

Narrating neglect at Artane Industrial School

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Artane Industrial School, formally named St. Joseph's Industrial School, was run by the Christian Brothers from 1870-1969. The institution was founded for the purpose of caring for Roman Catholic boys who had been left neglected, abandoned, or orphaned, and was operated in accordance with the Children Act, 1908. The school was legally permitted to accommodate up to 825 boys at a time.

This board shows the progression of released information regarding the narration of neglect at the Artane Industrial School.

Purple indicates an official State or Church report, while green represents evidence/testimony for very different perspectives.

The 1936 Cussen Report¹

The Report of the Commission of Inquiry Into the Reformatory and Industrial School System 1934-1936 states:

“the care of the children in the Industrial Schools and Reformatories has been generally good. (67) The children are on the whole suitably housed, fed and clothed, and their treatment is in general kindly and humane. (68) We consider, however, that there are a number of directions in which improvements should be effected” (20).

- A generalization was made without supporting evidence.
- Any questionable care of the children was redirected in the form of recommendations.

“the training in farming in the schools is unsatisfactory, the boys apparently being regarded as a rule merely as juvenile labourers. The work is unorganised, with no systematic instruction either in field or in classroom” (30).

- The report acknowledges that the training was inadequate.
- Children were not taught any advanced skills.
- The report admits children were treated like free laborers.

The Cussen Report acknowledges areas of neglect surrounding care and education. It calls for general improvements, but no changes were made because the report does not outline guidance for implementations.

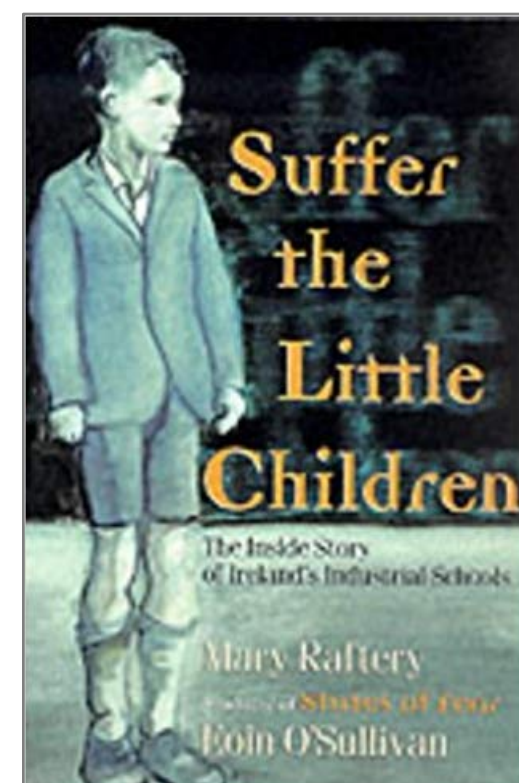
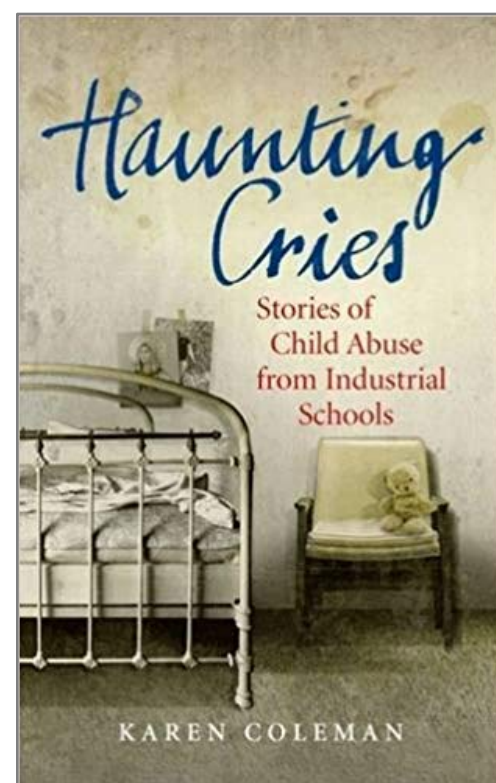
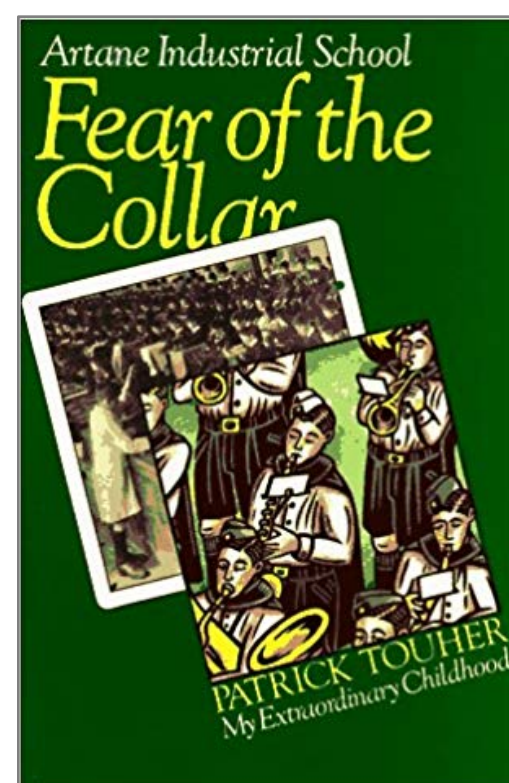
Testimony²

“Artane boys had much to offer those employers, because the Christian Brothers ensured that each boy was well trained and had the safeguard and knowledge of a skilled trade.” *—Fear of the Collar* (8)

“Fear took many shapes, many faces. The only thing worse than my fear of the Saturday showers was my fear of the night. The nightmares I had were awful. I was forever being haunted, on the run, like a fugitive.” *—Fear of the Collar* (81)

“We heard about the young boy in Artane who was knocked unconscious by a Christian brother who punished the young fellow for missing sports training.” *—Haunting Cries* (152)

“Artane was worse than a prison. At least in prison people get better fed, and they were certainly more humanely treated than we were, because in prison they’re adults.” *—Suffer the Little Children* (271)



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1962 Father Henry Moore³

Father Henry Moore's “Official Report” on Artane commissioned by Archbishop John McQuaid in 1962, as relayed in the Ryan Report (2009):

“[Fr Moore] was critical of the way the boys were indiscriminately admitted to the School... In addition to its general condemnation of the regime, the report made detailed criticisms of the care provided in Artane under the headings of diet, apparel, medical attention, religious observance, education, technical instruction, and aftercare” (7.786-7.787).

- As a chaplain at Artane, Fr Moore's report offers a critical, first-hand indictment of the neglect of children's needs.
- Fr Moore condemns Artane and shows the extent of poor conditions in the industrial school.
- Neglect leads to many consequences for the children.

“Overall, Fr Moore suggested ‘a reappraisal of the system at governmental level ... and a major reform in the management of Artane’... The report concluded that Artane required drastic revision as ‘the methods employed are obsolete, proper training is neglected and there is no attempt at adequate rehabilitation’” (7.790-7.791).

- Fr Moore recommended major re-evaluation of the whole institutional system at a government level.
- By suggesting a reform in the management of Artane, Fr Moore indicates that the Christian Brothers might not be suitable to run such institutions.
- Fr Moore concludes that Artane neglects to adequately train its employees or prepare the children for the outside world.



**“We are used to Reports, Responses, and to instant oblivion.”
– Nell McCafferty,
The Irish Times 1971⁷**

The 1970 Kennedy Report⁶

The Reformatory and Industrial Schools Systems Report, Commissioned in 1968 by Ireland's Minister for Education:

“A high proportion of children in care are educationally backward and the main limitation in the Reformatory and Industrial School is that this has not been taken into account in catering for the children's educational needs” (46).

- Report deflects blame for any educational shortcomings on pre-existing difficulties with the children. It ignored any accusation of creating an environment that most likely added to the children's problems.

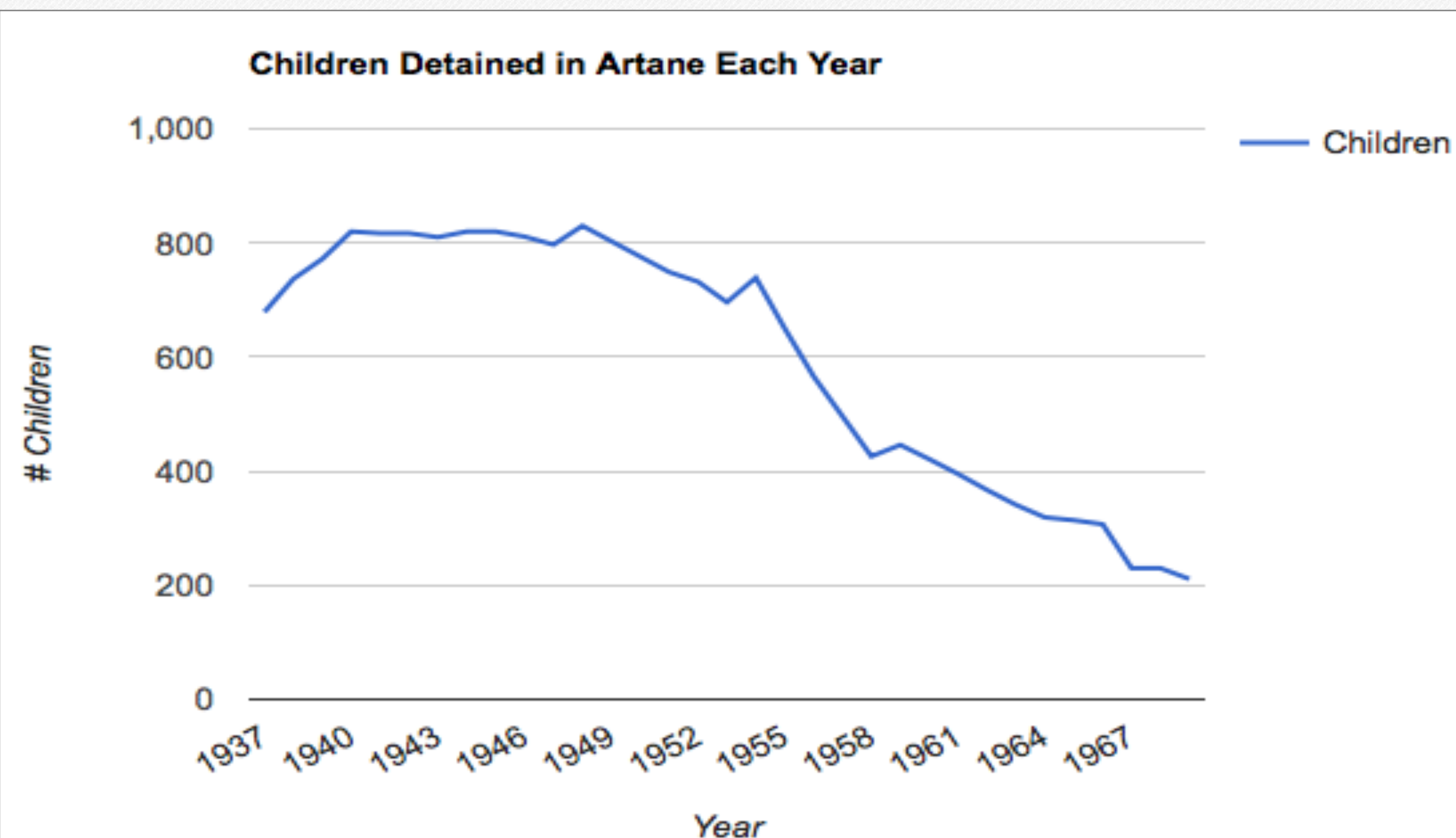
“It will be necessary to provide children in care with more than the normal educational facilities. It will, in other words, be necessary to overcompensate for deprivation” (54).

- This acknowledges that the children were struggling but instead of being honest about the school's poor conditions, the report simply suggests that the children should receive more care with no real intention of implementing these ideals.

The Kennedy Report further recognizes the severity of the conditions within these institutions. Recommendations were not concrete, but the necessity for change was recognized. However, little improvement actually occurred as a result.

Statistics⁴

Artane at capacity was in custody of 830 boys in 1948. Less than a decade later, the population decreased to almost half that number with 426 boys.



The 2009 Ryan Report⁸

The Commission to Inquire Into Child Abuse, Commissioned in 2000 by the Minister for Education:

“Dr. Anna McCabe... did not mention any of the matters raised in the late 1957 Report, which would indicate that either she did not actually see the boys in the refectory or she did not see anything remiss in the way meals were served. Either explanation has disturbing implications” (7.643).

- The inspector reports that were supposed to keep these institutions in check were clearly lacking either because the visitor ignored evidently lacking conditions or because the Industrial schools hid this truth from the inspector.

“A complainant who was committed to Artane for six years in 1945 recalled being told to go to the infirmary a number of times for various ailments. He never went, and nobody ever checked whether he had in fact attended. He gave his reason for not attending: ‘All screaming in there. The things I have heard about that place. I can’t remember it now. I was never actually in it’” (7.777).

- This combination of both abuse and neglect in such an important sector of a home for children reveals the absolute mismanagement within these institutions.

The Ryan Report dares to confront aspects of neglect and abuse that was revealed through survivor testimony, exposing information left out of the Cussen and Kennedy Reports.



**“Children's shoes left on the railings of Dáil Éireann [June 9, 2009] ahead of... protest by victims of abuse.”
– Irish Independent,
“Abuse victims furious as Dáil debate on Ryan report is pushed back”⁵**

Artane Band⁹

1999 *The Irish Times* article:

“Boys in the band proper were an elite. They were untouchable. It wouldn't do for them to arrive in Croke Park with black eye, bruises or broken limbs.” – Patsy McGarry

Mannix Flynn's “Disband the Artane Band”:

“The band's continuous existence is a reactivation and trigger for those of us who suffered horrendous ordeals at the hands of Christian Brother child sex abusers who ran many of the States Industrial schools.”

Take Away

Does the Ryan Report break the cycle of the state's inaction and concealment regarding the provision of care to vulnerable children?

How does society ensure non-recurrence in the future?

What are the necessary next steps?

How should the government make reparations for past failures?

How can we ensure the conversation to continue in order to maintain truth telling and change within society?

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2. Testimony²
3. Father Moore³
4. Statistics⁴
5. *Irish Independent*⁵
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7. *Irish Times*⁷
8. Ryan Report⁸
9. Artane Band⁹

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Photos

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