash of different sides of the debate and explore how this clash revealed itself through aesthetics. I will demonstrate how the pro-choice side subverted aesthetics created by the pro-life side for their own campaign. Finally, I will illustrate how the image of a migrant woman, Savita Halappanavar, was used by the campaign to shift the focus of the debate to the bodies threatened by the Eighth Amendment and reveal what was unseen within the established social order – the violence associated with the Eighth Amendment.

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Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION **1**

CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK **6**

1:1: Rancière 6

1.2: Feminist Critique of Rancière 9

1.3: Butler and Athanasiou 11

1.4: Space of Appearance 14

CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW **16**

2:1: The Aesthetics of Repeal 16

2:2: Aesthetics of Protest 20

CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY **22**

CHAPTER 4: "WHOSE STREETS? OUR STREETS!": A VISUAL EXPLORATION OF THE ABORTION DEBATE IN IRELAND **25**

4:1: Protest as a Performative Act and the Space of Appearance 25

4:2: Agonistic Aesthetics 31

4:3: Dissenting Images 37

4:4: Summary of Chapter 41

CONCLUSION **43**

BIBLIOGRAPHY **46**

FIGURES **53**

Introduction

Appearing at Dublin Castle after the referendum results were announced in May 2018, Taoiseach[1] Leo Varadkar stated that the 'Yes' vote had been won by a "quiet revolution".[2] However, the victory of repealing the Eighth Amendment after decades of struggle was anything but quiet. In response, TD[3] Ruth Coppinger proclaimed, "for thousands of activists, it's been a noisy battle cry".[4] This 'battle cry' is what has led me to conduct this research, and to explore the ways in which the notion of Ireland as 'abortion-free' was disrupted. The repeal of the Eighth Amendment allowed for legalisation of abortion for the first time. This thesis will focus on the years leading up to the 2018 referendum, and in particular, the use of aesthetics during this period. I pose the following questions:

1. *What role did activist aesthetics play in the campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment?*
2. *To what extent did aesthetics disrupt the notion of Ireland as an abortion-free country?*

The Repeal campaign was a long and arduous struggle for greater abortion rights. It is not my intention to suggest that the examples I will refer to were solely responsible for the success of the Repeal campaign, but rather that they were successful in tangent with decades of activism and struggle in many forms for greater access to abortion in Ireland.

The Eighth Amendment and the Struggle for its Repeal

The Eighth Amendment was added to the Irish constitution in 1983 by referendum. The resulting Article 40.3. 3° read:

> *The State acknowledges 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.*[5]

[1] *The Taoiseach is the Irish Prime Minister*
[2] Heffernan, Breda, "Coppinger berates Varadkar over 'quiet revolution' claim", *Irish Independent*, 29 May 2018, Available at: https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/abortion-referendum/coppinger-berates-varadkar-over-quiet-revolution-claim-36956260.html
[3] *A Teachta Dála is a member of the Irish Parliament*
[4] Heffernan, "Coppinger berates Varadkar over 'quiet revolution' claim", *Irish Independent*
[5] Electronic Irish Statue Book, *Eighth Amendment of the Constitution Act, 1983:* http://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1983/ca/8/enacted/en/print

The amendment effectively outlawed abortion completely in Ireland. Although abortion was already illegal under the 1861 Offences against the Persons Act, the success of Roe v Wade in the US led pro-life groups to campaign for the Eighth Amendment to be added to the constitution to prevent abortion restrictions being liberalised in Ireland too.[6] The insertion of this amendment into the constitution and the struggle for its removal that followed is underpinned by a wider context of the treatment of women, and especially sexually transgressive women, in Irish society and the influence of the Catholic Church. Journalist Ann Marie Hourihane recalled the social climate:

> *"Women were in an appalling position at that time. If you think about it – the 1979 Family Planning Act is what was on the books, which said you had to be married and you had to have a prescription in order to obtain condoms. […] Now abortion was not discussed, it really wasn't. Even though women were going in a steady stream to Britain for abortions […] [T]here was no divorce, homosexuality was illegal… women came into family planning clinics in secret".*[7]

The amendment was approved by 66.45% of voters after a bitter and divisive referendum campaign. Despite the Catholic Church's encouragement to vote yes, there was a poor turn-out with only 55.6% of the electorate voting in the referendum.[8] Four subsequent referenda added sections to the amendment permitting freedom to travel for abortion, and allowing abortion where there was a serious threat to the mother's life. Thousands of Irish women continued to travel abroad for abortions. Between 170,000 – 205,000 Irish women have travelled to Britain for abortion since 1970.[9]

As I have already mentioned, the repeal of the Eighth Amendment was the result of decades of grass-roots struggle for reproductive rights in Ireland and was a crucial moment in Irish feminist history. The campaign started in 1983 as an Anti-Amendment campaign, but the official *Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment* was formed in 1992 and was one of many groups part of a long-running movement against the Eighth Amendment. It was established by feminist and left-wing activists in response to the X Case, and to oppose the 'Irish Protocol' to

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[6] Ferriter, Diarmaid, *Occasions of Sin: Sex and Society in Modern Ireland*, (London, Profile Books, 2009): 465-466

[7] Ann Marie Hourihane quoted in Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin*: 464

[8] Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin*: 467-468

[9] Calkin, Sydney, "Healthcare not airfare! Art, abortion and political agency in Ireland," *Gender, Place and Culture* 26, no. 3 (2019): 338

the Maastricht Treaty.[10] The X Case referred to a 14-year old girl, pregnant as a result of rape, who was prevented from travelling to the UK for an abortion.[11] The 'Irish Protocol' was added to the Maastricht Treaty to ensure the European Union's non-interference with the Eighth Amendment.[12] The death of Savita Halappanavar in 2012, a migrant woman who died when she was refused a termination following an incomplete miscarriage, is largely considered the turning point of the campaign. The *Abortion Rights Campaign* was established in 2012 and promoted nation-wide access to free, safe and legal abortion care.[13] Under mounting public pressure, the government formed a Citizens Assembly in 2016 to consider the Eighth Amendment, which voted to recommend a liberalisation of abortion laws.

The campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment was extremely contentious and divisive. In the lead-up to the May 2018 referendum, Irish airwaves were dominated by debates and discussions on the issue, and campaign posters from both sides littered lampposts across the country. In the end, the amendment was repealed with a landslide vote of 64.1% voting yes. It is, of course, impossible to measure how successful the aesthetics I will discuss were in persuading voters to vote yes. Grassroots feminist organising played a significant role in the success of the repeal of the Eighth Amendment and campaigners strove to build a "ground force" of support and create "a great big behemoth of a campaign based on personal stories and medical facts".[14] Private discussions amongst friends and family were another key factor. As Chantal Mouffe has noted, activist practices alone cannot realise the transformation needed for the establishment of a new hegemony which requires the articulation of different levels of struggle.[15] However, one thing is clear: the use of aesthetics on both sides of the campaign succeeded in keeping the issue on the minds of voters in the lead up to the referendum.

Art and aesthetics were an important feature of the campaign. Protests on both sides of the debate regularly saw thousands of people take to the streets with placards and banners. In the lead up to the referendum, the issue of abortion became unavoidable. Phone numbers for the *Abortion Support Network* or information on securing abortion pills could be found scrawled

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[10] Chan, Suzanna, "Speaking of silence, speaking of art, abortion and Ireland", *Irish Studies Review* 7, no. 1 (2019): 75
[11] Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin*: 473
[12] Chan, "Speaking of silence": 75
[13] Abortion Rights Campaign Website: https://www.abortionrightscampaign.ie/
[14] Loughlin, Elaine and Fiachra Ó Cionnaith, "How they did it: Behind-the-scenes of how the Eighth was repealed", *Irish Examiner,* 2 June 2018, https://www.irishexaminer.com/opinion/commentanalysis/arid-30846478.html
[15] Mouffe, Chantal, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically* (London & New York: Verso, 2013): 99

in lipstick in public bathroom stalls, and university libraries were filled with laptops covered in 'Repeal' stickers. Stickers and campaign posters were placed around the country bearing slogans such as "For compassion in a crisis", or "A license to kill?" alongside an image of a foetus in the womb. Merchandise such as stickers, badges, t-shirts, and other wearable items were designed by both sides of the movement, and allowed people to signal their identification with the issue.[16] These wearable items were not confined to marches and protests, but were worn by people during their daily lives. The iconic 'REPEAL' jumpers became synonymous with the movement.[17] The image of a red and white 'Repeal the 8th' logo inside a heart which was designed by artist Maser became one of the most recognisable symbols of the Repeal campaign. Moreover, artists in the pro-choice movement in Ireland used aesthetics in a variety of ways, and much focus was placed on the importance of articulating women's lived experience with abortion. Theatre makers such as Grace Dyas, Tara Flynn and Jesse Jones invited audience members to engage and relate to abortion on a personal level, and *the Artists Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment* showcased artworks which represented women's experience of abortion. Abortion was increasingly addressed through artistic means; however, my analysis will focus on art and aesthetics on the street – such as protest banners and signs, and murals. It is also important to note that this was not a new phenomenon and pro-choice artists have been bravely acknowledging abortion through art even in times where the social and political climate was predominantly anti-abortion and intimidating.[18]

My analysis will rely heavily on a feminist engagement with Rancière's work on *dissensus* and his exploration of the relationship between politics and aesthetics, as well as Butler's work on the performativity of protest. Both of these scholars discuss the transformative potential of aesthetics and protest which will provide a foundation to my analysis. Building on this framework, I intend to explore the limited existing literature on the aesthetics of the abortion debate in Ireland, and on the use of aesthetics in social movements more broadly. In my analysis, I will focus on street aesthetics in order to explore their role in the lead-up to the 2018 referendum. The main tenet of my argument is that the aesthetics utilised by the campaign successfully disrupted the established social order which saw Ireland as abortion-free and morally superior. The analysis chapter consists of three sections. In "Protest as a performative act and the space of appearance" I will explore how a nationwide protest *Strike4Repeal* and a

[16] Chan, "Speaking of Silence": 563
[17] Repeal Project Instagram: https://www.instagram.com/repealproject
[18] Chan, "Speaking of silence"

curated procession by the *Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment* succeeded in requalifying the space they were inhabiting and demanded, not only access to abortion care, but a right to appear as speaking subjects. Secondly in "Agonistic Aesthetics", I will examine the Us/Them dynamic discussed by Chantal Mouffe and argue that the clash between both sides of the abortion debate revealed what was hidden behind the established social order. I use an example from the other side of the campaign, a large 'No' sign that was erected on Ben Bulben mountain in Sligo to illustrate this. Finally, in "Dissenting Images" I use the image of Savita Halappanavar to argue that by engaging with the issue of abortion on a physical and personal level, the campaign ruptured the social order by revealing what remained unseen – the violence and suffering associated with the Eighth Amendment. In this section, I will also engage with Butler and Athanasiou's notion of *dispossession* in relation to the death of Savita Halappanavar and her death as a catalyst to the movement.

To close, I discuss the place of my thesis within the existing literature on the aesthetics of Repeal, and mention topics that could be explored in further research. I outline the potential for aesthetics to be utilised to progress abortion rights in Ireland further, as well as how they can be used in other struggles both in Ireland and abroad.

Chapter 1: Theoretical Framework

My analysis of the art and aesthetics of the Repeal campaign will rely heavily on Jacque Rancière's concept of *dissensus* and his discussion of the interrelation between aesthetics and politics. I will link his theory to Chantal Mouffe's notion of *agonistics.* Rancière presents a useful framework for my analysis as he discusses the transformative potential of aesthetics and the disruptive capacity of politics. However, I will undertake a feminist engagement with his work and build on his concept of dissensus in order to apply it to the Repeal campaign. Moreover, I will engage with Judith Butler's work on the performativity of protest and her work with Athena Athanasiou on *dispossession*. Both scholars engage with the *space of appearance*, coined by Hannah Arendt, which is also useful for my analysis, as it recognises the potential of collective action. I will use Rancière and Butler's work as the foundation of my analysis.

1.1: Rancière

In *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics,* Rancière explores the intimate interrelation between politics and aesthetics, and the potential of what he calls *dissensus* to disrupt the established social order, or the 'police order'. He believes aesthetics to be a form of dissensus and politics.[19] Rancière does not understand politics in the way it is generally understood. For Rancière, politics stands in opposition to the police order.[20] He defines the police order as a '*partage du sensible'* (distribution of the sensible), in other words, the dividing up of the world and of people into particular roles and statuses. This is known as the sensible and can take the form of class, gender, race, and other forms of domination. Politics is an activity that disrupts this established hierarchal order. It is a moment when those who are excluded from the established order speak up for themselves. "Politics, before all else, is an intervention in the visible and the sayable".[21] Those who have been excluded, or uncounted, are known as the 'part of those with no part'.[22] Applying Rancière's concept of politics to the Irish context, those invisible or uncounted can be understood as Ireland's abortion-seeking women, existing in a social order that establishes Ireland as an 'abortion-free' country. Rancière believes that the essence of

[19] Rancière, Jacques and Steven Corcoran, *Dissensus: On Politics and Aesthetics* (London: Continuum, 2010): 1
[20] Rancière, *Dissensus:* 36
[21] Rancière, *Dissensus:* 37
[22] Rancière, *Dissensus*

politics involves disturbing this distribution of the sensible by supplementing it with a part of those without part. "Political dispute is that which brings politics into being by separating it from the police, which causes it to disappear continually either by purely and simply denying it or by claiming political logic as its own".[23] Rancière sees disruption as a process of equality that reveals the arbitrariness of the distribution of political participation in society.[24]

Such a disruption is what Rancière calls a *dissensus.* Dissensus is not simply a confrontation between interests or opinions, but rather it is an expression of a gap in the sensible itself. Dissensus is the essence of politics, according to Rancière. In contrast, a consensual vision of politics involves the reduction of people to political subjects, and a transformation of politics into the affairs of professional politicians and their experts in government.[25]

Similarly to Rancière, Chantal Mouffe believes politics cannot be conflated with rationality and impartiality. She claims that antagonism between different sides can never be eradicated from politics.[26] Instead, she argues for *agonistics*. She believes that collective identities are always formed as an 'Us' which stands in opposition to a 'Them'. Mouffe believes that the key to democratic politics, is to transform these conflicts into 'agonism' (a struggle between adversaries) rather than 'antagonism' (a struggle between enemies).[27] She claims that 'passions' are the driving force in the political field, and a consensus without exclusion cannot be reached.[28] The agonistic model does not attempt to eliminate passions or assign them to the private sphere in order to establish a rational consensus in the public sphere. Instead, this model should "'tame' these passions by mobilizing them for democratic ends and by creating collective forms of identification around democratic objectives".[29]

Both Rancière and Mouffe discuss the relationship between aesthetics and politics. Aesthetics, according to Rancière, is another form of dissensus, and this ensures its interrelation with politics. Rancière believes politics to have an inherently aesthetic dimension, and aesthetics to have an inherently political one.[30] Certain artistic practices have the potential to disrupt the social order. The aesthetic represents a specific sensory experience that holds the promise of

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[23] Rancière, *Dissensus*: 36-37
[24] Rancière, *Dissensus:* .5
[25] Rancière, *Dissensus:* 5
[26] Mouffe, Chantal, *Politics and Passions: The Stakes of Democracy,* (London, Centre for the Study of Democracy, 2002): 3
[27] Mouffe, Chantal, *Agonistics: Thinking the World Politically* (London & New York: Verso, 2013) and Mouffe, *Politics and Passion:* 7
[28] Mouffe, *Agonistics*: 6
[29] Mouffe, *Politics and Passions*: 9
[30] Rancière, *Dissensus:* 2

both a new world of art, as well as a new life for individuals and the community.[31] According to Corcoran, who summarises Rancière in his excellent introduction to *Dissensus,* Rancière demonstrates that "the freedom of the aesthetic – as aspirate sphere of experience or appearance – is based upon the same principle of equality that is enacted in political demonstration".[32] This is key to his concept of the politics of aesthetics. In an essay entitled *"Contemporary Art and the Politics of the Aesthetics"*, Rancière explains that the project of politicizing art, for example in the form of critical art, "is always anticipated by the forms of politicity entailed in the forms of visibility and intelligibility that makes art identifiable as such".[33] Political art thus means creating forms of dissensus.

Mouffe, too, recognises the central role that art plays in society and its potential to offer spaces for resistance. She believes that in order to understand the political potential of artistic resistance, it should be realised as agonistic interventions within the context of counter-hegemonic struggles.[34] Similarly to Rancière, Mouffe believes that there is an aesthetic dimension to the political, and a political dimension to art.[35] Mouffe focuses on what she calls *critical* art – art that has the capacity to disrupt the dominant hegemony and create a different form of articulation among public spaces.[36] "Its critical dimension consists in making visible what the dominant consensus tends to obscure and obliterate, in giving a voice to all those who are silenced within the framework of the existing hegemony".[37] However, Mouffe makes it clear that while she recognises the potential in aesthetics, she does not believe that artistic activism can, on its own, realise the transformation needed for a new hegemony. Instead, radical democratic politics calls for different levels of struggles.[38]

The concepts I have discussed thus far are useful to my analysis as they argue for the transformative power of aesthetics and its intimate relationship with politics. Using this work, I will argue that the aesthetics utilised by the abortion-campaign disrupted the 'police order' or the established notion of Ireland as morally superior in relation to abortion.

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[31] Rancière, *Dissensus:* 115
[32] Rancière, *Dissensus:* 15
[33] Rancière, Jacques, "Contemporary art and the politics of aesthetics". In *Communities of Sense: Rethinking Aesthetics and Politics,* ed. Beth Hinderliter, et. al., (Durham: Duke University Press, 2009): 40-41
[34] Mouffe, *Agonistics*: 85-88
[35] Mouffe, *Agonistics:* 91
[36] Mouffe, *Agonistics:* 91-92
[37] Mouffe, *Agonistics*: 93
[38] Mouffe, *Agonistics*: 99

1.2: Feminist critique of Rancière

Several scholars critique Rancière for a lack of insight into feminism, critical race theory, queer politics and so on,[39] and I will be undertaking a feminist engagement of Rancière's work throughout my thesis.

Holloway Sparks acknowledges the value to be found in Rancière's ideas, however she critiques Rancière's reluctance to incorporate theory put forward by critical race scholars, postcolonial critics, and feminists in his work and to fully recognise the power structures that decide who is excluded from the established social order.[40] Sydney Calkin has exposed Rancière's disembodied notion of geopolitics in relation to the Irish abortion context specifically, and she emphasises the need to interweave global and local scales in order to see the everyday in geopolitics. She calls for a feminist geopolitical engagement with Rancière to help us acknowledge the invisibilities of gender in geopolitics and identify alternative sites of lived resistance.[41] Sparks accuses Rancière of what she calls the "all-too-common tendency of Western theorizing from an unacknowledged center[sic]".[42]

Rancière's version of politics and disruptive action is very narrow. He defines it as a fleeting moment of "political creation and emergence of a new conflict where there had appeared to be no conflict at all".[43] For Rancière, those who "do not count" are not simply the excluded and marginalised, but are those who cannot even appear within the existing *partage* as speaking subjects.[44] Sparks argues that while Rancière's concepts are useful for analysing disruptive activism, they can only be used to make visible a particular, drastically narrow, range of inequalities and disruptions.[45] In Rancière's understanding, politics will always be successful, singular, and unexpected. In this sense, Rancière would not consider the campaigning in the lead-up to the abortion referendum in Ireland to be an example of disruptive politics. The Repeal campaign was a long, arduous process that took decades to achieve success in Ireland.

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[39] See Sparks (2016) and Calkin (2019)

[40] Sparks, Holloway, "Quarreling with Rancière: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Democratic Disruption", *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 49, No. 4 (2016): 420

[41] Calkin, Sydney, "Healthcare not airfare! Art, abortion and political agency in Ireland," *Gender, Place and Culture* 26, no. 3 (2019): 340

[42] Sparks, "Quarreling with Rancière": 420

[43] Rancière cited in Sparks, "Quarreling with Rancière": 422

[44] Sparks, "Quarreling with Rancière":.424

[45] Sparks, "Quarreling with Rancière": 429

I do not believe it should be disregarded as a form of disruptive politics, so in that sense I will be adapting Rancière's work to engage with poststructuralist accounts of identity and performativity offered by feminist theorists. As Sparks explains:

> *"[Rancière's understanding of politics] obscures the vital process of cultivating political subjectivities over time that so many political moments (even in the narrowed sense) require. Rancière's account seems to discount and sometimes even to dismiss any form of subjectivation that works by slow accretion, reiteration, and citation rather than surprising rupture."*[46]

A feminist and critical race engagement with Rancière makes several important contributions, as outlined by Sparks. It offers a deeper insight into the way power dynamics operate as part of accepted norms and assumptions about the world that we engage with knowingly or unknowingly during political disputes. Identities are shaped by "orders and structures of power" which are organised around discourses of gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, class, ability, and so on. These discourses decide which actions and debates are possible in society.[47] An engagement with feminism also invites attention to the way in which disruptive practices are cultivated in distinctly gendered and racialised ways. In contrast, Rancière's language often makes the act of declaring a wrong and taking political action seem instant and untethered.[48]

Political art can be understood as a disruption of sensory experiences that can expose the gendered norms and hierarchies that shape geopolitical power structures.[49] However, according to Calkin, geopolitical narratives, including Rancière's, sustain a "hierarchical and disembodied vision of the 'real work' of geopolitics"[50] and focus on traditional sites such as militarism or border politics. This reproduces assumptions about what counts as *legitimate* sites of disruption. Rather, it is important to de-centre traditional sites of political violence, and instead recognise that these power dynamics can operate at the level of the gendered body and work through the establishment of particular gender norms and inequalities.[51] Sparks also

[46] Sparks, "Quarreling with Rancière":.430
[47] Sparks, "Quarreling with Rancière": 429
[48] Sparks, "Quarreling with Rancière":.429-430
[49] Calkin, "Healthcare not airfare": 343
[50] Calkin, "Healthcare not airfare": 343
[51] Calkin, "Healthcare not airfare": 343

highlights how disruptive movements can blend both radical and non-radical performances and identifications.[52] Both Feminist and Rancièrian accounts share an emphasis on the political power of the rupture, and both focus on the potential for emancipatory alternatives to the existing social order.[53] Calkin makes it clear that separation between the political and the private is both socially constructed and performative and it hides the connections between intimate and the geopolitical.[54]

For the reasons stated above, I will be adapting Rancière's extremely valuable concepts and looking at his theories through a gendered lens. To ensure this, I will build on the work of feminist scholar Judith Butler and her notion of the performativity of protest, as well as her discussion of *dispossession* with Athena Athanasiou in their book *"Dispossession: The Performative in the Political"*.

1.3: Butler and Athanasiou

"*Dispossessions: The Performative in the Political"* consists of a dialogue between Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou. The book interrogates the complex concept of *dispossession*, which is an interesting concept when applied to the Irish context. The notion of dispossession is relevant to my analysis, as an absence of autonomy in relation to abortion can be considered a form of dispossession. In this way, the Repeal campaign can be viewed as being established in response to this dispossession, and as a form of resistance against it. Butler and Athanasiou understand dispossession as the condition of those who are excluded within the broader belonging of the world; in particular, they are interested in contemporary political protests by women.[55] According to Athanasiou "being dispossessed refers to processes and ideologies by which persons are disowned and abjected by normative and normalizing powers that define cultural intelligibility and that regulate the distribution of vulnerability"[56] such as the loss of land, or the ownership of one's body by someone else. Butler explores dispossession as a form of establishing us as dependent beings. If we are able to be deprived of our homes, livelihood,

[52] Sparks, "Quarreling with Rancière": 430
[53] Calkin, "Healthcare not airfare": 343
[54]Calkin, "Healthcare not airfare": 343
[55] Mupotsa, Danai S., "The Subject, Real Bodies and the Performative in the Political: A Review of Dispossession: The Performative in the Political by Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou", *Agenda* 27, no. 4 (2013): 136-140
[56] Butler, Judith and Athena Athanasiou, *Dispossession: The Performative in the Political* (Oxford: Wiley, 2013):2

citizenship and rights, then we are fundamentally dependent on these powers which have the ability to sustain or deprive us. Our pleasure and suffering depend on a sustained social world and environment.[57] Similarly to Mouffe, Butler claims that dispossession establishes the self as social and as passionate, "that is, as driven by passions it cannot fully consciously ground or know".[58]

Butler and Athanasiou explore the ways dispossession is connected to the constitutive and regulatory fiction of gender and sexuality.[59] Butler believes that the ways gender and sexuality are regulated are also conditions of possibility for their emergence. She calls this a dual operation of power.[60] Athanasiou states that desire and the law are inextricably intertwined. "In this performative intertwinement, gender and sexual categories, identities, and fantasies are reconstituted and reinvented in unforeseen ways as the law 'strives' […] to produce, affirm, consolidate, thwart, commodify, or render them proper".[61] She agrees that this regulation can also present a possibility of emergent gender and sexuality. In other words, the authors believe that there is a division between a primary productive power which is constitutive of the subject, and a secondary, regulatory or subordinating power which is external to the object.[62] This division must be disrupted.[63] The authors recognise the fight of second-wave feminists to "own" their bodies and claim autonomy. Athanasiou asks how we can fight for this autonomy when our bodies are "battlefields that are never simply our own", never completely under our control.[64] She concludes that it is this corporeal vulnerability that enables rather than undermines our claims for bodily integrity.[65]

Butler's work is often concerned with the performativity of resistance. In *Notes Toward a Theory of Performativity,* Butler explores the form, effect, and political potential of public assemblies.[66] Butler uses her early work on gender performativity to illuminate the politics of the street.[67] "Showing up, standing, breathing, moving, standing still, speech, and silence are

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[57] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 4
[58] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 4
[59] Mupotsa, "The subject": 137
[60] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 44-45
[61] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 45-46
[62] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 46
[63] Mupotsa, "The subject": 137
[64] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 98
[65] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 98
[66] Butler, Judith, *Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly,* (Cambridge, Massachusetts: Harvard University Press, 2015)
[67] Kohn, Margaret, "Notes Toward a Performative Theory of Assembly by Judith Butler", *Perspectives on Politics* 14, no. 2 (2016): 546

all aspects of a sudden assembly, an unforeseen form of political performativity that puts liveable life at the forefront of politics".[68] I will be working with Butler's discussion of the performative power of assembly. According to Butler, public gatherings signify in excess of what is said and this is a plural form of performativity. Plural forms of performativity operate through forms of coordinated action, whose aim is the constitution of plural forms of agency and social practices of resistances.[69] She describes the political potential of embodied resistance:

> *"When bodies assemble on the street, in the square, or in other forms of public space […] they are exercising a plural and performative right to appear, one that asserts and instates the body in the midst of the political field, and which, in its expressive and signifying function, delivers a bodily demand for a more liveable set of economic, social, and political conditions no longer afflicted by induced forms of precarity".*[70]

Butler and Athanasiou also engage with performativity, relating it to dispossession. They discuss several social and political cases of dispossession, including the occupation of Palestine, and use examples of street politics to demonstrate the performative nature of the political.[71] According to the authors, dispossession is a performative process which involves acts of dissidence as aspects of corporeality.[72] They engage with the embodied nature of resistance, and emphasise the spectral body that attempts to make itself present.[73] According to Athanasiou, "the logic of dispossession is interminably mapped onto our bodies, onto particular bodies-in-place, through normative matrices but also through situated practices of raciality, gender, sexuality, intimacy, able-bodiedness, economy, and citizenship".[74] Some bodies are seen as dispensable or disposable. Butler states that performativity takes place when these bodies appear in some way and exercise their right to exist.[75] "Performativity names that unauthorized exercise of a right to existence that propels the precarious into political life".[76]

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[68] Butler, *Notes*: 18
[69] Butler, *Notes*: 8-9
[70] Butler, *Notes*: 11
[71] Mupotsa, "The subject": 138
[72] Avramoploulou, Eirini, "Crisis, Critique and the Possibilities of the Political: An Interview with Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou Apropos the Publication of their Book Dispossession: The Performative in the Political", *Cyprus Review* 26, no.1 (2014): 197
[73] Mupotsa, "The subject": 137
[74] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 18
[75] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 101
[76] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 101

These assembled bodies, simply by their presence, state that they are not disposable – they demand to be recognised and valued, and they exercise their right to appear.[77]

1.4: Space of appearance

Butler engages with the work of Hannah Arendt but she critiques aspects of Arendt's work. Both scholars are interested in possibilities that emerge when people appear and act together in public. However, unlike Arendt, Butler explores the social conditions that enable people to appear and to act, and others to be excluded or silenced.[78] She also critiques Arendt's notion of public and private. Arendt distinguishes between the private sphere as one of dependency and inaction, and the public sphere as one of independent action.[79] Butler, however, disagrees with this. She explores the passage from the private to the public and asks whether we ever leave the sphere of "dependency" behind. "Only as creatures who recognize the conditions of interdependency that ensure our persistence and flourishing can any of us struggle for the realization of […] important political goals during times in which the very social conditions of existence have come under economic and political assault".[80] Butler engages with Arendt's concept of the *space of appearance*. Massive demonstrations and modes of resistance not only produce a space of appearance but attempt to disrupt already established space permeated by power and conventional conceptions of the 'public sphere'. Athanasiou, too, engages with this notion, adapting it to *spacing appearance.* This appearance is brought into being through political action. She claims that space should not be comparable with fixity, but instead imply a "performative plane of taking place".[81] Butler concurs that people taking to the streets is a form of body politic, and even if it does not speak in a single voice, it still asserts its presence, stating "[w]e have not yet been disposed of. We have not slipped quietly into the shadows of public life: we have not become the glaring absence that structures your public life."[82]

Nicholas Mirzoeff explores the space of appearance specifically in the context of the *Black Lives Matter* movement in the United States.[83] While, of course, he is speaking in a particular context, I find his engagement useful for exploring the space of appearance in a contemporary

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[77] Butler, *Notes:* 25-26
[78] Kohn, "Notes": 546
[79] Butler, *Notes*: 44
[80] Butler, *Notes*: 45
[81]Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 194
[82] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 196
[83] Mirzoeff, Nicholas, *The Appearance of Black Lives Matter* (Name Publications, 2017), Available at: https://namepublications.org/item/2017/the-appearance-of-black-lives-matter/

protest context. Commenting on his first experience at a *Black Lives Matter* march in 2014, he says "it was remarkable how many people were galvanized by the march – running out of apartments, bars, and restaurants to be part of what was happening".[84] In her discussion of Mirzoeff's exploration of the space of appearance in regards to *Black Lives Matter*, Nicole R. Fleetwood remarks that his work "imagines a world past, present, and future where people can show up in practices of recognition".[85] Mirzoeff refers to the space of appearance as a place where we can appear to each other and create politics.[86] He, too, adapts Arendt's notion, this time to describe the doubled experience of revealed police violence and the protests that followed in the same spaces. He uses Butler's version of the space of appearance, and the "right to appear", which is constrained by established norms and hierarchies.[87] He argues that the *Black Lives Matter* protests are an example of what Butler calls "anarchist moments or anarchist passages… [which] lay claim to the public in a way that is not yet codified into law and that can never be fully codified into law".[88] The Black Lives Matter protests allow for an appearance as Black in a way that is not codified by white supremacy. Likewise, Rancière believes politics consists of the transforming of public space into a space for the appearance of a subject. It involves re-figuring space to be seen and named in it.[89] This appearance "makes visible that which had no reason to be seen, [because] it lodges one world into another".[90] The campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment also used performativity to transform public space into a space where abortion-seeking women could appear in and disrupt the notion of Ireland as an abortion-free country.

My analysis will consist of a feminist engagement with the work of Rancière, as well as drawing on the work of Butler and Athanasiou to analyse the performativity of protest in relation to Repeal. Building on this framework, I will engage with Hannah Arendt's notion of the space of appearance as discussed by Butler and Athanasiou, and Chantal Mouffe's work on agonistics.

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[84] Mirzoeff, *Black Lives Matter:* 11
[85] Fleetwood, Nicole R., "The Appearance of Black Lives Matter by Nicholas Mirzoeff", *Expulsion* 14, No. 1 (2018): no page numbers given, https://hemisphericinstitute.org/en/emisferica-14-1-expulsion/14-1-book-reviews/em-the-appearance-of-black-lives-matter-em-by-nicholas-mirzoeff.html
[86] Mirzoeff, *Black Lives Matter:* 17
[87] Mirzoeff, *Black Lives Matter:* 20
[88] Mirzoeff, *Black Lives Matter:* 20
[89] Rancière, *Dissensus:* 37
[90] Mirzoeff, *Black Lives Matter:* 21

Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1: The Aesthetics of Repeal

The literature on the aesthetics of the Repeal the Eighth campaign is relatively scarce. However, Chan[91], Calkin[92], Enright,[93] and NicGhabhann[94] have all engaged with this topic. The scholarship on the aesthetics of Repeal tends to focus on aesthetics as a way of breaking the silencing of women's experience of abortion in Ireland. Calkin focuses on the 'hidden diaspora' of between 170,000-205,000 Irish women who have travelled to England for abortion since 1970.[95] According to Calkin, Ireland's near-total abortion ban was made politically sustainable for so long through a compromise: Irish women with the necessary financial resources and travel documents could legally travel abroad to access abortion.[96] She argues that artists in the pro-choice movement used public artworks in order to disrupt the invisibilities of abortion in Ireland. As I have already discussed, Calkin uses a feminist engagement with Rancière to analyse abortion art and argue that since aesthetics is inseparable from politics, political power is entangled in regimes of visibility and invisibility.[97] She states that Ireland's de facto abortion ban can be understood as a geopolitical aesthetic which attempted to establish moral and political claims about Irishness – Ireland as morally superior, and 'abortion free'.[98] She claims that "[a]bortion is a powerful political signifier in the Irish context because it sits at the centre of wider debates about national identity, religion, the family, and the exercise of political power to maintain control over these institutions".[99] She makes it clear that 'abortion-free' Ireland is a political fiction. The artworks Calkin discusses, such as the performance piece *Metronome*, centre around the offshoring of abortion and the experience of the women who are forced to travel, making these abortion seekers visible in a collective form.

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[91] Chan, Suzanna "Speaking of silence, speaking of art, abortion and Ireland", *Irish Studies Review* 7, no. 1 (2019): 73-93

[92] Calkin, Sydney, "Healthcare not airfare! Art, abortion and political agency in Ireland," *Gender, Place and Culture* 26, no. 3 (2019): 338-361

[93] Enright, Máiréad "Four Pieces on Repeal: Notes on Art, Aesthetics and the Struggle Against Ireland's Abortion Law", *Feminist Review* 124, (2020): 104-123

[94] NicGhabhann, Niamh "City walls, bathroom stalls and tweeting the Taoiseach: the aesthetics of protest and the campaign for abortion rights in the Republic of Ireland", *Continuum* 32, no. 5 (2018): 553-568

[95] Calkin, "Healthcare not airfare!": 338-361

[96] Calkin, "Healthcare not airfare": 339

[97] Calkin, "Healthcare not airfare": 341

[98] Calkin, "Healthcare not airfare":.344

[99] Calkin, "Healthcare not airfare": 345

On a different note, Máiréad Enright builds on Rancière to posit a feminist legal perspective of the aesthetics of Repeal. [100] She quotes the artist and curator Áine Phillips who states that "[w]e used art as a gavel to enact the reform of laws, a scissors to cut a hated section out of the constitution, as an antidote to and transformation of the female sufferings of the past".[101] Using Rancière's work on the politics of aesthetics, Enright situates artistic contributions to Repeal within emerging Irish feminist legal discourse. She maps out the legal consensus established around abortion in Ireland in the years before the referendum on the Eighth Amendment. Echoing Rancière, she states that abortion in Ireland was part of a "specific, exceptional and carefully guarded" police order.[102] She argues that "pro-choice demands were portrayed as undemocratic, careless, ill-considered, aggressive, and disrespectful to the popular will, which gave the law its legitimacy".[103] Enright argues that in framing abortion-seeking women as victims, the Repeal campaign often failed to establish their experiences as legitimate disruptions to the legal order.[104] However, it must be noted, that the very appearance of abortion-seeking women in public discourse, whether portrayed as victims or not, can be viewed as a form of disruption and a confrontation of the police order that Enright discusses. Like Calkin, Enright focuses on the role of art in making abortion-seekers visible and creating personal narratives of abortion in Ireland. She emphasises the role of aesthetics as a mode of transformation and as an act of dissensus – the appearance of the 'part of no part' who name a 'wrong' (their exclusion) which underpins the Amendment's police order.[105]

Unlike other scholars writing on this topic, Suzanna Chan engages with artwork from the 1990s as her main point of attention.[106] She looks at how this artwork reclaimed the female body which was appropriated by the Eighth Amendment and provided visual icons and positive images of abortion. She also focuses on the silencing of women around abortion that was challenged in arts activism, and in particular visual art.[107] Chan's reasoning for focusing on these artworks from the 1990s is that she believes they explicitly referred to abortion and women's silencing in what was a deeply intimidating social and political climate that was predominantly anti-abortion.[108] At this time, very few well-known women in Ireland had

[100] Enright, "Four Pieces on Repeal", 104-123
[101] Áine Philips quoted in Enright, "Four Pieces on Repeal": 105
[102] Enright, "Four Pieces on Repeal": 106
[103] Enright, "Four Pieces on Repeal": 106
[104] Enright, "Four Pieces on Repeal": 107
[105] Enright, "Four Pieces on Repeal"
[106] Chan, "Speaking of silence", 73-93
[107] Chan, "Speaking of silence": 73
[108] Chan, "Speaking of silence": 74

spoken publicly about their abortion and the few that had included singers Sinead O'Connor and Mary Coughlan, and activist Ruth Riddick.[109] Journalist Mary Holland, who stood alone when speaking publicly of her abortion in the 1980s, made a plea in March 1995 asking younger women to join her in writing about the issue of abortion from personal experience.[110] In comparison, the art that emerged in the lead up to the 2018 referendum did so in a climate that, while still contentious, was significantly less anti-abortion than in the 1990s. Chan also speaks of coming to voice about her own abortion through art: "[t]he pregnant body that had been beyond my reach in Ireland depicted abortion as an aesthetically pleasing act, in an image of abundance to refuse being without means of expression."[111] This personal perspective that Chan shares makes her argument extremely persuasive.

Niamh NicGhabhann is alone in her focus on aesthetics regarding Repeal that took place beyond the space of the museum or gallery.[112] She also dedicates attention to the discussion of the aesthetics of protest and 'counter-spectacular' actions by artistic groups.[113] There appears to be a gap in the literature in relation to the aesthetics of collective action, which will be the focus of my analysis. NicGhabhann argues that the actions she discusses use highly visible tactics in public spaces which create memorable images and symbols which can then be shared across digital platforms and encourage participatory action through social media.[114] These performances reflect the key characteristics of protest theory – the use of carnivalesque aesthetics, the use and subversion of 'sticky symbols', and the use of humour. She engages with Bakhtin's notion of 'carnivalesque' as "actions that oppose or temporarily invert established positions of power, usually through the use of satire, humour, festival and the transformation of shared space".[115] NicGhabhann defines 'sticky symbols' as images that are "closely associated with authority" which maintain their "institutional power even when they are appropriated for resistance".[116] She uses the example of the feminist performance group *Speaking of IMELDA* who read out an alternative Proclamation of the Irish Republic at a public demonstration. She emphasises the importance of occupying public space: "[i]n engaging in public protest, and using events such as marches or demonstrations as the contexts for action,

[109] Chan, "Speaking of silence": 75
[110] Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin*: 474
[111] Chan, "Speaking of silence": 75
[112] NicGhabhann, "City walls": 553
[113] NicGhabhann, "City walls": 553-568
[114] NicGhabhann, "City Walls": 558
[115] NicGhabhann, "City Walls": 554
[116] Smithey and Young quoted in NicGhabhann, "City Walls": 559

the groups [she mentions] focus attention on the bodies threatened by the 8th Amendment, and insist on engaging with the issue on the level of the physical and the personal".[117] NicGhabhann broadens the notion of public space to include the digital public space. Although an important factor, discussion of digital public space is beyond the scope of my analysis and I will not engage with this aspect in detail.

As I have previously mentioned, a common theme that runs throughout the literature on Repeal is either the silencing of women's experience of abortion in Ireland, or the exploration of aesthetics from a legal perspective. In an attempt to bridge the gap in the literature, my analysis will focus on the discussion of aesthetics, not only as way of breaking the silence of abortion-seeking women, but as a *disruption* of the established social order as theorised by Rancière. I will focus on the socio and political order rather than the legal consensus which other scholars engaging with Rancière in their discussion of the Irish context have tended towards. Although Chan touches on the performance group *Speaking of IMEDLA* who participated in public protest demonstrations, and Enright refers to the *Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment* procession in Limerick, NicGhabhann appears to be the only scholar to significantly engage with the aesthetics of protest, which I will focus on in my analysis. While I will explore the *Artists' Campaign* procession in my analysis, I believe it is important to also analyse the performativity of non-curated protests, which would not typically be regarded as performance art. In this way, I will broaden my discussion to include protests that have not been put together by artists. Although NicGhabhann does explore non-curated protests in her discussion, her research does not rely on the work of Rancière. She does, however, reference the work of Butler. I will attempt to explore the aesthetics of Repeal from a different angle, using both Butler and Rancière as my foundation. There is also a notable gap in the literature in relation to the aesthetics of the pro-life side of the campaign. If the pro-life side is mentioned in the existing scholarship at all, it is only briefly. I believe that it is necessary to explore the dynamics that exist between the two sides in their use of aesthetics. A failure to do this may result in scholars simply making celebratory claims around the function of aesthetics without fully interrogating the power dynamics at play. It is impossible to analyse the aesthetics of Repeal in isolation, and for this reason I will include some of the aesthetics of the pro-life campaign in my research.

[117] NicGhabhann, "City Walls": 558

2.2: Aesthetics of Protest

Several scholars have, of course, engaged with the concept of aesthetics and activism more broadly. Building on the work of those I have already discussed in my theoretical framework, numerous scholars have engaged with this topic. I will discuss some of the existing literature on the relationship between aesthetics and social movements that can be applied to the Irish context.

Aidan McGarry et. al. argue that movements are formed through the performance of politics.[118] Similarly to Butler[119], they believe that protest movements are struggles of visibility through embodiment in which protestors perform their existence through resistance, and demand recognition. They agree with Rancière that the aesthetics of protest rupture the existing political order and create new possibilities.[120] They recognise that the aesthetics of protest are crucial for minority and marginalised voices who appear invisible or whose voices are not heard.[121] McGarry et al. consider protest aesthetics to be the visual and performative elements of protest such as art, symbols, images, and graffiti, as well as bodies, gestures, clothes, and the "choreography of protest actions" in public spaces. They argue that all protest aesthetics are performative and communicative.[122] Protest aesthetics can help protestors communicate ideas, raise awareness and visibility, and can act as a resource for further mobilisation.[123]

More specifically, Holly Eva Ryan[124] and Julia Tulke[125] both engage with political street art as a mode of protest. Although their discussion is grounded in the examples of Argentina, and Athens and Istanbul respectively, it can easily be applied to the Irish context and my discussion of murals and other forms of street art. Using Argentina as an example, Ryan explores the

[118] McGarry, Aidan et.al., "Introduction: The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication". In *The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication*, eds. Aidan McGarry et. al., (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020): 15
[119] Butler, *Notes*
[120] McGarry et. al., "Introduction": 16
[121] McGarry et. al., "Introduction": 18-19
[122] McGarry et. al., "Introduction": 19-20
[123] McGarry et. al., "Introduction": 17
[124] Ryan, Holly Eva, "Political Street Art in Social Mobilization: A Tale of Two Protests in Argentina". In *The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication*, eds. Aidan McGarry et. al., (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020): 99-120
[125] Tulke, Julia, "Archiving Dissent: (Im)material Trajectories of Political Street Art in Istanbul and Athens. In *The Aesthetics of Global Protest: Visual Culture and Communication*, eds. Aidan McGarry et. al., (Amsterdam: Amsterdam University Press, 2020): 121-139

central role that street art and aesthetics have played in political transformation. She argues that street art is a mode of protest as it allows political messages or sentiments to be expressed and communicated to the government, and to the public. These messages or sentiments can be defined as political "to the extent that they illuminate, challenge, or otherwise engage within the existing constellations of power within society".[126] Using Athens and Istanbul as case studies, Tulke argues that political street art has emerged as one of the most important modes of "fostering and disseminating a shared aesthetics of resistance".[127] Both scholars understand street art to include murals, wheatpastes, graffiti, stencils and other ad hoc painted expressions found outside.[128] Ryan argues that while street art expressions are not new, they have increased across the world, and often emerge alongside popular protests and political uprisings.[129] This is interesting when applied to the Irish context as the Repeal campaign saw an increase in the use of aesthetics from previous movements, such as the *Marriage Equality* campaign which took place in 2015. Tulke claims that through performatively engaging with the material landscape of the city, creative interventions into public space can imagine alternative histories and possibilities.[130] She outlines three ways in which the political significance of street art can unfold. Firstly, regardless of intention, any work of street art intervenes into the visual configuration of the city and contests dominant understandings of what urban space should look like. This therefore questions public ownership and representational regimes. Secondly, street art can become politically significant through the messages and "strategic contextualization" by the artist. Finally, street art can circulate beyond the "embodied performance of the artist" through media and online platforms and generate alternative channels of communication.[131]

As the scholarship on the aesthetics of Repeal is rather limited, it is necessary to discuss the literature on the issue more broadly in order to achieve a more nuanced understanding. These concepts can easily be applied to the Irish context, which saw the formation of the Repeal movement through the performance of politics. This notion expands beyond the legal perspective and silencing of women's stories which the success of the Repeal movement is so often attributed to in the existing scholarship. McGarry et. al, Tulke and Ryan, all provide

[126] Ryan, "Political Street Art": 101
[127] Tulke, "Archiving Dissent": 121
[128] Ryan, "Political Street Art": 100-101
[129] Ryan, "Political Street Art": 101
[130] Tulke, "Archiving Dissent": 120-121
[131] Tulke, "Archiving Dissent": 124

useful insights to the use of aesthetics, street art, and protests which can be utilised to bridge the gap in the literature in the Irish context.

Chapter 3: Methodology

Throughout my analysis, I will work towards answering the following questions:

1. *What role did activist aesthetics play in the campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment?*
2. *To what extent did aesthetics disrupt the notion of Ireland as an abortion-free country?*

To do this, I will take a qualitative approach, and more specifically, my methodology will consist of visual, cultural, and discourse analysis. In order to analyse the relationship between aesthetics and politics in the context of Repeal, I narrowed my selection of case studies to *street* aesthetics and selected these examples based on three key themes - embodied resistance, agonism between different sides of the campaign, and emotive images. For the section on embodied resistance I chose two examples of assemblies, one curated and one non-curated, that I felt demonstrated both the performativity of protest and the space of appearance. For the section on the clash between different sides of the campaign, I chose to highlight visuals created by the pro-life side that were subverted by the pro-choice side in some way. For the section on emotive images, I selected the symbol of Savita Halappanavar to examine how her image was utilised by the campaign. I will visually analyse these items *within* their cultural context in tangent with discourse analysis. I will, of course, be engaging with these methods through a feminist lens.

Qualitative research allows me to explore a wide range of dimensions in relation to my topic. As stated by Mason, qualitative methodologies "celebrate richness, depth, nuance, context, multi-dimensionality, and complexity".[132] She argues that qualitative research has an "unrivalled capacity" to produce compelling arguments and understandings about "how things work in particular contexts".[133] As several scholars, including Gee[134] and Fairclough[135], have asserted, theory and method cannot be separated. As I have already outlined in depth, I will be borrowing from theories of aesthetics and performativity to ground my methodology.

[132] Mason, Jennifer, *Qualitative Researching: Second Edition* (London: SAGE, 2002): 1
[133] Mason, "Qualitative Researching": 1
[134] Gee, James Paul, *An Introduction to Discourse Analysis: Theory and Method* (New York: Routledge, 2014): 11
[135] Fairclough, Norman, "Critical Discourse Analysis" in *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis,* eds. James Paul Gee and Michael Hanford (London & New York: Routledge, 2012): 13

Theoretically, my research will also be informed by an intersectional framing of the issues at hand. The Eighth Amendment did not affect everyone in Ireland in the same way, and many people, such as migrant women or working-class women, faced additional barriers in accessing abortion care. It is important to recognise this.

Using discourse analysis, I will engage with the debates surrounding the aesthetics of the abortion campaign, as well as debates on aesthetics, and the performativity of protest more broadly. Discourse analysis puts emphasis on text as data sources, and I will approach this method from a poststructuralist and critical standpoint. Among poststructuralists, Michel Foucault is notable for his use of discourse analysis. Discourse, for Foucault, refers to a "group of statements which provide a language for talking about – a way of representing the knowledge about – a particular topic at a particular historical moment".[136] Discourse is about the use of language to produce knowledge. Moreover, a critical perspective examines the relationship of discourse with other social elements, such as power relations, institutions, identities, and so on. Rather than being simply descriptive, it attempts to evaluate and critically engage with discourse.[137] Discourse analysis allows me to situate my case studies within scholarly discussions of aesthetics, as well as public discourse on the Eighth Amendment.

As my research is occupied with aesthetics, visual analysis is required as a central method. Visual analysis is interested in data sources which occur or are located in the visual and spatial, rather than in words and texts.[138] A dominance of text and talk in research methods can be one-dimensional and limiting[139] and analysing visual and sensory dimensions will lead to a better understanding of the case studies I will be discussing. I will employ Mieke Bal's understanding of visual analysis as a form of cultural analysis and a method for examining 'visual culture'.[140] This allows me to interpret these sources in the context of "how they are produced, used, what meanings they have, what they are seen to be or to represent culturally speaking".[141]

Discourse, culture, and visuality are inextricably linked, and visual culture cannot be isolated from other aspects of culture.[142] Cultural analysis involves applying forms of textual analysis

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[136] Hall, Stuart, "The Work of Representation", in *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices,* ed. Stuart Hall (London: SAGE, 1997): 29
[137] Fairclough, "Critical Discourse Analysis": 9
[138] Mason, "Qualitative Researching": 104
[139] Mason, "Qualitative Researching": 104
[140] Bal, Mieke, "Visual Analysis", in eds. Tony Bennet and John Frow, *The SAGE Handbook of Cultural Analysis,* (Thousand Oaks, SAGE, 2008): 167
[141] Mason, "Qualitative Researching": 108
[142] Bal, "Visual analysis"

to visual texts[143] and investigating forms and practices of culture, their relationship to social groups, and "the power relations between those groups as they are constructed and mediated by forms of culture".[144] It is important not only to analyse these examples as stand-alone pieces, but to ground them both within their broader context, and scholarly debates on aesthetics. For example, as noted by Bal, it is crucial to analyse "not just the graffito but the wall on which it was painted".[145] Street art is never merely a static representation of its given sociological context[146], and needs to be situated in its potential to disrupt the established social order.

Feminist research practices understand knowledge as partial, and I will employ Donna Haraway's notion of "situated knowledges" in this regard. [147] The lived experience and values of the researcher cannot be separated from the knowledge being produced, and in this way the denial of biases and values is not only unrealistic, but undesirable in feminist research.[148] It is crucial to acknowledge my position as a pro-choice Irish woman who was active during the campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment. My experience is coloured by living in an Ireland where abortion was not legally accessible and living through this social movement as it was occurring. As Alison Jagger and other feminists have recognised, emotion is a critical aspect of knowledge seeking and must be understood as such. According to Jagger, it is unrealistic to assume that emotions will not affect research, especially as emotion often motivates a researcher's selection of topics, questions, and methods.[149] I know it has certainly motivated my choices.

In summary, a combination of discourse analysis and visual and cultural analysis will provide a well-rounded understanding of the case studies I will be discussing, and allow me to explore the extent to which the aesthetics I have chosen to analyse had the potential to disrupt the established social order.

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[143] Davis, Aeron, "Investigating Cultural Producers", in ed. Michael Pickering, *Research Methods for Cultural Studies* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2008): 56
[144] Van Leeuwen, Theo, and Carey Jewitt, "Introduction", in eds. Theo Van Leeuwen and Carey Jewitt, *Handbook of Visual Analysis* (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2000): 61
[145] Bal, Mieke, "Introduction" in eds. Mieke Bal and Bryan Gonzales, *The Practice of Cultural Analysis: Exposing Interdisciplinary Interpretation* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2008): 9
[146] Tulke, "Archiving Dissent": 124
[147] Haraway, Donna, "Situated Knowledges: The Science Question in Feminism and the Privilege of Partial Perspective", *Feminist Studies* 14, No. 3 (1988): 575-599
[148] Hesse-Biber, Sharlene Nagy, "A Re-Invitation to Feminist Research", in *Feminist Research Practice: A Primer,* ed. Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber (Thousand Oaks: SAGE, 2014): 4
[149] Hesse-Biber, "Feminist Research": 4

Chapter 4: "Whose Streets? Our Streets!": a visual exploration of the abortion debate in Ireland

In the following chapter, I will engage with case studies to outline the role that art and aesthetics played in the campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment and the relationship between aesthetics and the movement. The main tenet of my argument is that the aesthetics utilised by the campaign successfully *disrupted* the established social order which saw abortion as legally and morally wrong and Ireland as an abortion-free country. My argument is threefold. First, using Judith Butler's notion of the performativity of protest, I will explore the ways in which embodied protests succeeded in breaking open the space of appearance, which in turn ruptured the political fiction of Ireland as an abortion-free country. Secondly, I will refer to Chantal Mouffe's work on agonistics to discuss the competing sides of the debate and analyse how both sides inform one another. I will look at how this clash can reveal itself through aesthetics. Finally, using Rancière's notion of dissensus, I will argue that by engaging with the issue of abortion on a physical and personal level, and by shifting the focus onto the bodies threatened by the Eighth Amendment, the aesthetics used by the campaign revealed what was left unseen within the established social order. This, thus, created a rupture in this social order. Moreover, I will engage with Butler and Athanasiou's notion of dispossession in relation to the death of Savita Halappanavar and how her death became a catalyst to the movement.

4.1: Protest as a performative act and the space of appearance

Protest assemblies played a huge role in the campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment. Various embodied protests took place in the years leading up to the referendum, first to demand that the government call a referendum on abortion, and then to campaign for a 'Yes' vote in this referendum. The *March for Choice* took place annually, attracting thousands of supporters every year since 2012.[150] However, in this section, I will focus on two stand-alone forms of embodied action that I believe exemplify protest as a performative act and which succeeded in disrupting the space of appearance.

[150] McGreevy, Ronan, and Ciarán D'Arcy, "Thousands attend Dublin abortion rights protest", *The Irish Times,* 30 September 2017, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/thousands-attend-dublin-abortion-rights-protest-1.3239832

Strike4Repeal was a nationwide protest that took place on International Women's Day in 2017 to demand the government call a referendum on abortion, claiming that people's lives and health were in danger. The protest was organised by an ad-hoc non-affiliated group of activists, artists, academics, and trade unionists.[151] This group borrowed from other non-traditional strike actions for human rights across the world, including the strike in Poland in 2016 which was successful in defeating a ban on abortion.[152] Despite the name "strike", the protest in Ireland was not a form of industrial action but rather a "social strike", with participants encouraged to take the day off work, or wear black in solidarity if they were unable to do so.[153] The group also called for women to withdraw their domestic labour to highlight the contribution they made every day to a country where they do not have access to basic healthcare.[154] Thousands of people took to the streets all across the country[155] dressed in black, some holding lightning bolts as a symbol of solidarity, with others bearing banners or handmade placards. Although by no means the first protest on this issue, the strike was deliberately intended to cause disruption on a midweek afternoon.[156] In Dublin, the protesters blocked O'Connell Bridge, the

Figure 1: Strike4Repeal in Dublin

[151] "Strike4Repeal", official webpage, http://strike4repeal.org/
[152] "Strike4Repeal", official webpage, http://strike4repeal.org/
[153] Forster, Katie, "Irish women go on strike over the abortion ban", *Independent,* 8 March 2017, https://www.independent.co.uk/news/world/europe/irish-women-abortion-ban-strike-international-day-2017-republic-ireland-consitutional-amendment-a7617461.html
[154] "Strike4Repeal", official webpage, http://strike4repeal.org/
[155] Duffy, Rónan, "Stike4Repeal: Ireland's pro-choice marchers made international headlines", *The Journal,* 9 March 2017, https://www.thejournal.ie/strike-for-repeal-international-coverage-3278669-Mar2017/
[156] Duffy, "Stike4Repeal: Ireland's pro-choice marchers made international headlines", *The Journal*

main thoroughfare in Dublin city, disrupting traffic and preventing pedestrians from passing. Demonstrators banged pots and pans, sang along to popular songs such as Cyndi Lauper's 'Girls Just Wanna Have Fun'[157], and shouted chants such as "Whose Streets? Our Streets!"[158] Walkouts and demonstrations happened in universities across the country, and smaller protests took place in other counties in Ireland. Small groups of Irish protestors also gathered in London and Oxford. The *Strike4Repeal* is an example of Butler's performativity of protest - the occupation of public spaces, the parking of one's body in the middle of another's action, and an embodied form of resistance and demand.[159] The *Strike4Repeal* was not only a demand for a referendum, but an embodied demand to be recognised. Through exercising a right to appear the protestors made a demand for a liveable life.[160] In shutting down O'Connell bridge through this specific bodily appearance, the protestors laid claim to that public space. As stated by Butler, the focus becomes "this body, or these bodies or bodies like this body or these bodies, that live the condition of imperiled livelihood" because of the Eighth Amendment.[161] This allows the space of appearance to break open in new ways, questioning the very public character of this space as well as the existing forms of political legitimacy.[162] Through this appearance in public space, these gatherings disrupt the notion of Ireland as an abortion-free country by presenting the lived reality of those who must and do seek abortion outside of the state. As stated by Butler:

> *"There can be no entry into the sphere of appearance without a critique of the differential forms of power by which that sphere is constituted, and without a critical alliance formed among the discounted, the ineligible—the precarious—to establish new forms of appearance that seek to overcome that differential form of power".*[163]

[157] Fox, Kara, "#Strike4Repeal: Ireland protests abortion ban on International Women's Day", *CNN*, 9 March 2017, https://edition.cnn.com/2017/03/08/health/ireland-abortion-strike-womens-day/index.html
[158] Edwards, Elaine and Rachel Flaherty, "Thousands march against Eighth Amendment in Dublin", *The Irish Times,* 8 March 2017, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/politics/thousands-march-against-eighth-amendment-in-dublin-1.3002375
[159] Butler, *Notes*: 9
[160] Butler, *Notes:* 26
[161] Butler, *Notes*: 10
[162] Butler, *Notes*: 70 and Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 194
[163] Butler, *Notes*: 50-51

As part of the strike, lightning bolts were placed on high-profile monuments and statues, as well as spray-painted on the city streets. These proved to be durable and remained visible on the streets of Dublin for months after the march finished. They succeeded in inscribing the issue into the everyday negotiation of public space - literally painting the issue of abortion onto the streets of Dublin.[164] NicGhabhann argues that the use of these lightning bolts succeeded in intervening in public space in a "low profile yet continuous way" by occupying 'edge space'.[165] Kim Knott has explored the significance of 'edge spaces' as locations that "gather people and things together" by opening up the possibility of unexpected interactions through their unremarkable quality. [166]

Another group that requalified the space of appearance is the *Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment,* who marched through the streets of Limerick in support of Repeal as part of EVA International's biennial. The *Artists' Campaign* was set up in 2015 and began as an online campaign appealing to fellow artists, musicians, actors, and writers to sign a statement calling for the repeal of the Eighth Amendment and they continued to create badges and artworks centring on abortion in the lead-up to the referendum.[167] The group presented an exhibition as part of the biennial in Limerick, and kicked off the exhibition with a procession through the streets. The procession consisted of colourful banners created by the artists, dance performances, singing, and other artistic creations such as tall figures draped in black designed by Áine Phillips. The artists employed a range of imagery for their banners. These included popular images used by feminist activists such as vulvas or banners with headings such as "respect my decision". One evocative banner contained the image of a woman's naked body being stretched between figures of the church and the state to depict how women's bodies are controlled by these two powers in Ireland. Another banner portrayed Ann Lovett[168], a 15-year old Irish schoolgirl who died in 1984 while giving birth alone in a grotto. Her death took place just four months after the Eighth Amendment was enshrined into the Irish constitution and led to a national debate at the time on the treatment of pregnant women in Irish society. Six aprons were designed by Rachel Fallon which displayed military mottos on the inside. Speaking on the choice of images, Alice Maher, one of the artists involved stated: "we're very aware of the

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[164] NicGhabhann, "City walls": 562
[165] NicGhabhann, "City walls": 563
[166] Kim Knott cited in NicGhabhann, "City Walls": 563
[167] EVA website, https://www.eva.ie/artist/artists-campaign-to-repeal-the-eighth-amendment/
[168] http://papervisualart.com/2018/05/24/i-wish-ann-lovett-were-out-buying-a-swimsuit-for-lanzarote/

power of imagery […] When you reclaim imagery, you take the power back".[169] At this point in the campaign the debate was becoming increasingly divisive, with emotive imagery being used on both sides of the campaign. The vibrant nature of the banners attempted to create a more positive atmosphere as the procession moved through the streets, and exemplified the

Figure 2: Aprons designed by Rachel Fallon for the Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment procession in Limerick

transformative potential of aesthetics, as discussed by scholars such as Rancière and Mouffe. Corcoran describes Rancière's understanding of the transformative and creative power of art as "key to altering the realm of the possible".[170] Mouffe, too, discusses art's "great power", which lies in its "capacity to make us see things in a different way, to make us perceive new possibilities".[171] It is important to acknowledge the use of these banners in providing a positive atmosphere around the notion of abortion. With the visuals of the pro-life side dominated by images of foetuses, positive images of abortion are often hard to imagine.[172] As discussed by Shubert:

[169] Saner, Emine, "The hateful Eighth: artists at the frontline of Ireland's abortion rights battle", *The Guardian,* 12 April 2018, Available at: https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/apr/12/the-hateful-eighth-artists-frontline-ireland-abortion-rights-battle-eighth-amendment
[170] Rancière, *Dissensus*: 14
[171] Mouffe, *Agonistics:* 97
[172] Petchesky, Rosalind Pollack, "Fetal Images: The Power of Visual Culture in the Politics of Reproduction", *Feminist Studies* 13, No. 2 (1987): 264

"I think the winning arguments for our side are complex and nuanced, like the lives of women seeking abortions. It's harder to turn them into slogans and chants. We need to find messages that inspire our supporters to the same kind of righteous indignation [as the anti-abortion supporters exhibit]… and that resonate with, not alienate, all the women who have abortions each year".[173]

Fallon explained that it was important that the banners be positive, "[a]s a counterbalance to the at times horrific photos the anti-choice side like to show [we] try to create a visual culture that is more hopeful".[174] This reflects Butler's discussion of performativity as a source of hope.[175] The *Artists'* procession was not merely a way to name a wrong, but a positive affirmation that things could change for the women of Ireland. It involved a transformation of space from one of negativity to one of potential.

Notably, the procession started at the site of the *Limerick School of Art and Design*, formerly a Magdalene laundry. Magdalene Laundries were institutions run by the Catholic church where Ireland's sexually transgressive or "fallen" women were sent. Many of these women were pregnant outside of marriage and were forced to give their babies up for adoption. As historian Diarmaid Ferriter has noted, these women were confined by the "collusion of state, society and religious orders in seeking to remove from public circulation perceived threats to a conservative moral order".[176] Taoiseach Enda Kenny called the institutions a "dark chapter of Ireland's history" when he issued a formal state apology in 2013.[177] It is easy to draw parallels to the treatment of the women in these laundries and to the treatment of abortion-seeking women who were 'sent away' to access abortion, or risk imprisonment if they carried out their abortions illegally within the state. During a speech at the start of the procession, *Artists' Campaign* stated that they were honouring the memory of those institutionalised women, and reclaiming the streets of Limerick from that "dark and judgemental past".[178] According to Enright, the

[173] Shubert cited in Ludlow, Jeannie, "Love and Goodness: Toward a New Abortion Politics", *Feminist Studies* 38, No. 2 (2012): 476
[174] Saner, "The hateful Eighth: artists at the frontline of Ireland's abortion rights battle", *The Guardian*
[175] Butler, *Notes:* 1
[176] Ferriter, *Occasions of Sin*: 16
[177] The Journal, "In full: Enda Kenny's State apology to the Magdalene women", *The Journal,* 19 February 2013, https://www.thejournal.ie/full-text-enda-kenny-magdalene-apology-801132-Feb2013/
[178] Artists Repeal the 8th, "Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment's Repeal! Procession #EVA2018", *Vimeo Video,* 04.15, Available at: https://vimeo.com/269493291

Artists' Campaign procession mirrored the religious parades that Magdalene women were forced to participate in as their only permitted appearance in public. She argues that these parades were repurposed to intervene into the police order created by the Eighth Amendment, and directly associated Ireland's abortion restrictions with the incarceration and shaming of Magdalene women.[179] This relates to Della Porta and Diani's discussion of the reproduction of the repertoires of social movements over time. This choice of tactic "symbolically expresses proximity to previous movements"[180] and legitimises protest as it "evokes past political movements whose struggles have long since been vindicated as just".[181] Another example of this mirroring was the "Abortion Pill Bus" organised by socialist feminist and pro-choice activist group *ROSA,* which travelled around Ireland offering consultations and carrying illegal abortion pills.[182] This mirrored the 'Contraception Train' of the *Irish Women's Liberation* movement in 1971 which travelled to Belfast and returned to Dublin with contraceptives which were illegal in the Republic of Ireland at the time. Linking abortion-seeking women to the women institutionalised in the Magdalene laundries, as the *Artists' Campaign* did in their procession, asserts that "a group of people is still existing, taking up space and obdurately living", which in line with Butler's assertion, is already an expressive action and politically significant event in itself.[183] The procession requalified the streets of Limerick as a space where those previously hidden, both Magdalene women and abortion-seeking women, can demand to be seen.

In this way, through requalifying the space they were inhabiting, both the *Strike4Repeal* and the *Artists' Campaign* procession functioned as performative protests. Through their appearance on the streets, they transformed the space to one of possibility for women's agency and disrupted the political fiction of Ireland as abortion-free and morally superior.

4.2: Agonistic Aesthetics

Both sides of the campaign, the pro-choice/'Yes' and the pro-life/'No' side engaged in public demonstrations and employed aesthetic tactics. In the lead up to the referendum, the issue of

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179 Enright, "Four Pieces on Repeal": 109

180 Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements*: 182

181 Rochon cited in Della Porta and Diani, *Social Movements*: 182

182 ROSA Website, http://rosa.ie/greet-the-abortion-pill-bus/

183 Butler, *Notes*: 18

abortion became increasingly contentious. With many people still undecided about which way to vote, both sides were criticised for employing divisive tactics. Kitty Holland, a well-known journalist who advocated for the removal of the Eighth Amendment having had two abortions herself, declared that the abortion rights movement had been "hijacked by the middle class".[184] According to her, there was a "gaping hole" of marginalised voices included in the debate.[185] Others argued that the pro-choice side were intolerant of differing opinions, with Paul Cullen stating that the voices on either end of the spectrum were "deeply attached to absolutist views on the subject".[186] Larissa Nolan, who leaned more towards the pro-life side, called on the Repeal campaign to begin "listening to dissenting voices" and stop "trying to force what they think on people".[187] However, the pro-life side were also criticised for utilising emotive images of foetuses which were attached to lampposts, buses, and as street advertisements. In one case graphic placards of disembodied foetuses were displayed outside maternity hospitals in Dublin.[188] According to Calkin, graphic images of foetuses are essential to the anti-choice movement as they "mobilize visceral disgust at the abortion procedure and a sense of protection over the fetus[sic], whose personhood has been socially imagined through advances in photographic technology and the political uses of these images**".**[189]

However, conflict is difficult to avoid in these sort of debates. As I have already noted, Mouffe argues for the impossibility of eradicating antagonism in politics.[190] There can never be a construction of an 'us' that does not have a corresponding 'them'.[191] In this case, the pro-choice/pro-life divide is clearly an example of this Us/Them relationship and an example of opposing hegemonic projects which can never be reconciled rationally.[192] In Mouffe's agonistic model, this antagonistic dimension is always present - one side always needs to be defeated.[193] As Mouffe remarks, it is a real confrontation, but one that is played out under

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184 Holland, Kitty, "Abortion movement has been hijacked by the middle class", *The Irish Times,* 1 May 2017, https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/abortion-movement-has-been-hijacked-by-the-middle-class-1.3066835
185 Holland, "Abortion movement has been hijacked by the middle class", *The Irish Times*
186 Cullen, Paul, "Has the intolerance of the 1980s pro-life brigade been transplanted to the Repeal debate?", *The Irish Times,* 1 November 2016, https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/abortion-movement-has-been-hijacked-by-the-middle-class-1.3066835
187 Nolan, Larissa, "Why the Repeal the Eighth march will backfire", *The Irish Times,* 8 March 2017, https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/why-the-repeal-the-eighth-march-will-backfire-1.3001535
188 Murray, Sean, "The 11 standout moments of the Eighth Referendum campaign", *The Journal,* 27 May 2018, https://www.thejournal.ie/eighth-referendum-campaign-4036731-May2018/
189 Calkin, "Healthcare not airfare": 348
190 Mouffe, *Politics and Passions*: 3
191 Mouffe, *Agonistics*: 6
192 Mouffe, *Agonistics*: 9
193 Mouffe, *Politics and Passions*: 10

conditions regulated by a set of democratic procedures accepted by the adversaries”[194]. The democratic procedure in this case is, of course, a referendum. Passions ultimately drive both sides of the abortion debate, who associate their position with a moral grounding. Mouffe believes that a well-functioning democracy requires “vibrant clashes” of political positions. Rancière, too, refers to a clash in heterogeneous elements as being central to politics. Dissensus works to introduce new subjects and heterogeneous objects into the field of perception.[195] Both sides of the debate inform one another and cannot exist without the other.

The pro-life side of the campaign employed similar aesthetic tactics in their attempt to win the referendum. They too utilised large protest assemblies, protest signs and banners, campaign signs, and various other aesthetics. In addition to the use of foetal images which I have already discussed, they also presented images of babies as well as smiling mothers holding new-borns. However, as the focus of my analysis rests on the pro-choice side, I have chosen to highlight aesthetics created by the pro-life side that specifically demonstrate this clash and agonism. During the lead up to the referendum, aesthetics on both sides of the campaign, such as stickers or campaign posters, were defaced or removed by the other side. A week before the referendum, a large ‘No’ sign was erected on the side of Ben Bulben mountain by the group *Sligo for Life*, fearing their argument was “not being heard”.[196] Ben Bulben is one of Ireland’s most distinctive mountains and is a protected site, designated as a County Geological Site by Sligo County Council.[197] The sign was 100 metres tall and made of cladding. Tommy Banks, one of the volunteers who erected the sign,

Figure 3: 'No' sign on Ben Bulben mountain

[194] Mouffe, *Agonistic:* 9
[195] Rancière, *Dissensus*: 2
[196] Farrell, Rachel, “Giant ‘No’ sign on iconic Ben Bulben mountain removed”, *Irish Independent,* 18 May 2018, https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/abortion-referendum/giant-no-sign-on-iconic-ben-bulben-mountain-removed-36920146.html
[197] Sligo County Council website, https://www.sligococo.ie/planning/Heritage/NaturalHeritage/

said there were about twenty people involved in what he called a "mammoth task".[198] He claimed that the group had permission from all the landowners and had been helped by "men of all ages, and women as well, down making tea and sandwiches".[199] The sign prompted several people on social media to create mock images to propose humorous alternative message for the mountain. For example, 'Yes' advocate Darren Purcell transformed the image of the slogan to read "No advice from me I'm a mountain". Another was transformed to read "Carefull [sic] now", in reference to popular Irish sitcom *Father Ted* which follows the lives of priests living in Ireland. [200] In this way, the 'Yes' side attempted to subvert the 'No' sign to reflect what they perceived as outdated beliefs. Sligo County Council received numerous complaints and the sign was taken down overnight by the group who had erected it. The *National Parks and Wildlife Service* called for its removal, stating "the insinuation of alien materials such as this onto a special area of conservation is insensitive to its conservation status and incompatible with the habitat".[201] Councillor Marie Casserly said she was satisfied that the sign had been taken down. She stated "[I]t's such a sensitive matter and people feel strongly about it from both sides. Ben Bulben wasn't the place to make a protest".[202] The sign received negative reactions from the public, with one local priest saying that there was "no need for it".[203] However, Banks explained that it had been "a cry from the mountains to save Ireland's babies because no one is listening".[204] Another large 'No' sign was constructed on the Dublin Mountains and removed overnight, this time at the request of the farmer who owned the land as he had received several phone calls about it.[205] The sign was made of plastic white polythene and cost "a couple of thousands".[206]

Another aesthetic utilised by the pro-life side were 17,000 white crosses that were placed along a 25 kilometre stretch of road in Letterkenny in Donegal, used to symbolise the number of

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[198] Ruxton, Dean, and Marese McDonagh, "Giant 'No' sign removed from Ben Bulben as Twitterati pay their respects", *The Irish Times,* 18 May 2018, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/ireland/irish-news/giant-no-sign-removed-from-ben-bulben-as-twitterati-pay-their-respects-1.3500078
[199] Ruxton and McDonagh, "Giant 'No' sign removed from Ben Bulben as Twitterati pay their respects", *The Irish Times*
[200] Ruxton and McDonagh, "Giant 'No' sign removed from Ben Bulben as Twitterati pay their respects", *The Irish Times,* 18 May 2018
[201] Murray, "The 11 standout moments of the Eighth Referendum Campaign", *The Journal*
[202] Farrell, "Giant 'No' sign on iconic Ben Bulben mountain removed", *Irish Independent*
[203] Farrell, "Giant 'No' sign on iconic Ben Bulben mountain removed", *Irish Independent*
[204] Farrell, "Giant 'No' sign on iconic Ben Bulben mountain removed", *Irish Independent*
[205] Ní Aodha, Gráinne, "Giant 'No' sign removed from Dublin Mountains says pro-life group", *The Journal*, 23 May 2018, Available at: https://www.thejournal.ie/giant-no-sign-removed-dublin-mountain-4029218-May2018/
[206] Ní Aodha, "Giant 'No' sign removed from Dublin Mountains says pro-life group", *The Journal*

abortions that the group believed would take place annually if the Eighth Amendment was repealed.[207] This aesthetic was also engaged with by the 'Yes' side. There were reports of passers-by getting out of their cars to remove some of the crosses, and several were removed on the roundabout by *Donegal County Council* due to road safety issues.[208] Pro-choice campaigner Taryn de Vere wrote 'Savita'[209] on one of the crosses and published the image on social media, as well as names of other high-profile women. She said that other women who had been affected by the Eighth Amendment got in touch with her and asked that their names be included as well.[210] A spokesperson for *Donegal Together for Yes* declared that with this tactic the 'No' side were "absolutely brushing over the pain and the suffering of the women and families of Donegal by doing something like this".[211] According to Rancière, a clash of heterogeneous elements should provoke a break in our perception and reveal what is hidden behind everyday reality.[212] In writing these names on the crosses, the focus is shifted from the "foetus" to the "mother", and to the violence and suffering associated with the Eighth Amendment. Aesthetics used by the pro-life side, such as images of disembodied foetuses, tend to eliminate the pregnant person from the debate completely. It is crucial that the woman is re-centred into the narrative of abortion.

It was not just through the removal of aesthetics on the pro-life side that this clash can be seen, as aesthetics on the pro-choice side were also engaged with by the 'No' side in this way. A large "Repeal the 8th" mural, designed by artist Maser, was painted on the front of the *Project Arts Centre* in Dublin. It was deemed illegal on two occasions and had to be removed – once

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[207] Ní Aodha, Gráinne, "Families of those who died in road accidents 'upset' at placing of white crosses in Donegal", *The Journal,* 19 May 2018, Available at: https://www.thejournal.ie/white-crosses-donegal-4022801-May2018/

[208] Ní Aodha, "Families of those who died in road accidents 'upset' at placing of white crosses in Donegal", *The Journal*

[209] *Savita Halappanavar died after being refused a termination following an incomplete miscarriage*

[210] Ní Aodha, "Families of those who died in road accidents 'upset' at placing of white crosses in Donegal", *The Journal*

[211] Maguire, Stephen, "Thousands of white crosses placed along Donegal to Derry Road in anti-abortion protest", *Irish Examiner,* 18 May 2018, https://www.irishexaminer.com/news/arid-30843757.html

[212] Rancière, "Contemporary Art and the Politics of Aesthetics": 41

Figure 4: Maser's Repeal Mural

Figure 5: Site of resistance

in 2016 and again in 2018. The first time, it was removed due to a lack of planning permission[213], however it returned to side of the building in 2018 due to a loophole in the planning laws.[214] This time, it was deemed illegal by the *Charities Regulator* as it was a "political advertisement" by *Project Arts Centre*, who receive state funding.[215] Cian O'Brien, Artistic Director of *Project*, publicly painted over the mural himself. Crowds of protestors and media gathered at the scene, with some holding placards which read, "you can't paint over a movement".[216] Through its removal, the mural became a site of resistance and its covering up was seen as a visual metaphor for the state's historic silencing of abortion and women. This public act of demonstration was ultimately more successful in generating discussion about the campaign, and as O'Hara has argued, the painting over the mural was a purely symbolic act.[217] The 'Yes' side used this agonism to their advantage during the campaign and the examples I have provided above demonstrate the "vibrant clashes" in democracy that Mouffe speaks about.[218]

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[213] Linehan, Hugh, "How Maser's Repeal the 8th mural achieved its objective through being erased", *The Irish Times,* 26 July 2016, Available at: https://www.irishtimes.com/opinion/how-maser-s-repeal-the-8th-mural-achieved-its-objective-through-being-erased-1.2734935

[214] Ryan, Nicky, "'You can't paint over a movement': Repeal mural removed from Temple Bar (again)", *The Journal,* 23 April 2018, Available at: https://www.thejournal.ie/repeal-mural-temple-bar-2-3973134-Apr2018/

[215] RTÉ News, 'Repeal mural removed at request of Charities Regulator', *RTÉ,* 23 April 2018, Available at: https://www.rte.ie/news/eighth-amendment/2018/0423/956564-mural/

[216] Ryan, "You can't paint over a movement"

[217] O'Hara, Lorna, "Maser's 'Repeal the 8th' mural': street art, abortion access and the battle over public space in Ireland", *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography,* 19 March 2018, Available at: https://genderplaceandculture.wordpress.com/2018/03/19/post-5-of-gpc25-masers-repeal-the-8th-mural-street-art-abortion-access-and-the-battle-over-public-space-in-ireland-by-lorna-ohara/

[218] Mouffe, *Politics and Passions*, 11

4.3: Dissenting Images

One of the images that was utilised by the Repeal side of the campaign was that of Savita Halappanavar. Savita Halappanavar was a young Indian woman who died at University Hospital Galway in 2012 after she was refused a termination of her pregnancy due to the presence of a foetal heartbeat following an incomplete miscarriage. She and her husband were informed by hospital staff that they could not get a termination "because Ireland is a Catholic country".[219] She died in hospital following a septic miscarriage one week after she presented at hospital. Savita's death can be understood through Butler and Athanasiou's notion of dispossession. The church and state succeeded in depriving Irish women of agency. Although in 2012 the Eighth Amendment allowed for a termination of pregnancy where there was an *immediate* risk to the life of the mother, doctors, fearing a fourteen-year prison sentence often waited as long as possible before terminating. Professor Sabaratnam Arulkumaran, the doctor who led the inquiry into Savita's death, explained that the doctors treating her had their "hands tied"[220] and feared "if they did a termination they might be accused of performing an illegal act by not complying with the Eighth Amendment".[221] He stated that the Eighth Amendment was a "material risk to the woman" and that in another country without such a restriction, doctors "would have terminated the pregnancy two or three days earlier."[222] As Butler has affirmed, dispossession establishes us as relational and interdependent beings. We are dependent on the forces which hold power over our survival as human beings.[223] In this case, Savita's survival depended on the Eighth Amendment, which ultimately failed her. The official report on her death found that there was "an overemphasis by hospital staff on her unviable foetus and an underemphasis on her deteriorating health".[224]

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[219] Cullen, Paul and Kitty Holland, "Midwife manager 'regrets' using 'Catholic country' remark to Savita Halappanavar", *The Irish Times*, 10 April 2013, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/health/midwife-manager-regrets-using-catholic-country-remark-to-savita-halappanavar-1.1355895

[220] Murray, Shona, "Doctor in Savita case says that 'hands were tied' by the Eighth", *Irish Independent,* 23 May 2018, Available at: https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/abortion-referendum/doctor-in-savita-case-says-that-hands-were-tied-by-the-eighth-36936888.html

[221] Ní Aodha, Gráinne, "Doctor who led inquiry into Savita Halappanavar's death calls for Yes vote 'for women's health and rights'", *The Journal,* 22 May 2018, https://www.thejournal.ie/doctors-savita-halappanavar-4027207-May2018/

[222] Ní Aodha, "Doctor who led inquiry into Savita Halappanavar's death calls for Yes vote 'for women's health and rights'", *The Journal*

[223] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 4

[224] Lentin, Ronit, "A woman died: abortion and the politics of birth in Ireland", *Feminist Review* 105 (2013): 134

According to Athanasiou, dispossession relies on the notion that something has been deprived of us that rightfully belongs to us.[225] Savita's death is often considered the turning point for the Repeal campaign and became the "rallying cry" for a change in Ireland's abortion laws.[226] The demand for the right to safe and legal access to abortion care intensified. Immediately following her death, thousands gathered outside the Irish parliament, and marches and vigils were organised across the country.[227] Protestors lit candles and held photographs of Savita with the words "Never again".[228] Savita was not the first tragic case arising from the Eighth Amendment to cause public outrage. Several high-profile cases demonstrated the impact of the Eighth Amendment on women's lives. The 'X Case' referred to a 14-year-old girl, pregnant as a result of rape, who was prevented from leaving Ireland to obtain an abortion in England. As 'X' was suicidal, the Supreme Court ruled that her life was in danger and she was entitled to an abortion in Ireland. Speaking of the 'X Case', activist Ailbhe Smyth wrote at the time that "[w]omen in Ireland are living in a police state ... the reproductive activities of women in Ireland are being subjected to a process of 'regulation, discipline and control' carried out by the police in accordance with state policy and laws".[229] This 'police order', as Rancière[230] would refer to it, remained in place at the time of Savita's death. As argued by Lentin, Savita might not have died if the Irish government had legislated after the Supreme Court ruling following the 'X Case'.[231] The death of Savita Halappanavar sparked a new momentum: "[i]t was her death, as much as pressure from Europe, that brought home to the Irish government the urgency of legislating for abortion in Ireland, twenty-one years after the X Case".[232] One tactic on the pro-choice side was to highlight individual cases or people who were affected by the Eighth Amendment, and in the marches and protests that followed over the coming years, Savita's image remained present. In this way, protestors linked the lives lost under the Eighth Amendment, with "*this* body"[emphasis in original] that they brought to the protest space.[233] Butler and Athanasiou discuss several examples of how the death of an individual acts as the

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[225] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 6

[226] O'Carroll, Sinead, "Savita Halappanavar: Her tragic death and how she became a part of Ireland's abortion debate", *The Journal,* 29 April 2018, https://www.thejournal.ie/eighth-amendment-4-3977441-Apr2018/

[227] Specia, Megan, "How Savita Halappanavar's Death Spurred Ireland's Abortion Rights Campaign", *The New York Times,* 27 May 2018, https://www.nytimes.com/2018/05/27/world/europe/savita-halappanavar-ireland-abortion.html

[228] O'Carroll, "Savita Halappanavar"

[229] Smyth quoted in Lentin, "A woman died": 132

[230] Rancière, *Dissensus*

[231] Lentin, "A woman died": 132

[232] Lentin, "A woman died": 132

[233] NicGhabhann, "City walls": 558

catalyst for collective resistance and fights that occur "overwhelmingly through bodily actions".[234] The death of Savita Halappanavar can be viewed as another such example. Tulke, too, discusses the martyrdom associated with the Gezi uprising in Turkey. Berkin Elvan who was killed by a tear gas canister while he was out buying bread became one of the most recognisable icons of the movement. Like Savita, his name and image were painted on banners and walls in Turkey.[235] Butler and Athanasiou argue that several corporeal forms of street politics have emerged from an exposure to and a resistance against "pervasive forms of socially assigned disposability".[236] Savita's body was deemed as disposable under the Eighth Amendment, and many others remain uncounted or unacknowledged. Collective resistance is, for Butler, a refusal to become disposable.[237] The Repeal campaign used her image to claim "never again" and she became the symbol of the campaign.

In 2018, on the day before the referendum, artist ACHES painted a mural of Savita outside the Bernard Shaw pub in Dublin city. The mural consisted of a portrait of Savita with the word 'Yes' layered on top. The mural became a space of remembrance following the vote. People gathered, embraced, and left flowers, tributes and notes. Speaking of the attention the mural received, ACHES stated "I've been painting a long time and I've never seen anything like that before".[238] One note on the mural read "It's the biggest shame that your death galvanised repeal of our 8th amendment that failed you. I'm so sorry Savita."[239], and another, "For Savita, you made us fight. Never again".[240] ACHES' mural of Savita can be viewed, not only as an intervention into public space, but a disruption of the established social order. The image of the violence associated with the Eighth Amendment created a rupture in the social order. It makes visible what was left unseen within the police order – the women's bodies threatened by the Eighth Amendment. This is, therefore, an example of dissensus.[241] As discussed by Enright, the mural centred a woman and her mourners as the proper authors of legal change. She argues that despite the fact that they themselves are not the artists of the piece, the women

[234] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 145
[235] Tulke, "Archiving Dissent": 126
[236] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 145
[237] Butler and Athanasiou, *Dispossession*: 197
[238] Ní Aodha, Gráinne, "Savita mural artist: 'I've been painting a long time, I've never seen a reaction like that before'", *The Journal,* 31 May 2018, https://www.thejournal.ie/savita-mural-artist-4044389-May2018/
[239] Holland, Kitty, "Flowers, notes and messages placed at mural of Savita in Dublin", *The Irish Times,* 26 May 2018, Available at: https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/flowers-notes-and-messages-placed-at-mural-of-savita-in-dublin-1.3509950
[240] Ní Aodha, "Savita mural artist"
[241] Rancière, *Dissensus:* 38

who intervened in the space between ACHES' mural and the political events of the voting day are the 'part of no part'. "Spectatorship is not a passive state, and their notes and tributes are acts of interpretation and translation that appropriate the 'story' of the mural and make it their own".[242] The mural insisted on engaging with the issue of abortion on a physical and personal level.[243]

Figure 6: ACHES mural of Savita Halappanavar

However, it is important to acknowledge the risk of Savita's death being sensationalised during the campaign. Ruth Fletcher has warned that high profile cases such as Savita's should not be subjected to "voyeuristic gaze".[244] Moreover, there is a something unsettling that comes along with Savita's image as a migrant woman being used so extensively. Enright discusses the uncomfortable nature of predominantly white Irish women gathering at the Savita mural in a "fashionable area" of Dublin.[245] Several of the distressing and high-profile cases surrounding the issue were migrant women, including another woman known as 'Ms Y'. Ms Y was an asylum seeker who discovered she was pregnant just a few weeks after her arrival in Ireland,

[242] Enright, "Four Pieces on Repeal": 112
[243] NicGhabhann, "City Walls"
[244] Chan, "Speaking of Silence": 78-79
[245] Enright, "Four Pieces on Repeal": 112

after she had been kidnapped, beaten, and repeatedly raped in her home country.[246] She was unable to travel outside the state due to her status and was prevented from accessing abortion in Ireland, despite being suicidal. She was hospitalised and her baby was eventually delivered by caesarean section at twenty-six weeks.[247] Ms Y's solicitor claimed that a religious influence was "significantly at play" in this case and medical records indicated that doctors "hoped to maintain the patient on the ward" until the foetus was viable.[248] Ms Y suffered an extremely traumatic experience at the hands of the Eighth Amendment, as did several other migrant women unable to access abortion care. However, migrant women were denied a central place in the official referendum campaign, and *Migrants and Ethnic Minorities for Reproductive Justice (MERJ)* have argued that migrant voices often remained unheard.[249] This is compounded by the fact that only Irish citizens can vote in referendums, despite the fact that migrant women often face additional barriers to accessing abortion. For example, migrant women may not have the documentation or the money to be able to access abortion outside of the state. Enright argues that just as Savita was identified as a symbol of Repeal, other black and brown women were denied this position.[250]As stated by Sparks in her feminist critique of Rancière, different structures of power influence who remains excluded from the established social order.[251] In this case, race and sexism intersect in specific ways to exclude migrant women in particular from the established social order. Moreover, Lentin explores Savita's place as a not only a woman whose reproductive practices are controlled by the Irish state, but a migrant woman, whose body carries a property of otherness.

4.4: Summary of Chapter

In conclusion, it is clear that the aesthetics utilised by the Repeal the Eighth campaign succeeded in disrupting the established social order that saw Ireland as an abortion-free country, and abortion as morally wrong. Through the use of embodied protests, such as

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[246] Amnesty International, "Ms Y's Case: Denied A Lawful Abortion in Ireland", 21 March 2016, https://www.amnesty.ie/ms-ys-case/

[247] Holland, Kitty, "Timeline of Miss Y Case", *Irish Times,* 4 October 2014, https://www.irishtimes.com/news/social-affairs/timeline-of-ms-y-case-1.1951699

[248] Sheehan, Maeve, "Solicitor claims religious influence in Ms Y baby case", *Irish Independent,* 30 April 2017, https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/solicitor-claims-religious-influence-in-ms-y-baby-case-35666670.html

[249] Chan, "Speaking of silence": 87

[250] Enright, "Four Pieces on Repeal": 112

[251] Sparks, Holloway, "Quarreling with Rancière: Race, Gender, and the Politics of Democratic Disruption", *Philosophy & Rhetoric* 49, No. 4 (2016): 420

Strike4Repeal and the *Artists'* procession, the campaign broke open the space of appearance and made those who remained unseen within the established social order visible. This ruptured the notion of Ireland as an abortion-free country. Through the subversion of pro-life aesthetics, the Repeal campaign successfully shifted the focus back onto their own campaign and shifted the focus both to the bodies threatened by the Eighth Amendment and the historic silencing of women in relation to abortion. Finally, through engaging with abortion through the use of emotive images such as Savita Halappanavar, the campaign revealed the violence and suffering of the Eighth Amendment, thus disrupting the notion of abortion as morally wrong.

Conclusion

In this thesis, I have mapped out the relationship between aesthetics and the Repeal the Eighth Movement and argued that the aesthetics utilised by the campaign successfully disrupted the established notion of Ireland as an abortion-free country.

My analysis was fundamentally grounded in the work of Jacque Rancière and Judith Butler, as well as drawing on Judith Butler and Athena Athanasiou's work on *dispossession*, and Chantal Mouffe's work on *agonistics.* I used Rancière's theory of *dissensus* to exemplify how aesthetics have the capacity to create a rupture in the established social order and Butler's work on the performativity of protest to explore the transformative potential of embodied resistance.

Through a combination of discourse, visual, and cultural analysis I used several case studies to analyse the role of the aesthetics utilised by the campaign under three key themes – embodied resistance, agonism between different sides of the campaign, and emotive images. The main aim of my analysis was to demonstrate the disruptive nature of the aesthetics of Repeal and this was done in three ways.

In section 1, I explored the role of protest assemblies in intervening in public space during the campaign. Using Butler's work on the performativity of protest and the space of appearance, I analysed two embodied forms of resistance – the *Strike4Repeal* and the *Artists' Campaign to Repeal the Eighth Amendment* procession. *Strike4Repeal*, in a deliberate attempt to be disruptive, successfully requalified the public space it inhabited in a demand by those in attendance to be recognised. The *Artists' Campaign* procession used colourful banners and positive images not only to name a wrong, but to positively affirm that a change was possible. I argued that this demonstrated the transformative potential of aesthetics. The procession linked those abortion-seeking women it represented to the women incarcerated in the Magdalene Laundries in the past, successfully requalifying the streets by revealing those who remained unseen – Magdalene women and abortion-seeking women.

In section 2, I used Mouffe's discussion of the US/Them dynamic as well as the clash of heterogeneous elements Rancière speaks of to explore how the clash between the pro-choice and pro-life side revealed itself through aesthetics. Speaking of pro-life visuals that were successfully subverted by the pro-choice side, I discussed the large 'No' sign erected on Ben Bulben mountain and the thousands of white crosses placed on a public road in Donegal. Through the use of mock images on social media, and the defacing of the crosses, the pro-

choice side succeeded in shifting the focus of these aesthetics back to their own campaign. I also spoke of the Maser mural of the pro-choice side which was removed on two occasions. I argued that, through its forced removal, the mural achieved its objective as it became a site of resistance.

In section 3, I demonstrated how the image of Savita Halappanavar, a migrant woman who died as a result of the Eighth Amendment, was utilised by the Repeal campaign to connect the Eighth Amendment to the suffering and violence of women's bodies. I associated Butler and Athanasiou's concept of *dispossession* with the death of Savita, and discussed how her death became the turning point for the campaign. Her life was deemed disposable under the Eighth Amendment, and in response to her death, the pro-choice side was galvanised to declare "never again". Using ACHE's mural of Savita as an example, I explored how the use of Savita's image made visible what remained unseen in the established social order – the bodies threatened by the Eighth Amendment. By revealing this violence and suffering in public space, the mural ruptured this social order. I also touched on the risk of sensationalising Savita's image as a migrant woman and the lack of migrant representation in the official campaign.

The existing literature on the aesthetics of the campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment is limited and very few scholars have written about it. This thesis has added to what is a fairly scarce discussion. As I outlined in my Literature Review, the existing literature tends to focus on the aesthetics of Repeal from a legal perspective, or as a way of breaking the silence of women in Ireland in relation to abortion. I instead focused my research on the role of aesthetics, not only as a way of breaking this silence, but as a way of *disrupting* the established social order that existed in Ireland. I addressed the aesthetics of protest, which has not been frequently engaged with in the existing literature. Further reflection on non-curated embodied assemblies would be useful in relation to Repeal, as this seems to be an under-researched aspect in the existing literature. Butler has emphasised the transformative potential of these embodied forms of resistance and it would be interesting to consider this in more detail in the context of Repeal. Further research could also focus on the risk of the image of migrant women being used so prevalently by the campaign as this was one aspect of my research that I felt could be further explored in the future. It would be interesting to consider whether this association with migrant women puts forward the idea that abortion is not perceived as 'really' Irish.

Furthermore, while the Eighth Amendment has been successfully repealed, there is still progress to be made in relation to abortion care in Ireland. Greater access is still required, and

both the 3-day waiting period and 12-week limit currently in place for abortion on demand is relatively restrictive by global standards.[252] Aesthetics can be utilised to create a rupture in the often accepted notion that the abortion rights movement in Ireland is now 'over'. It is clear that the use of aesthetics played an important role in the repeal of the Eighth Amendment and can be used to further expand the legislation as it exists now. Moreover, aesthetics can be used similarly in other struggles or movements both in Ireland and abroad as a way of disrupting the established social order.

To end, it is crucial to remember that while aesthetics made an important contribution to the success of the campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment, as I have demonstrated in this thesis, it did so alongside many other forms of struggle, such as lobbying, canvassing, and highlighting personal stories in media debates among many others. The campaign to repeal the Eighth Amendment took decades to achieve success in Ireland and this should not be discounted.

Words: 14,615

[252] Calkin, Sydney, "Nearly two years on, Ireland's historic abortion law is still far from perfect", *Independent,* 27 January 2020, https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/ireland-abortion-referendum-law-services-limitations-a9292161.html

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Figures

Figure 1: Nurphoto, Via Buzzfeed, https://www.buzzfeed.com/laurasilver/inside-the-battle-for-abortion-rights-spilling-out-on-to-ire

Figure 2: Aprons of Power performance - ACREA - Repeal!, Photo: Alison Laredo via Rachel Fallon, http://www.rachelfallon.com/aprons-of-power-and-the-artists-campaign-to-repeal-the-eighth-amendment

Figure 3: Photo: James Connolly via Irish Independent, https://www.independent.ie/irish-news/abortion-referendum/giant-no-sign-on-iconic-ben-bulben-mountain-removed-36920146.html

Figure 4: Maser Mural via Stellar, https://stellar.ie/real-talk/masers-repeal-the-8th-mural-is-back-in-temple-bar-two-years-after-it-was-painted-over/55766

Figure 5: Project Arts Centre via Broadsheet, https://www.broadsheet.ie/tag/project-arts-centre/

Figure 6: Aches Savita, via Dublin Gazette, https://dublingazette.com/opinion/oped-emma-blake-49917/