GENDER FORUM
An Internet Journal for Gender Studies

Gender and Urban Space

Edited by
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About

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Editorial

By Sonja Frenzel, Guest Editor

1   The majority of the world's population today live in urban habitats. In fact, cities have grown ever so rapidly into metropolises and even megalopolises that it seems difficult to keep track of their complex developments. Urban Studies as an interdisciplinary field of research has proliferated immensely in recent years and has reached out, from its grounding in the social sciences, to encompass such disciplines as history and literary studies, for instance. This on-going turn to space has brought forth an abundance of explorations into the construction and perpetual re-construction of urban space/s through urban dwellers' practices of habitation. It is gendered experiences, perceptions and performances of and in urban space/s that play a decisive role in these processes. The four contributions of this issue aim to shed new light upon the intersections of gender and urban space/s by highlighting the intricate interdependences between constructions of gender and constructions of urban space/s.

2   Natalie Collie's article "Walking in the City: Urban Space, Stories, and Gender" provides a feminist reading of Michel de Certeau's influential theory of urban space, urban movement and storytelling. Juxtaposing *The Practice of Everyday Life* with Elizabeth Grosz's work on gender and the urban, she shows the great merits of gendering theories of urban space/s and urban practices within these space/s. Indeed, her article establishes a valuable foundation for the subsequent contributions.

3   Judit Minczinger explores the growing visibility of women in the fin-de-siècle metropolis through a reading of George du Maurier's novel *Trilby*. While the novel was a best-selling success at the time, it has since disappeared from the literary canon. However, as Minczinger argues in her article "A Mass-Produced Muse: Gender and Late-Victorian Urban Developments in George Du Maurier's *Trilby*", it gives striking insights not only into the intersections between gender and commodification, but also into their significance for the production of urban space/s. As the novel's heroine becomes a stage performer, her female body is turned into a commodity for a world-wide audience. At the same time, the public spectacle of her performance disrupts the supposed equilibrium of the city.

4   This cue is taken up, from a very different vantage point, in Ami Crinnion's contribution "The Slutwalks: Reappropriation through Demonstration". Sparked by an incident of sexual harassment, the Slutwalks emerged in the summer of 2011 as a global

phenomenon: women of all walks of life taking to the streets in "provocative" dress to protest against derogatory perceptions of women in urban space/s. This reappropriation of a derogatory term entails the female and male participants' reappropriation of urban space/s through the practice of public protest. Crinnion conducts interviews with female participants in the Slutwalks of Newcastle upon Tyne, UK, and Vienna, Austria, to outline their individual motivations and goals, as well as their collective effort at challenging hegemonic norms and structures of the urban environment.

5   Finally, human geographers Johanna Stephanie Leder and Chandramukhee, in their joint contribution "Dowry practices and gendered space in urban Patna/India", illustrate how the social practice of dowry in India simultaneously reflects and produces gender discrimination against young women. They argue that dowry as a social practice creates a transactional space that is pertinent to the urban context of their study. In fact, this transactional space has a striking impact upon the urban space/s within which it emerges. Hence, this contribution takes the discussions of gendered urban space and of gendering urban space to a different cultural context. It thereby adds a new, critical perspective to this issue, while it also draws attention to the shared challenges of theorising gender and urban spaces across cultures.

6   The issue is rounded off with a review by Shu-Ju Ada Cheng of Rhacel Salazar Parrenas 2011 book *Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration, and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo*. In her book, Parrenas challenges the label of Filipina hostesses as trafficking victims coerced into prostitution and makes an important critique of anti-trafficking policies and campaigns, which frame these women as victims in need of rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration. Instead, Parrenas calls for a more nuanced approach of addressing the lived experiences of these women and giving them the room to define their own subjectitivies.

Walking in the city: urban space, stories, and gender

By Natalie Collie, University of Queensland, Brisbane, Australia

Abstract:

This paper outlines a feminist reading of Michel de Certeau's work on urban space and narrative in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. De Certeau offers a persuasive, highly poetic theoretical framework for understanding the production of urban space and the way it is experienced – and 'written' – through the everyday practices of a city's inhabitants. The role of sexual difference in the production of this space is somewhat underdeveloped, however. In response to this gap, and with the help of Elizabeth Grosz's essay Cities-bodies, I develop a feminist analysis of the urban subjectivity implied in his work.

1   This paper outlines a feminist reading of Michel de Certeau's work on urban space and narrative in *The Practice of Everyday Life*. De Certeau offers a persuasive, highly poetic theoretical framework for understanding the production of urban space and the way it is experienced – and 'written' – through the everyday practices of a city's inhabitants. The role of sexual difference in the production of this space is somewhat underdeveloped, however. In response to this gap, and with the help of Elizabeth Grosz's essay Cities-bodies, I develop a feminist analysis of the urban subjectivity implied in his work.

Urban space and narrative

2   Michel de Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* investigates the spatial logics of everyday life and cultural consumption. The particular essay on which my reading is focused – "Walking in the City" – explores the use of urban space as an example of the ways in which consumers, as *bricoleurs*, actively re-use culture and "reappropriate the space organised by techniques of sociocultural production" (de Certeau, xviii). These ways of operating are "ruses of other interests and desires" that are not determined or captured by the systems in which they develop (de Certeau, xviii).

3   Everyday practices are enunciative for de Certeau (Collie). The physical act of walking realises the possibilities of space organised by the spatial order (the network of streets for example), in the same way that the act of speaking realises a language, its subject, and writes a text. This process "affirms, suspects, tries out, transgresses, respects etc., the trajectories it 'speaks'" (de Certeau 99). Walking is framed as an elementary and embodied form of experiencing urban space – a productive, yet relatively unconscious, speaking/writing of the city.

4   Walking and other spatial practices are individual modes of appropriation as opposed to collective modes of administration (96). And they are tactical in nature, rather than strategic. Tactical ways of operating appropriate and divert spaces away from administrative strategies designed to create abstract place (29-30). This distinction between strategies and tactics is closely aligned with the distinction de Certeau makes between place and space in "Spatial Stories", another essay in *The Practice*. De Certeau's use of place refers to a stable ahistorical configuration of positions ruled by the law of the 'proper', that is, defined by the distribution of elements in relationships of coexistence (117). Place enables an institution to delineate itself and its others and to exercise strategies of power using this distinction. Space, in contrast, is a 'practiced place', taking vectors of direction, velocities and time variables into account: "thus the street geometrically defined by urban planning is transformed into a space by walkers. In the same way, an act of reading is the space produced by the practice of a particular place: a written text, i.e., a place constituted by a system of signs" (117). Space is actuated by "the ensemble of movements deployed within it" (117) and situated by the actions of historical subjects.

5   Pedestrians, in effect, tell urban stories through their movements. A multitude of intertwined paths and detours weave the urban fabric. They give their shape to spaces and weave together places in ways that potentially transgress, from within, the abstract map imposed from above by the panoptic gaze and administrative strategies of corporate and government interests. Using speech act theory to think about walking and its relationship to the city thus enables a basic distinction to be made between the forms of a system (the organisation of the city, the city as a text or book) and the ways these forms can be used (the ephemeral, discrete and communicative trajectories of the walker, the walker as a user/reader/re-writer of the city-text).

6   As a form of enunciation, walking has its own rhetoric. The trajectories, shortcuts, and detours taken by passers-by are *turns of phrase* and *stylistic figures*. Any particular trajectory or detour composes an unforeseeable path, a "long poem of walking", out of the formal spatial possibilities at its disposal (101). The city streets are filled with *forests of gestures* that cannot be fully captured or circumscribed from above by a picture, a text, or a map. The formal system of the city as text, its literal meaning, is subject to a semantic drift and wandering that makes "some parts of the city disappear and exaggerates others, distorting it, fragmenting it, and diverting it from its immobile order" (102). The narratives and "symbolizations" that create these habitable spaces are embodied by the city's inhabitants, "encysted in the pain and pleasure of the body" (108).

7   Thus, cities become meaningful and habitable through the legends, memories, and dreams that accumulate in and haunt places (105). Stories about place produce a second, metaphorical geography of the city, insinuating *other routes* through which everyday urban practices are organised and given meaning. Stories, as enunciations, create space via an "enunciative focalization" that inserts the speaking body into the text (130): "the opacity of the body in movement, gesticulating, walking, taking its pleasure, is what indefinitely organises a here in relation to an abroad, a 'familiarity' in relation to a 'foreignness'". De Certeau explicitly links the art of storytelling with space and everyday tactics. Maps, on the other hand, function strategically to colonise space, rendering geographical knowledge as an abstract, ahistorical *place* that erases the spatial practices that are the condition of its possibility.

8   De Certeau's framework thus rests on a central distinction between the ordinary practitioners of the city, living "below the thresholds at which visibility begins" (93), and the city as place, as an abstract concept and map produced and imposed from above by the panoptic eye of the planner or cartographer (Collie). The bodies of walkers "follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it" (de Certeau 93):

> These practitioners make use of spaces that cannot be seen; their knowledge of them is as blind as that of lovers in each other's arms. The paths that correspond in this intertwining, unrecognised poems in which each body is an element signed by many others, elude legibility. It is though the practices organising a bustling city were characterised by their blindness. The networks of these moving, intersecting writings compose a manifold story that has neither author nor spectator, shaped out of fragments of trajectories and alterations of spaces: in relation to representations, it remains daily and indefinitely other.

Escaping the imaginary totalisations produced by the eye, the everyday has a certain strangeness that does not surface, or whose surface is only its upper limit, outlining itself against the visible.

9   A common criticism of de Certeau's work also rest on this distinction. Morris (2004) suggests that de Certeau provides an overly simplified top-down model of power and its operations which produces a set of rigid either/or binaries: the official versus the everyday, the authorities versus the ordinary people, the symbolic versus the unconscious, strategies versus tactics, and compliance versus resistance, et cetera. The vertical one-dimensionality of de Certeau's model also runs the risk of eliding the complexity of the street: in terms of differences and struggles between groups within an essentialised 'the people'; and the possibility of complicity and acceptance of domination (Frow). These criticisms largely focus

on the question of power and the possibility of resistance formulated by de Certeau. I would argue that *The Practice of Everyday Life* clearly operates in dialogue with the terms and mechanisms of power set out by Michel Foucault. Rather than focus on the violence of disciplinary technologies, de Certeau examines the ideal of an everyday *anti-disciplinary* network composed of the "clandestine forms taken by the dispersed, tactical, and makeshift creativity of groups or individuals already caught in the nets of 'discipline'" (xiv-xv).

Urban space, narrative, and the pedestrian subject

10   The previous section of the paper outlined a reading of the relationship between cities and narrative. This next section will take up an important implication of this work – the centrality of the embodied subject in the production or 'writing' of urban space – and examine the urban embodied subject implied by de Certeau's ideas about the city. This will lay the foundation for my subsequent analysis of urban space, narrative and gendered difference.

 11   Michel de Certeau's exploration of a city-text generated by acts of walking produces a particular kind of urban embodied subject: the pedestrian. The pedestrian subject reads/writes the city as an everyday user of place, producing space – writing the actual city – in the process. The kind of reading/writing undertaken by the pedestrian subject is framed by de Certeau as a form of *bricolage* and enunciation. The pedestrian subject engages in a practice of reading that involves an active appropriation and rewriting of the products of contemporary culture and systems of mass production. De Certeau emphasises the manipulative nature of acts of reading as "silent productions" that insert the reader's world, histories, pleasures, and body into the author/designer/ administrator's place of the city or the written text: "words become the outlet or product of silent histories. The readable transforms itself into the memorable…" (xxi). Reading as bricolage is "an art of manipulating and enjoying" (xxi) that rewrites a text or a place as habitable. Renters appropriate an apartment by furnishing it with their acts and memories. Pedestrians appropriate "the streets they fill with the forests of their desires and goals" (xxi).

12   De Certeau also suggests that this reading from the position of user or consumer of culture is an ephemeral, unstable activity that eludes legibility. (The bodies of walkers "follow the thicks and thins of an urban 'text' they write without being able to read it" [93].) The reader does not have a stable 'place' from which to protect herself from the "erosion of time (while reading, he forgets himself and he forgets what he has read)" (1984, p. xxi). The reader is only able to 'stockpile' the experience if he writes/records while reading or

practicing space. The act of documenting and reflecting returns some of the particularities of this reading, the trace of its history, to the reader. It is here in de Certeau's schema that the reflective, productive activities of other kinds of urban subjects – the *flâneur*, for example – can be understood. More than a mere stroller or passive consumer (as consumption is conventionally positioned) of the city's spectacles, this kind of urban subject actively observes and documents the city.

13   De Certeau's pedestrian can be understood alongside (and in the tradition of) other urban subjects who walk and read/write the city, the *flâneur* in particular. The *flâneur* not only uses but witnesses and responds to the city. Reading the city becomes a kind of writing in its documentation (e.g. the *flâneur*'s notes and sketches of the crowd). Pedestrian subjects write urban space via their bodies and movements as unconscious stories with neither author or spectator; yet, in the mode of the *flâneur*, they also observe and read urban space, and re-iterate or *re-cite* this movement/reading in subsequent representations and narratives that contain at least the trace of those trajectories (Whybrow, 19). Thus, these models of urban subjectivity – the pedestrian and the *flâneur*– cannot be conflated. Both types of reading/writing render the city as a text, but the kinds of consumption and city-texts they imply are of two different orders. The *flâneur* is a figuration of urban subjectivity that involves both "wandering and wondering" (Whybrow); that is, they involve both walking in the city *and* reflecting on the urban as spectacle, as text. The figure of the *flâneur* and other readers/writers of the city introduce a degree of detachment and estrangement (a degree of dis-embodiment) in the pedestrian subject that allows for observation and reflection. However, while they are engaged in actively observing and interpreting the city, they are also always practitioners of urban space: unconsciously producing the city as text through their movements and their bodies, in spite of their position as detached observer. They are returned from a relatively invisible, dis-embodied position of anonymous observer to their place as a body in the crowd, becoming spectacle for others, an everyday 'common man', one of the 'masses' once more. Hence, the basic ambiguity of the *flâneur* and other models of the urban subject such as the detective: they are both of the city and yet apart from the city; both enabled by urban culture and its complex concentrations of affect, capital, spectacle, and inspiration, and yet its critical observers, interpreters, and investigators. And hence, for example, Whybrow's exploration, via the work of Benjamin and Brecht on the city of Berlin, of the relationship between wandering and wondering: the "immediacy of the encounter (the city as 'text') and the complex elaboration of that encounter (the text as 'city')" (18).

14   Nord (1995), in her analysis of gender and the traditions of urban rambling and investigation, argues that the 'urban panaroma' produced by the urban novelist as *flâneur* or social investigator relies on a disembodied, all-seeing eye that has much in common with de Certeau's voyeuristic panoptic viewpoint from nowhere. I would suggest, however, that the difference between these figures and the imaginary panoptic eye of the planners and administrators of the city is found at the level of the street. As practitioners and observers, *flâneur* and detectives are always working at street level, with partial knowledge. They never operate solely from an imaginary position of an all-seeing, penetrative eye hovering 'above' the city. *They are always also urban bodies.*

15   The value of reading these figures alongside de Certeau's formulation of the everyday practitioner of the city is thus twofold. The body and its movements are brought further to the foreground, re-embodying these observing subjects. In addition, the manipulations that the crowds of everyday practitioners make to the city-text are articulated alongside these more specialised readings. In doing so, it is possible to theorise a subject space from which to read and write the city that falls somewhere between two extremes. This idea of the subject re-embodies the totalising abstract eye from nowhere (of the planner/cartographer) who is paradoxically unable to 'see' the everyday practices and trajectories that write the city in time and space; and, it liberates the urban subject from the fully imbricated 'blindness' of an ephemeral, everyday use at the street level, completely in the city's grasp.

16   What difference, however, do different bodies make to these practices, and to the urban spaces, stories, and subjectivities that they articulate? How might the specific desires, perspectives, and needs of a female subject in the city be accommodated within the above logics of urban space, narrative, and subjectivity?

Urban space, narrative, the pedestrian subject, and gender

17   The subject position of one who observes the spectacle of the city, rather than just one of its performers or practitioners, is not open equally to all of a city's bodies (Parsons). For instance, the *flâneur* is traditionally a middle-class, masculine subject of leisure whose privileged position shields him from the curiosity of the crowd (Nord 237). He is the subject, rather than the object, of the 'botanizing' gaze by virtue of his privileged position as spectator not spectacle. Others, however, are less able to enjoy the privilege of being anonymous, of being one who sees, but is not seen. People's gender, class and racial background, and to what degree their bodies conform to conventions of desire, or movement and anatomy, for example, affect their ability to extricate themselves from the spectacle of the city enough to

be its observer. Hence, Nord argues for the importance of cross-dressing for women at certain times and places; and I would add *passing* for those able to do so, in terms of race and of sexuality. On particular streets, this can be a matter of life and death, or at the very least a strategy for avoiding strange stares or verbal abuse.

18   What difference does this differential access make? Is, in fact, the *flâneuse*, for example, an impossibility, unrepresentable, invisible, as some have suggested (D'souza & McDonough; Wilson)? Traditionally, a woman walking the streets is a 'street walker' – 'all body' – part and symbol of the spectacle and decadence of urban culture. Women have historically been represented as an "interruption in the city, a symptom of disorder, and a problem" (Wilson 9). The specifically female urban subject is thus a problem from both the point of view of traditional phallocentric representations of gender and urban life – for reformers, designers, administrators, and moral crusaders – and also from the point of view of those wishing to positively explore this identity and mode of urban corporeality from a feminist perspective.

19   Keeping in mind the problematic nature of theorizing a specifically female gaze (e.g., Mulvey, Parsons, Pollock), it still may be more productive to ask what difference gender makes to the position of observer (Nord 12):

> the particular urban vision of the female observer, novelist, or investigator derives from her consciousness of transgression and trespassing, from the vexed sexuality her position implies, and from her struggle to escape the status of spectacle and become spectator.

20   The point-of-view of the female reader/writer of the city is thus split between that of a privileged observer (in terms of class and culture, for example) and that of the object and symbol of the degeneration and contamination of urban life as it has been conventionally written. The city, then, exerts a particular force on those traditionally assigned as the corporealised 'other' and subject to the disembodied male gaze. The gendered pedestrian subject's point-of-view is drawn 'down' to the level of the street by the difference her gendered body makes socio-culturally. The fantasy of dis-embodiment and an all-seeing eye is more difficult to sustain under such circumstances.

21   It is no coincidence then that feminist analysis has identified the gendered nature of traditional discourses of space and corporeality: solidity, separateness, distance, coherence, activity, time, and the mind are coded masculine; liquids, relationality, proximity, incoherence, passivity, space, and the body are coded feminine (Grosz, *Volatile Bodies*). Associated with these discourses is the gendered nature of narrative, space, and point-of-

view. The traditional hero of classic urban narratives, such as the detective story, is coded an active male subject who 'penetrates' and conquers the passive, feminine-coded urban landscape, evil other, or object of desire. This suggests the need to interrogate the fundamental discourses of cities and corporeality, and the relationship between the two, underwriting my analysis. Elizabeth Grosz's essay, Cities-bodies, is one such attempt at doing just that. It is to her essay that I now turn.

22   Grosz argues that our thinking about the relationship between bodies and cities tends to fall into two dominant narratives. The first assumes a one-way causal relation: cities are physical entities designed by the minds of people and built by the body. A body is thus a physical tool used in the service of the mind, a disembodied consciousness, to make a physical city. Another common version of this dominant way of seeing bodies and cities is that the city is 'bad' for the body, 'unnatural' and damaging; this is still, however, very much a one-way relation.

23   The other dominant narrative posits a more social, and parallel, relation between bodies and cities that effectively naturalises the social organisation of a city (especially its social hierarchies). The city is not just material, but a socio-political construct, a 'body-politic' modeled on the structure of the body; an "anatomical allegory" (McGraw and Vance 67). Thus, for instance, the political rulers of a city are its 'head'. Not only does this model of the relationship between bodies and cities render 'natural' the social organisation and power relations articulated in the spatial figurations of a city, it also assumes a particular, masculine kind of corporeality. This assumed corporeality, Grosz argues, is thus overwhelmingly phallocentric; that is, the sexual specificity of the universal human body used to model this relation is disavowed. And finally, the body-politic assumes a particular, implicitly gendered, relation between nature and culture (248): "nature is a passivity on which culture works as male (cultural) productivity supercedes and overtakes female (natural) reproduction."

24   How can the relation between bodies and cities be rethought without assuming either an oversimplified causality or parallelism that, in their effects, prioritise one of the binary over the other and renders that relation in gendered terms? Grosz suggests that the body and the city might be best thought of as 'mutually defining', as a two-way dialogue or interface that is mutually productive in the practical sense. Her suggested model relies on a particular way of conceptualising the body.

25   Bodies, for Grosz, are always sexually specific (never gender neutral), and understood as the "material condition of subjectivity...as the locus and site of inscription for specific modes of subjectivity" (241-43):

By body I understand a concrete, material, animate organisation of flesh, organs, nerves, muscles, and skeletal structure which are given a unity, cohesiveness, and organisation only through their psychical and social inscription as the surface and raw materials of an integrated and cohesive totality. The body is, so to speak, organically/biologically/naturally "incomplete": it is indeterminate, amorphous, a series of uncoordinated potentialities which require social triggering, ordering, and long-term "administration," regulated in each culture and epoch by what Foucault has called "the micro-technologies of power." The body becomes a human body, a body which coincides with the "shape" and space of the psyche, a body whose epidermic surface bounds a psychical unity, a body which thereby defines the limits of experience and subjectivity, in psychoanalytic terms, through the intervention of the (m)other, and, ultimately, the Other or Symbolic order (language and rule-governed social order).

26   The city, then, can be understood as a key factor or tool used in the regulation and social production of the sexed body (242-43):

The built environment provides the context and coordinates for most contemporary Western and, today, Eastern forms of the body, even for rural bodies insofar as the twentieth century defines the countryside, "the rural," as the underside or raw material of urban development....it is the condition and milieu in which corporeality is socially, sexually, and discursively produced....[its] form, structure, and norms...seep into and effect all the other elements that go into the construction of corporeality and/as subjectivity. It affects the way the subject sees others...as well as the subject's understanding of, alignment with, and positioning in space...moreover, the city is, of course, also the site for the body's cultural saturation, its takeover and transformation by images, representational systems, the mass media, and the arts – the place where the body is representationally reexplored, transformed, contested, reinscribed.

27   Thus, not only do cities help produce bodies and organise familial and other social relations, through domestic architecture, the arrangement of rooms, the divisions between public and private space, for example, they also produce a pattern of automatic links and inequalities of power between otherwise unrelated bodies.

28   However, the metropolis is also, in turn, produced by corporeality – not just designed by a dis-embodied consciousness – as the work of de Certeau and other urban theorists have also made clear. The city is subject to transformation and reinscription by the changing demographic, economic, and psychological needs of the body. Bodies "reinscribe and project themselves onto their sociocultural environment so that the environment both produces and reflects the form and interests of the body" (Grosz 242). The body and the city, both sociocultural artifacts, are involved in a complex feedback relation of introjections and projections that "produce each other as forms of the hyperreal, as modes of simulation which have overtaken and transformed whatever reality each may have into the image of the other" (242).

29   Thus, neither the city nor the body should be understood as monolithic or distinct entities that would make it possible to have clear uni-directional causalities or for either to artificially mirror the other. Instead, Grosz wants us to conceptualise bodies and cities as mutually defining, co-building assemblages (248):

> ...or collections of parts, capable of crossing the thresholds between substances to form linkages, machines, provisional and often temporary sub- or microgroupings. It is not a holistic view, one that stresses the unity and integration of city and body, their "ecological balance." Instead, [she is] suggesting a fundamentally disunified series of systems and interconnections, a series of disparate flows, energies, events or entities, and spaces, brought together or drawn apart in more or less temporary alignments.

30   Grosz gives us a fragmented, provisional collection of body/city parts coming together (or apart, as the case may be). Along with its resonance with a Deleuzian model of a Body without Organs, there is an obvious connection to be made here with various formulations of cyberfeminism and work on the posthuman from a feminist and/or queer perspective (e.g., Hayles; Haraway; Flanagan & Booth). In *Simians, Cyborgs and Women: The Reinvention of Nature*, for example, Donna Haraway suggests that we are all cyborgs: "we are all chimeras, theorized and fabricated hybrids of machine and organism…the cyborg is our ontology; it gives us our politics" (150). For Haraway, a cyborgian subjectivity is useful for feminism because it confounds the binarised discourse that devalues nature, space, and the body as feminine. This resonates with Grosz's work on the relationship with bodies and cities because of the emphasis on the breakdown of the borders between categories of human and non-human, body and city, organic and non-organic, culture and nature, whole and part.

31   What this suggests for our investigation of urban space, narrative, and subjectivity, is the always already embedded, culturalised and sexed 'nature' of urban corporeality and spatiality. The work of both Haraway and Grosz also suggests a pragmatic engagement with the concrete details and materiality of the highly technologised everyday spaces, cultural narratives, and identities within which we invariably work. This, then, returns us to de Certeau's notion of everyday makeshift stories – tactical *bricolage* – as the appropriate mode through which to "reappropriate the space organised by techniques of sociocultural production" (de Certeau xviii). As *bricoleurs*, female pedestrian subjects re-write the city in idiosyncratic, unforeseen ways and detours that resist, from within, the disciplines of gendered space and identity to which they are subject and through which they are conventionally objectified as urban spectacle.

32   The reconceptualisation of the relationship between cities and bodies afforded by Grosz's work opens our analysis towards the possibility of a specifically gendered pedestrian subject. It brings to de Certeau's discussion of urban space and narrative the capacity to better differentiate between differently embodied urban subjects, by way of a critique of the gendered representational logics of space and corporeality. Urban spaces, narratives, and subjectivities are thus understood as the products of cities and bodies mutually *writing each other*.

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A Mass-Produced Muse: Gender and Late-Victorian Urban Developments in George Du Maurier's *Trilby*

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Abstract:

This paper examines the gender dimension of several issues emerging in the context of the fin-de-siècle urban setting through a discussion of George Du Maurier's popular novel *Trilby*. Set in bohemian Paris, the novel's female protagonist Trilby, initially a highly hybrid character, is gradually turned into a domestic creature in order to be protected from the lures and temptations of the city. Later hypnotized by the evil Svengali, she is then transformed into an outstanding diva, La Svengali, and as a female performer she arouses insatiable feelings of passion and desire in her audience. The paper examines the ways in which the heroine and her associations with the city engage with various ideological formations, including the cult of domesticity, the paradigm of the pastoral tradition, and the Romantic conception of artistic genius. Trilby's transformation into a metropolitan celebrity also highlights several developments in the late nineteenth-century city, including new technologies of display, changing modes of consumption, a burgeoning mass culture, as well as a preoccupation with the commodity. Du Maurier's best-seller may teach us contemporary readers about the ways in which the issue of gender and the position of women constitute one of the fault lines in the development of urban modernity.

1   In his novel *Trilby*, published in 1894, George du Maurier weaves a seemingly simple plot into a highly complex narrative: Trilby, a tone-deaf washerwoman and artist's model in Paris, mesmerized by the evil musician Svengali, becomes the most celebrated diva of European metropolises, while she is at the complete mercy of the composer. This plot scenario, at first sight a tale of extreme female subjugation, managed to capture the fin-de-siècle imagination and quickly achieved best-seller status. What is more, it generated an unprecedented number of parodies, adaptations and spin-off products in its wake.[1] It is tempting to speculate as to which aspects of the novel triggered this sweeping success, and conversely, why it is no longer part of the Victorian canon. Certainly, though, one may argue that *Trilby* managed to respond to the possibilities as well as anxieties that emerged during the turbulent period of late-Victorian culture and its impact on the development of urban modernity. For the purpose of this article, I will focus on only one out of the numerous crossroads this novel occupies: the intersection of the fin-de-siècle urban setting and "the ideological working of gender".[2]

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[1] For an account of the novel's astonishing reception history, see Jenkins, and Gilder and Gilder.

[2] The term refers to Mary Poovey's study of mid-Victorian society; this analysis is greatly indebted to her method of discussing representations of gender as a site on which contradictory ideological meanings are ascribed and contested.

2   In *Trilby*, the cosmopolitan city is variously configured as a carnivalesque space of plurality and collectivity, as well as the quintessential environment for a burgeoning mass consumerism and commodity culture. On the other hand, several ideological formations are pitted against this urban setting: the cult of domesticity, the paradigm of the pastoral tradition, and the Romantic conception of artistic genius. These oppositions not only separate the city from what lies outside or beyond it, but also structure the urban environment itself. In my discussion of the novel, I will attempt to show how the female protagonist consistently traverses the very fine line separating these divisions. Du Maurier's novel may thus teach us contemporary readers about the ways in which the issue of gender and the position of women constitute one of the fault lines in the development of urban modernity.

3   Scholarship on late-Victorian fiction has produced numerous fruitful discussions of women's increasing visibility in urban spaces and their participation in public activities. This has entailed, among others, the critical resurrection of non-canonical women writers and their engagement with the urban environment, as well as the equally important task of identifying female personas and fictional characters as active agents exercising mobility and spectatorship in the urban arena, like female renditions of the modern flâneur. On the surface, Du Maurier's novel does not fit easily with either goal of this feminist agenda – Trilby does not possess the same spatial and scopic freedom as the *flâneuse*, nor is she a progressive and confident New Woman; instead, what we witness is her transformation from a celestial artists' muse into a "singing machine," who in both cases remains at the mercy of men and does not have an apparent will of her own. Nevertheless, Trilby exposes some of the underlying mechanisms behind the cultural developments of late-Victorian urban modernity, de-stabilizing the accepted notions about women's proper place and role within the urban milieu, and what is more, challenging master-narratives about artistic production. She does so perhaps more subtly, but at least as profoundly, as her more autonomous and independent fictional sisters.[3] Hence, this article attempts to make a case that, compelling as it is to look for more obviously empowered female figures, different forms of representation and their symbolic importance also warrant attention if we want to address the complex reverberations emerging from the intersection of gender and urban space. This approach is part of a wider critical effort to account for a variety of different roles women play in the city and in public life.

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[3] Not every critic has viewed *Trilby* as a story of female victimization or dependence – most famously, Nina Auerbach has argued that Trilby could be seen as a triumphal heroine of infinite capacities. Auerbach nevertheless does not explicitly discuss Trilby's presence in the urban environment; my analysis also departs from her overly optimistic reading and aims to discuss Trilby as a highly ambiguous figure.

4   For the purpose of this article, I only focus on one such role: the female public performer (in this case, the singer). Musical activity and stage performance are obviously highly laden with gender connotations, and they also highlight the dangers women encountered when venturing outside the private realm. Outside of the shelter of the private drawing rooms, female singers in concert halls and opera houses exposed themselves to the public gaze, and thus violated prohibitions against self-display. Besides, the female performer was also believed to arouse feelings of passion and desire in the male spectator, at the expense of such sentiments as piety and modesty. As it will be shown though, Trilby's domain as a performer is not confined to the concert hall. Thanks to her extraordinary fame, highly coveted reproductions of her image also proliferate in various other spaces of the city, calling attention to the sweeping changes regarding display and spectacle at the end of the nineteenth century.

5   Historians and social critics have characterized the period spanning 1850 to World War I as turbulent on several fronts – anxieties concerning gender and national identity, the decline of imperial power, challenges to traditional values and family structures are only some of the most-cited concerns of this period. By setting his novel in mid-nineteenth-century Paris, Du Maurier choses a city that is, arguably, more suitable for the narrative than London or any other European metropolis of the time. Napoleon III's Second Empire was a site that captured the dissolution of age-old certainties at its most extreme with permanent landmarks and buildings disappearing overnight. As the narrator of *Trilby* remarks, in Baron Haussman's Paris "there was a mania for demolition and remolition" (187). The French metropolis is a perfect setting to capture the sense of turbulence characterizing this era, since the changes were perhaps more prominent in its visual landscape than in any other European metropolis. In Paris, change was not merely "in the air," so to speak, but thanks to Hausmann's radical re-structuring, it was also inscribed on the architectural body of the city itself.[4]

6   The novel opens with the description of a bohemian household of three British painters. Serving both as a studio and a home, this semi-private space is where most of the novel's first takes place. Yet in many ways, the gender relations that unfold within its walls will be later replicated on a larger scale, and in this sense, it could also be seen as a microcosm of the city. The three male painters come from respectable families, and all three live the somehow infantile existence of aspiring young artists, which is exemplified, for

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[4] Another possible reason behind the choice of setting might be that it allows the author to play upon the romanticized conceptions of Parisian bohemia (a topos that Du Maurier fully exploits).

instance, by the nicknames they give to each other: Taffy, the Laird, and Little Billee. They occupy a "temporal space" that, according to Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, is the defining feature of bohemia: "a developmental stage" where "the young, male bourgeois literary subject was required to navigate his way through his homosexual panic" towards a more heterosexual trajectory (193). Taffy and the Laird act as the more parental figure for the fragile, naive Little Billee, whose "girlish purity of mind" make them feel "as fond of the boy as they could be" (8). Homosexuality is constantly repudiated in the novel and is never even considered as a possibility. In fact, by the end of the novel, Taffy and the Laird have achieved that mature, consolidated bourgeois identity that Sedgwick describes as the objective of bohemia.

7   Little Billee, on the other hand, is not only patronized by the two older painters, but his effeminate appearance and fragile disposition are also set against the robust and energetic character of Trilby. The narrator remarks that "she would have made a singularly handsome boy" (12), and, indeed, the inversion of gender roles between Trilby and Little Billee runs through the whole novel as a subtext. While her origins and background will be closely scrutinized later in the novel, it is worth recalling the first impression she makes on the three painters, and, by implication, on the reader. Trilby, who works as a professional artist's model, enters the apartment dressed in a military coat and wearing a pair of oversized male slippers. From the very beginning, Trilby takes up the role of a poser, albeit unconsciously. When she arrives at the artists' studio, she immediately sits down on the model-throne, starts eating from a paper parcel, and rolls a cigarette, while the other occupants of the room observe her as if she was modelling.[5] It is only the first of the numerous poses that she will take up in the course of the novel (the next time she comes to the studio, she takes on the persona of a *grisette*). Trilby constantly poses even when she is not doing her job, and this is all the more significant inasmuch as the first posing we witness takes place in the private space of the artists' household, as it thus flouts one of the culturally prescribed roles for women in the private sphere. Assuming that one of the basic tenets of domestic ideology is its association between the figure of the domestic woman on the one hand, and the principles of originality, sincerity and the "real" on the other, then Trilby's posing automatically violates the domestic doctrine. With her various acts of impersonation and eccentricities, Trilby fails to adhere to this feminine ideal of authenticity, and instead turns the artists' masculine

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[5] Besides the three painters, Svengali and his fellow-musician Gecko are also present in this introductory scene. Although he only rises to prominence in the second half of the novel. Svengali's presence in the narrative is crucial from the beginning, not least because he functions as a foil to the three painters, and Little Billee in particular. As this early scene foreshadows, all five of these male characters will eventually fall in love with Trilby, but whereas the painters' (and Gecko's) affection is associated with brotherly respect and platonic admiration, Svengali's attraction is from the beginning drawn by lust and sexual desire.</

household into a theatrical stage of imitation and artificiality. These performances also foreshadow her subsequent public posing in the novel's second part.

8   Much to their disappointment, the three painters learn that not only does Trilby occasionally model for nude paintings, but that "she had all the virtues but one" (32) – meaning that she is also sexually experienced. They regard her promiscuity as a result of her having been corrupted, and more specifically, as the effect of a corruption inflicted upon her by the city. Paris is presented as "the most corrupt city on earth" (98), and at various points the narrative suggests that the metropolis is detrimental to an otherwise uncontaminated femininity. Accordingly, when alone with the three painters, Trilby was "absolutely 'like a lady.' [...] But enter a Frenchman or two, and a transformation effected itself immediately" (59). From the outset, Trilby is positioned at the axis between respectability and contamination, also evident from her hybrid origins: Trilby is the daughter of an Irish dean and a Scotch-English woman who worked as a barmaid in Paris; and while Trilby herself is fluent in both English and French, her English "was more or less that of her father, a highly-educated man," whereas her French "was that of the Quartier Latin – droll, slangy, piquant, quaint, picturesque – quite the reverse of ungainly, but in which there was scarcely a turn of phrase that would not stamp the speaker as being hopelessly, emphatically 'no lady!'" (59) The narrative thus sets up an opposition between Frenchness on the one hand, associated with Trilby's mother and the city, and Englishness on the other hand, linked to her father as well as the painters, whose studio is meant to protect Trilby from the wickedness of urban life. Curiously though, while Frenchness is associated with Paris, it is not London that comes to stand for Englishness – the metropolis by nature is too cosmopolitan to become nationally emblematic. Instead, Englishness is metonymically mapped onto the provinces, expressed through Little Billee's longing "that Trilby could be turned into a young lady – say the vicar's daughter in a little Devonshire village – his sister's friend and co-teacher at the Sunday school, a simple, pure, and pious maiden of gentle birth" (30). Indeed, it is when he goes back to his village in Devon that Little Billee later becomes a nationally acclaimed artist, the most respectable English painter. Nationality, gender, social status and the rural-urban divide are thus all inextricably linked in the novel.

9   The discovery that her femininity has been tainted by her promiscuity eventually prompts the three painters to turn Trilby into a lady through what could be seen as a domesticating enterprise. Trilby does not protest this development, in fact, the painters' patronizing attitude seem to correspond to her original desire to join the household in search of brotherly affection. She becomes the artists' personal cook, housemaid and nurse at the

expense of her modelling in the studios of Paris through an act of benevolent incarceration in the studio. From the beginning, Taffy, the Laird and Little Billee posit themselves as Trilby's saviours, whose benign guidance is supposed to help and shelter her: "They would even frame little plans whereby she might better herself in life, and avoid the many snares and pitfalls that would beset her lonely path in the Quartier Latin when they were gone" (66). The quasi-domestic space of their studio is meant to provide a safe haven from the temptations and lures of the city, and it is here that Trilby's cultivation takes place – or rather, the cultivation of some of her characteristics at the expense of others. In their attempt to turn a grisette of the city into a respectable lady, the three artists try to suppress Trilby's French/urban side and nourish her Englishness. This process, however, inadvertently exposes their endeavour as encouraging performance. It is the way she speaks, the clothes she wears, and the books she reads (Dickens, Thackeray, Walter Scott) thanks to which Trilby "grew more English every day" (58); however, Taffy, the Laird and Little Billee treat her as if her "ladyness" had been there all along, waiting to be discovered, and it is only the contaminating forces of the city that have turned her into a fallen woman. As Little Billee claims already after the first encounter, regardless of her behaviour Trilby's true essence lies elsewhere: "It makes me sick to think she sits for the figure. I'm sure she's quite a lady" (18). Even when Taffy remarks that "she looks like a grande dame masquerading as a grisette" (81), the language of performance ("masquerade") is immediately undermined by the presumption that regardless of her appearance, Trilby's 'real' identity as an English lady is preserved nevertheless. But even after the artists' pedagogical project to develop her English femininity has supposedly been completed, occasionally she still displays some traits of the French grisette: when they take her to a ball, she looks so graceful that "she might have been the daughter of an English dean – until she undertook to teach the Laird some favourite cancan steps. And then the Laird himself, it must be admitted, no longer looked like the son of a worthy, God-fearing, Sabbath-keeping Scotch writer to the signet" (64). It is as if at these moments of spontaneous outburst, outside of the bonds of the studio and under the public gaze, Trilby de-naturalized not only the notion of her own essence, but also the seemingly stable identity of those around her.

10   The artists, by contrast, display a radically different mode of mobility and spectatorship, one that stands in stark contrast to Trilby's confinement to their apartment. Situated in the Quartier Latin, the studio gives access to a panoramic view of Paris, so that when Little Billee gazes out of the window, "the top of nearly all Paris lay before him" (7). Providing a bird's eye-view of the city, the studio is thus akin to a nineteenth-century version

of the de Certeauian World Trade Centre, allowing the viewer to read the supposedly transparent text of the city, "to be a solar Eye, looking down like a god" (de Certeau 92). When the artists occasionally descend from their studio to the Parisian streets, their movement in the city is reminiscent of yet another quintessential trope of masculine urban spectatorship – the practice of *flânerie*. Like the Baudelairean/Benjaminian *flâneur*, they stroll the city streets at a leisurely pace, treating Paris as if it was "a playground" (26). Their interest lies in the ephemeral, at the same time converting the fleeting moment into an axiom of universal experience: "they would gaze at the glowing sky and all it glowed upon […] and would try to express themselves to the effect that life was uncommonly well worth living in that particular city at that particular time of the day and year and century" (23). Confronted with the urban mass, they furthermore possess the epistemological confidence of the *flâneur*, evident from their attempt to read the social status of the inhabitants from their outer appearance: they would "gaze, but quite without base envy, at the smart people coming back from the Bois de Boulogne. […] And our three musketeers of the brush would speculate on the vanity of wealth and rank and fashion" (23-24). Their speculations are characteristic of the journalistic genre of physiologies, which Benjamin has described as the prototypical form of "urban" literature – removed from the crowd, and classifying people into identifiable types, authors of physiologies as well as Du Maurier's artists try to give a sense of intelligibility to the unfamiliar urban environment.

11   And yet, the narrative problematizes the detached mode of observation that is viewed as the prerogative of the *flâneur*. In the same passage quoted above, the text offers a description of a radically different mode of urban spectatorship – one that is not predicated upon distance and indifference, but allure and desire. As the three artists stop by a pastry shop, the narrator describes how

> they would stare with greedy eyes at the window of the great corner pastry-cook, and marvel at the beautiful assortment of bonbons, pralines, dragées, marrons glacés – saccharine, crystalline substances of all kinds and colours, as charming to look at as an illumination; precious stones, delicately-frosted sweets, pearls and diamonds so arranged as to melt in the mouth; especially, at this particular time of the year, the monstrous Easter-egg, of enchanting hue, enshrined like costly jewels in caskets of satin and gold. (23)

Rather than give an account of disinterested observation, the passage displays an insatiable, and almost sexualized, appetite. Instead of a mere inventory of things, we are confronted with objects that point beyond themselves; like an "illumination," they hold the promise of revealing something significant. It is hard not to notice how these objects become fetishized

through the description, as if to parallel the fetishization of Trilby's body parts that will later feature as an important feature of the novel. Sweets are figured in the language of jewellery, and the section almost reads like an advertisement – in this respect anticipating the commodity fetishism that becomes a prominent theme in the second part of the novel. This mode of representation is particularly suitable for the description of city life: at the same time as one's sense of self gets diminished amidst the rapid stimuli of the city, objects acquire a heightened significance. As commodities, they take on the function of seemingly filling the void created by urban life.

12   Alongside the project of turning Trilby into a domestic creature through the process of marking her off from the corrupt forces of the city, we also witness a parallel development of Trilby's transformation from an ordinary washerwoman into an artist's muse. This aspect is significant inasmuch as the mechanism governing this development (i.e. the operation of fetishization, as it will be shown) prefigures the process through which Trilby will be later elevated into the position of a metropolitan celebrity. Trilby, the artist's *ideal* in the first part of the novel, later re-emerges as the *idol* of the city, and it is essentially the same principle that is at work behind her role as an object of adoration both in private and in public.

13   Of the three painters, it is Little Billee who stands out as the only great artist: his "sense of all that was sweet and beautiful in nature [...] amounted to true genius" (8). In contrast to Taffy and the Laird, who are mediocre painters at best, Little Billee does not imitate others and is not interested in other people's pictures. His 'originality,' in turn, has much to do with 'origins,' and his philosophy of art has a lot in common with the Romantic notion of aesthetics: true beauty originates in nature, and it is the role of the artist to reveal this transcendental beauty through artistic creation. This artistic credo is further crystallized by his encounter with Trilby. Prompted by his romantic admiration, he sets out to scrutinize Trilby's body in order to see what he could salvage for his idea of universal beauty. Curiously enough, he finds that it is Trilby's "pair of over-perfect feet" (32) that is exquisite and perfectly proportioned enough to reveal the timeless beauty of perfect forms. The essence of her feet will eventually outshine the base reality – as a result, Trilby is turned into a Petrarchan Laura, whose celestial features are supposed to lead the artist to the purest form of beauty.

14   At the same time, it is crucial that Little Billee disregards the less attractive features of Trilby's body, which are incongruous with the perfection of her feet. Her big teeth, her robust figure, freckled complexion and broad features must be ignored so that they do not interfere with the ideal artistic frame. In short, her feet are metonymically severed from the

heterogeneity of her body in order to fulfil the function of the greatest metonymic chain of substitutions – the fetish. As Emily Apter notes, "fetishism records the trajectory of an idée fixe or noumen in search of its materialist twin" (4). It is precisely this trajectory that Little Billee is compelled to follow, but interestingly enough, the novel does not present foot fetish as a sexualized activity, but rather as an artistic feature. When he spontaneously draws a sketch of Trilby's foot on the studio's wall, it is instantly called "the work of a master" (18), a "petit chef-d'ouvre" (21). Little Billee does not substitute Trilby's feet for the phallus, but for his idea of timeless beauty – in other words, sexuality and the fetish in the narrative are constantly aestheticized. Artistic creation, as conceived by the narrator and Little Billee, must efface all materiality, bodily features and sexuality in order to achieve perfection.

15   Even as she is posited as Little Billee's muse, thus by association a passive object, Trilby nevertheless challenges this idea of transcendental art, and in fact tries to participate in the artistic creation herself. Upon her first visit, she gently mocks Taffy's realistic painting by saying, "That chiffonier's basket isn't hitched high enough. [...] And he's got the wrong sabots, and the wrong lantern; it's *all* wrong" (17) – the implication being that it is not accurate enough. At her second visit, she brings a few objects to help Taffy correct his painting: "I've brought you these objects of art and virtue to make the peace with you. They're the real thing, you know. [...] This is how it's put on. Do you see? If *you*'ll put it on I'll fasten it for you, and show you how to hold the lantern and handle the pick. [...] Père Martin will pose for you in person, if you like" (28). Whereas in this instance, Trilby's critique is directed at Taffy's paintings, her suggestions in fact also violate Little Billee's axioms concerning artistic genius in several ways. By bringing the "real things," she calls attention to the material aspects of art, and stresses the fact that artistic creation inevitably starts with the study of real-life objects. Furthermore, by suggesting that Père Martin, the rag-picker who has lent her the objects, could pose for Taffy, she undermines the notion of divine inspiration, since according to her reasoning, any rag-picker could invigorate Taffy's imagination as long as he approximates the type of person the painter wants to represent. Perhaps the most provocative assertion, however, is that Taffy himself could try on the basket and thus occupy the position of the model. Not only would then Taffy the artist transform into an urban inhabitant of utmost wretchedness and destitution (i.e. the rag-picker, yet another emblematic figure in Benjamin's writings on the city), but the distance between the sovereign creator and the muse would also be suddenly violated – the artist could no longer hide behind his canvas, but would be implicated in the process of posing and performance himself.

16   The idyll of the bohemian household as well as Little Billee and Trilby's blossoming romance is eventually halted by an act of motherly intervention – Little Billee's mother, unable to accept the news of engagement between her respectable middle-class son and a woman of questionable background, hastens to Paris to break off the engagement. Whereas the three painters have regarded Trilby as an essentially innocent girl corrupted by the ways of urban living, Mrs. Bagot is convinced that her son's fiancée herself is the embodiment of corruption. As she exclaims, Little Billee "has been with us all his life, till he came to this wicked, cursed city" (112), and in addition to the evilness of Paris, she considers Trilby to be the source of her son's downfall, rather than someone who has also fallen victim to the vile city: she thinks of Trilby "as a wanton and perilous siren, an unchaste and unprincipled and most dangerous daughter of Heth" (249). The dangers of the city and uncontained femininity are aligned in these accusations, and it is only one of the several instances of women being likened to sirens, as if eager to lure guileless men unable to resist them.

17   As she is lamenting the choice of her son's beloved, Mrs. Bagot is desperately trying to pin down Trilby's origins. Subjecting Taffy to incessant questioning over Trilby's characteristics ("'Is she English?'" "'Is she a Protestant or a Roman Catholic?'" "'An English governess, or something of that sort?'"; 111), in the end she articulates what seems to be the pivotal moment of her interrogation: "'Is she a lady, Mr Wynne?'" Taffy, however, is perplexed by this apparently straightforward question: "'A lady?' said Taffy; 'a – it so much depends upon what that word exactly means, you know; things are so – a – so different here'" (111). His bewilderment points to a semantic confusion ruling the city; whereas a definition of respectable femininity might be taken for granted in Mrs. Bagot's small village, the implicit moral code governing who counts as a lady is thrown into disarray in the urban environment. Rather than obvious or taken for granted, the notion of knowable, unified femininity is thus presented as unstable and a matter of interpretation in the urban context.

18   As a result of Mrs. Bagot's interference, the engagement comes to naught, and Trilby leaves Paris and temporarily disappears from the narrative. Little Billee, in turn, suffers a nervous breakdown. In order to foster his recovery, he is relocated to his native village, and it is here that his career as one of the most celebrated painters of the country begins. The countryside, with "the dearest mother, the dearest sister in the world, in the dearest little seaside village" (156) is hyperbolically romanticized in this interlude, and it is as if the narrative was struggling hard to revive the pastoral tradition so central to the nineteenth-century realist novel. As well-documented by Raymond Williams and others, this paradigm of the pastoral was posited as a pre-industrial haven removed from the evils of urban life, and

constructed as a realm of stability and freedom contrasted with the impersonality and instrumentality of the city. If Little Billee "was as innocent and pure-minded as any girl" (112) prior to his adventures in Paris, then this narrative excursion can be seen as an attempt to retrieve this primordial bliss.

19   Just as in the ideology of domesticity the private sphere is presided over by a female guardian, so is the pastoral tradition activated by the figure of a woman. With both elements positioned outside the instrumental relations of the urban arena, women as well as the pastoral haven supposedly occupy the position of the rescuer in relation to the masculine subject. In Du Maurier's novel, this female figure is epitomized by the vicar's daughter, Alice, "a simple, pure, and pious maiden of gentle birth" (131). The contrast between Alice and Trilby could not be more pronounced, and in order to accentuate this disparity, Alice is effectively infantilized: "that dear, weak, delicate shape, so cherishable, so perishable" (163). Having developed an infatuation for her, Little Billee is convinced that Alice is meant to be his saviour: "Alice alone, in all the world, has got the healing touch for me now" (162). Nonetheless, the narrative does not convincingly revive this nostalgically evoked pastoral refuge. In the end Little Billee is forced to abandon his plans of marrying the vicar's daughter and living a simple life in the countryside – partly because the ideas he has adopted in the city are too progressive for this way of living (he reads Darwin on the train back to the village), but there is also a sense in which once he has experienced the intense passion for Trilby in the context of the urban setting, there is no turning back to the pastoral and the naïve simplicity of Alice.

20   Consequently, the narrative returns to the urban environment, but whereas the first part centres on bohemian life in Paris, the section following the pastoral episode is filtered through Trilby's relationship to Svengali, and lifts her out from the artists' household to the grand stages of various European cities. If Little Billee is the embodiment of the 'true artist,' which the narrative repeatedly connects to Englishness, provinciality and bourgeois values, then the other components of the set of oppositions described earlier – city life, vulgarity, cosmopolitanism, and, by implication, Jewishness[6] are epitomized by the figure of Svengali. Moreover, if Little Billee stands for artistic genius, then Svengali is the incarnation of the pseudo-genius of imitation, and whereas the foundation of Little Billee's art is divine inspiration, the key to Svengali's bravura performance is technique. His art is not constituted

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[6] Among others, Neil R.Davison and Jonathan H. Grossman discuss the significance of Svengali's Jewishness. Interestingly, Little Billee also possesses a "tinge" of Jewishness (6), which supposedly makes his art even more attractive, whereas Svengali is described as an "Oriental Israelite Hebrew Jew" (223) – the narrative thus posits "too much" Jewishness as excessive and threatening.

by a transcendental universal; instead, he takes any simple melody, and renders it 'beautiful' through his technical tricks: he "fugued and cannoned and counterpointed and battledored and shuttlecocked it, high and low, soft and loud, in minor, in pizzicato, and in sordino – adagio, andante, allegretto, scherzo – and exhausted all its possibilities of beauty" (19). And in contrast to Little Billee, whose paintings are meant to be contemplated, Svengali creates only short-lived effects and plays on his audience's emotions: "Scraps, snatches, short melodies, meant to fetch, to charm immediately, or to melt or sadden or madden just for a moment" (11).

21   Svengali is portrayed as essentially the artist of the city, which is implicitly associated with cheapness, coarseness, and lack of taste. Although he is famous for his masterly performance, his base material is ultimately trivial: "tunes of the café concert, tunes of the nursery, the shop-parlour, the guard-room, the schoolroom, the pothouse, the slum" (38). His territory remains the popular; unlike Little Billee, Svengali cannot master "the highest and best" of his art. Instead, "he had to draw the line just above Chopin" (38) – his talents are limited, and are relegated to the realm of low culture. In the nineteenth-century urban landscape, it is the opening up of new markets such as café concerts and music-halls (precisely Svengali's domain) that enabled the rapid expansion of a commercialized concert world, and since he is rejected from the high-status world of music, Svengali earns his livelihood by playing for a few pennies in these spaces of popular entertainment. It is also through his manipulation through hypnosis, rather than thanks to his artistic talents that Svengali eventually manages to turn Trilby into a celebrated diva.

22   Svengali's attitude towards Trilby is more explicitly objectifying than that of the three painters, and the process of compartmentalizing Trilby's body launched by Little Billee in the name of romantic affection is taken up by Svengali in a more violent way. Again, certain segments of her body are singled out for attention and subjected to extensive scrutiny. With the aid of a pair of opera glasses, for instance, Svengali sets out to examine her inner cavities, describing them in architectural, biological and musical terms: the roof of her mouth is "like the dome of the Panthéon," her throat "like the middle porch of St. Sulpice," her tongue "like the leaf of a pink peony," and the bridge of her nose "like the belly of a Stradivarius" (46-47). The description of Trilby's inner spaces makes them look enormous and grotesque, and is not entirely without sexual undertones. On two occasions, he whispers a chilling story into Trilby's ears, an act that is described by the narrator as "love-making" (69). In both cases, it is a tale of complete objectification, a nightmarish scenario of what will happen if Trilby does not yield to Svengali's attempts at seduction. In the first case, Svengali envisions Trilby's

decaying body displayed to the public behind a big plate-glass window; in the second, her skeleton is exhibited in a mahogany glass case in a medical museum. The fact that in these tales the public gazes at Trilby's remains through glass seems to be crucial. Glass technology, utilized by exhibition places as well as department stores, became an essential component of the nineteenth-century city, creating a sense of theatricality, and displaying items in a more attractive guise. And even though neither scenario features a commercial space such as the department store, in fact the two cautionary tales towards the beginning of the novel are extreme versions of what happens to Trilby when she finally does succumb to Svengali: the images of her decomposing body behind the glass are analogous to her two-dimensional, mass-produced photograph behind a shop window in the second part of the novel.

23   This latter part of the novel focuses on Trilby's transformation into a "world-wide colossal celebrity," La Svengali (248). The mystery behind her transformation is explained only at the end of the novel: Trilby, who used to be tone-deaf, has been hypnotized by Svengali, and turned into an outstanding celebrity. Although situated in a larger realist context, this part of the novel carries decidedly Gothic overtones, with Svengali the demon-artist depicted as "a sticky, haunting, long, lean, uncanny, black spider-cat" (66), and the effect Trilby has on her audience described as "strange and uncanny; [...] so oppressive, so anxious, so momentous" (190). With its focus on effect and external phenomena rather than origins and internal character, the Gothic is a particularly suitable mode to capture Trilby's metamorphosis. Far from being obsessed with the *sources* of the uncanny, the reader's anxiety is instead displaced onto the external element (in this case, mesmerism), and the villain (Svengali). But insofar as the Gothic elements are embedded in a realist framework, the effect is rather bewildering: we, as readers, feel as though we are familiar with Trilby the ordinary washerwoman, as well as Trilby the sisterly figure to the three painters, and yet we know nothing about La Svengali – as she appears and disappears in the de-familiarized space of the city, Trilby/La Svengali is a complete enigma.

24   In Du Maurier's urban landscape, three different but not unrelated forces are pitted against each other, and Trilby in her various incarnations is implicated in all three of them. On the one hand, we find the guardians of high culture, eager to ward off the incursions of what they see as vulgar or low art. These, on the other hand, are in a constant struggle with the collective, innovative and anonymous developments inherent to city life, whose effect in turn is to desacralize the notion of autonomous art. Finally, the process of commodification is eager to cash in on the monetary value of either of the previous two. The battle between these

forces is played out over a single site when after five years, the three painters return to Paris, and decide to re-visit their old studio:

> All over the walls were caricatures in charcoal and white chalk, with more or less incomprehensible legends; very vulgar and trivial and coarse, some of them, and pointless for trois Angliches.
> But among these (touching to relate) they found, under a square of plate-glass that had been fixed on the wall by means of an oak frame, Little Billee's old black-and-white-and-red chalk sketch of Trilby's left foot, as fresh as it had been done only yesterday! Over it was written: 'Souvenir de la Grande Trilby, par W. B. (Litrebili)' (181)

Both the plate-glass and the inscription can be seen as part of an attempt to attribute the sketch of Trilby's foot to the private genius of Little Billee; marked by a signature and set apart in its frame from the rest of the wall, the drawing is designated as the artist's exclusive property. Nevertheless, the surrounding caricatures are encroaching upon this framed foot, and it is as if the traces of these heterogeneous, carnivalesque voices were threatening to overwhelm the product of the unitary genius. The image is thus caught between the competing frames of individual and social possession, and at the same time it is reducible to neither. Finally, there is an attempt on the Laird's part to turn the drawing into an object that enters the market as a commodity – as the three painters are leaving the studio, the Laird rushes back to announce that he would like to buy that particular wall, and enquires about its price. His attempt at the acquisition of the drawing through monetary transaction introduces the item into yet another route of circulation – that of exchange values.

25   Similarly, the popular craze turns Trilby/La Svengali into an object of consumption on a mass scale as representations of her on stage become the most sought-after products. The urban environment provides ample sites and technologies for the public to consume her image. Casts of her feet are sold at Brucciani's[7], so that Little Billee's private fetishization gets replicated on a mass scale. Crowds gather in front of the Stereoscopic Company to gaze at images that show her "in all sizes and costumes" (222). Photos of La Svengali are displayed in shop-windows; ironically, the best-selling image is the one in which she is wearing a Greek dress, with her left foot on a little stool. This is Little Billee's idealized image of transcendental beauty, but in a highly choreographed version, and turned into a publicity poster. Initially, when the three artists see her perform on stage, the Laird has doubts as to whether La Svengali is really identical with Trilby, and at this point the semantic confusion referred to earlier is expanded by a sense of visual confusion. Curiously enough, in

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[7] In 1864, Brucciani opened a London-based business that manufactured plaster casts of classical and Renaissance sculpture for commercial purposes (Haskell and Penny 117-23).

this image-saturated world of the city, it is through the filter of a representation that this bewilderment is resolved and Trilby's identity is re-affirmed – when the three of them see a photo of her foot in a display window, Little Billee exclaims, "*The foot! Now* have you got any doubts?" The Laird agrees that it is indeed Trilby, and "they all go in and purchase largely" (222). In the end, it is only her foot (or rather, its representation) by which she can be recognized – in other words, the metonymic substitution has entirely eclipsed the whole. Paradoxically, it is what used to be the mark of her uniqueness that now makes her easily reproducible. And instead of looking for a merely aesthetic experience, the three artists now feel compelled to *own* her image. The fact that they purchase largely, however, points to the fact that they cannot have their desires fulfilled. In this respect it is useful to recall Rachel Bowlby's analysis of the gender dynamics surrounding consumerism: whereas on the surface, the consumer/commodity relation might easily fit in with the dominant gender paradigm of the masculine subject taking possession of the passive feminine object, this model gets complicated once we consider the fact that the consumer is virtually dependent on the commodity's promise to complement his or her identity and selfhood: "The consumer is not (just) an active appropriator of objects for sale. His or her entire identity, the constitution of the self as a social subject, a "citizen of consumer society," depends on the acquisition of appropriate subjects. […] There is thus a clear sense in which the consumer is not so much possessor of as possessed by the commodities […] The boundaries of subject and object, active and passive, owner and owned, unique and general, break down in this endless reflexive interplay of consumer and consumed" (28-29). Accordingly, there is no clear separation between masculine and feminine positions in the dynamics between the urban crowd and Trilby/La Svengali (and her representations) – the consumers drawn to her image end up capitulating to her lure as much as they appropriate her.

26   As La Svengali is consumed by the devouring urban public, the gender connotations governing consumption are thus revealed to be highly complex. Similarly, gender issues also play a significant role in the impact of her performances on the audience. As a diva, La Svengali is a figure akin to a femme fatale and becomes the centripetal force of her environment. Everyone, regardless of their class or social status, is drawn to her. In contrast to Little Billee's idealized, non-material image of Trilby, La Svengali is described in highly sexualized terms. The music coming from her mouth is like liquid oozing from her monumental body, "like a clear, purling, crystal stream that gurgles and foams and bubbles along" (199). Having seen her performance, Taffy, the Laird and Little Billee feel that "they must drink of that bubbling fountain once more – *coûte que coûte*" (208). Adored by the

urban crowds, the figure of La Svengali is turned into a public fountain, creating an insatiable appetite that can never be satisfied completely, while holding up the illusory promise of fulfilment that in fact gets endlessly deferred.

27   The language of mesmerism is particularly suitable for dramatizing the forces behind commodity fetishism; in fact, Marx himself often resorts to metaphors of transcendence in his analysis of the commodity: he speaks of "the mystical character of commodities" (164) and describes it as "abounding in metaphysical subtleties and theological niceties" (163). In the novel, Trilby is depicted as if controlled by larger forces; she is likened to a "singing-machine" and "an organ to play upon" (275). Viewed from this angle, her objectification could not be more extreme, and rather than a subject deprived of her agency, in this sense it might be more appropriate to describe her as an object come to life, akin to Marx's example of the table that stands on its head.

28   Nevertheless, it would be a mistake to regard Du Maurier's heroine as the embodiment of complete objectification, even as she displays a complete loss of self-determination in front of her audience, and representations of her are voraciously devoured by the urban crowd. Trilby/La Svengali is a highly ambiguous figure, combining the more sinister elements of commodification and standardization with some of the positive elements of mass production and entertainment. Whereas in the first part of the novel, Trilby is frozen into timeless immobility via Little Billee's idealization, Svengali re-mobilizes the multiple facets of her identity. Earlier in the novel, Svengali established his fame thanks to his ability to perform music in a variety of ways. Correspondingly, La Svengali can sing the most trivial tune in different registers, each time adopting a different persona, and consequently triggering extreme emotions in the audience. In this sense, her ever-changing personality corresponds to the commodity's essential plasticity. The excessive repetition and the heightened emotions, however, threaten to empty her performance of any meaning; as one member of the audience remarks, "I couldn't tell 'God save the Queen' from 'Pop goes the Weasel'" (154-55). In semiotic terms, La Svengali is a pure signifier, entirely severed from the referent, the peak of her performance being a reduction *ad absurdum*: "un impromptu de Chopin, sans paroles" (188), that is, performed entirely without words. Like Warhol's "Diamond Shoes" in Fredric Jameson's discussion, she is unable to refer to anything outside of herself, and signals an artifice that, to quote Jameson, fails to operate as "a clue or a symptom for some vaster reality" (8). Yet in a less pessimistic reading, Trilby/La Svengali thereby also de-stabilizes the notion of the male genius, and disrupts the protocol defining the proper ways of consuming art: after a long description of sentimental images that La Svengali's performance

conjures up in the audience's imagination, the narrator remarks, "Chopin, it is true, may have meant something quite different" (198) – ultimately, however, it does not really seem to matter what the creator of the music meant, and in this sense, Trilby renders Chopin aesthetically available to everyone.

29   Viewed from this angle, Trilby/La Svengali desacrilizes the concept of male genius, and even in the process of consumption, there is more at work than her merely being reduced to the passive component. Furthermore, her performance unites her audience, annihilating national and class boundaries. Even though the French are presented as vehemently anti-German, when La Svengali sings a song about a German Fräulein, the Parisian audience is moved to tears. Dukes, lords, and common people are equally enchanted by her; she sings in private salons as well as on the street – in this respect, she symbolizes the egalitarian aspects of mass culture. In addition, Trilby surpasses both of her 'masters' in terms of glory and significance. Svengali dies of a heart attack during one of her performances, and although Little Billee outlives her by a short period of time, his importance both as an artist and as a character is completely diminished by the end of the novel, so that even his mother refers to him as "a little obscure art student" and a "penniless and insignificant [...] nobody" (248). At the same time, Mrs. Bagot, previously portrayed as Trilby's staunchest critic, cannot help but submit to Trilby's charm, and finds herself "worshipping this fast-fading lily" (248). Whereas a great number of pages are devoted to Trilby's last days, Little Billee's death is relegated to a single paragraph, and he quietly passes from the text without further reference. By contrast, Trilby/La Svengali leaves an ineffaceable mark on the urban environment, an excess that cannot be easily tamed. Trilby is restored to the private space of her bedroom during her last days, but this act of re-domestication is only achieved through a great effort to keep the urban crowd at bay. As news of her dying reach the public, she receives a flood of responses: there are "endless letters and telegrams from all parts of Europe," "disinterested offers of service," "beggings for an interview from famous *impresarios*," as well as a "constant rolling of carriages up to the door" (247). La Svengali's admirers literally try to cross the threshold separating them from their object of fascination, so that the urban crowd in its various carnations must be barred from entrance in order for Trilby to be protected from the extreme emotions stirred by her public performance.

30   Against the background of the visual, material and technological conditions of the late-Victorian city, the narrative manages to lend its heroine visibility and stage her on the urban platform. Even if at times this leads to disturbing consequences, the figure of Trilby/La Svengali shifts back and forth between the two-fold potential of her urban presence. While

prone to sexualisation and commodification, she simultaneously dislodges the power of a number of ideological formations seeking to keep women in place. Du Maurier's metropolitan landscape exhibits several oppositions in a dynamic interaction with each other, all of them highly implicated in the question of gender – public/private, urban/pastoral, mass-produced/authentic – and with Trilby/La Svengali traversing the line separating the various domains, all the while remaining irreducible to any one of them.

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The Slutwalks: Reappropriation through Demonstration

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Abstract:
The Slutwalks were protests which took place in cities across the world in summer 2011 and were sparked when a police officer told a group of students that they should stop dressing like sluts to avoid being sexually assaulted. A global movement in which women and men took to the streets - many dressed provocatively and proudly called themselves sluts - in an attempt to reclaim both the derogatory term and the right to dress how they want; free from judgement. This paper interviews Slutwalk participants from Newcastle-upon-Tyne, UK and Vienna, Austria to explore their motivations for getting involved and to gain a deeper understanding of how they have challenged androcentric structural norms that are manifest within the city.

1   From a radical feminist perspective, the city has been so thoroughly characterised by male structures and pervaded by male practices that women have been kept on the margins and, ultimately, have been rendered invisible in this male-dominated environment. Urban architecture with its high-rise buildings reverberates with phallic symbols; a hegemonic narrative of growth and expansion favours capitalist practices of exploitation that exclude female practices; arguably, it is these urban features that have historically defined men's and women's roles and positioning in the city.

2   From a less radical stance, feminist geographers Deborah Parsons, Doreen Massey, Elizabeth Wilson and Leslie Kanes Weisman have provided important discussions on how a given city's spatial structures, its built environment and a hegemonic male narrative have jointly shaped gendered experiences. In their deconstructions of the city, they still maintain that the urban environment has perpetuated male dominance and female subordination. Patriarchy and androcentrism are still manifest in the urban environment. As there does not seem to be a female (counter-) narrative of the city, women are still marginalised in and by urban structures and practices. In line with these feminist geographers, this contribution assumes that, although women have gained the same rights as men, many gendered inequalities still exist and have continued to influence the urban environment, its structures and practices.

3   At the same time, of course, the urban environment is less monolithic than this cursory overview may suggest. As any living environment, it is inherently shaped by the practices of all its inhabitants, be they male or female, be they hegemonic or marginal. When it comes to gendered experience, the city emerges as a site of contestation within which many battles are fought over its structures and practices. In less martial words: Urban public space/s

serve as collective arenas to communicate discontent amongst groups. Such public displays of discontent may become acts of appropriation of urban space/s that may then not only re-define men's and women's experiences as well as their gendered roles and positionings. Rather, they may become expressions of belonging in the urban environment with its everyday structures and practices (Fenster 243).

4   The Slutwalks movement is one such example of appropriating urban public space/s. These walks have taken place in major cities across the world since 2011. Their provocative title expresses participants' attempt at reclaiming a derogatory term used against many "ordinary" women in everyday life to insult them and to thereby place them in an inferior position. At the same time, the Slutwalks constitute a distinctly urban phenomenon that both responds to and undermines the city's gendered structures, practices and narratives. Many women and even men took to the streets, dressed provocatively, to protest against stereotypical perceptions of women and against the social inequalities these entail. Accordingly, the marches illustrate how the city's hegemonic, patriarchal and androcentric, norms and practices are being challenged by the sheer physical presence of people who rebel against these very norms. Moreover, it is important to raise the question to what extent the Slutwalks may represent a tactic of reappropriating the urban environment's spatial structures as well.

5   This empirical study is based on interviews with a group of women who took part in The Slutwalks. The respondents are women from all walks of life; so, of course, factors like age, class, ethnicity and sexuality all impact on their individual perceptions and experiences not only of the city, but also of the Slutwalks. Yet, their shared narrative of having participated in the protests allows for comparing their testimonies, which will be used to give insights into the women's personal motivations for as well as their experiences in getting involved in the event. Due to the limitations of the small-scale qualitative research project conducted for the present purposes, not every facet of gender and its diversity can be explored. Rather, this contribution will begin with a brief discussion of the theoretical background, introducing the concepts of gendered space, language, the body, and gendered social protest before outlining the interview results in order to then conclude with a discussion of how The Slutwalks may have served as tactics of (re-)appropriating androcentric urban space/s.

6   In using the Grounded Theory method, the theoretical framework has been constructed from key concepts and themes derived from this empirical research. In taking this approach, the overarching research question is prevalent, yet the interviewees' responses

helped develop and underpin the main themes which were then explored and analysed in more depth within the theoretical framework. The theoretical part is subsumed under the overarching concept of The Androcentric City. Its core features are illustrated through the abstract categories of Space, Language, The Body, and Gendered Social Protest. The theoretical part shows how all four of these categories are interwoven with such important issues as power, control, safety and sexuality, and how they thus become ambiguous and fluid.

7   The subsequent part of this contribution presents the interviews and their main results. The overarching concept of The Androcentric City of the first, theoretical part, is replaced by the concept of Reappropriation. The change in terminology reflects The Slutwalks' challenge to the androcentrism manifest in the city: within the cluster of theoretical categories of the first part, the results section of the second part demonstrates how these categories have been reappropriated by the Slutwalk participants and, to some degree, how they have been overturned in the protest and have become forms of empowerment for them instead. The final part discusses these workings in more detail.

The Androcentric City

Space

8   Space has a wide array of meanings and evokes a broad range of associations. What all of these share is their emphasis on space being linked to one's sense of place in the world, which is not only the basis for one's feeling of being at home in a particular place, but which is also reverberated in one's feeling of being comfortable in more unknown places and, hence, in one's mobility. The complexity of this matter brings forth many interpretations and discussions (cf. Massey 1). The construction of space, specifically city space, can perpetuate divisions between groups in society, maintaining societal inequalities and subordination: "Space, like language, is socially constructed…the spatial arrangements of our buildings and communities reflect and reinforce the nature of gender, race and class relations in society […]. Language and space contribute to the power of some groups over others and the maintenance of human inequality." (Weisman 2) However, these divisions are often difficult to pinpoint: With the exception of changing rooms and toilets, explicit sex separations are rarely defined in urban spaces. Rather, gender inequalities may be maintained through a hegemonic masculine ideal and its inherent – and often implicit – 'rules' about such factors as appearance and dress. Non-compliance then impacts upon one's sense of belonging, and, what is more, upon one's general safety, too. Fitting in, as a process of social conformity, can

then become a feeling of being 'out of place' for certain groups, leading to groups such as women becoming objectified, even marginalised (Jarvis 19).

9   Omnipresent androcentrism in the construction of urban spaces and in the built environment can thus further propel gender divisions. Given women's lack of presence in the urban environment (and in the urban workplace) until recently, cities have become habitually male spaces, built upon masculine ideals. Skyscrapers, feminists have argued, are phallic, patriarchal symbols, which now take up large proportions of cities. This is starkly contrasted with the feminine imagery of the home as a 'nest' and 'birthplace'. Hence, space is very much entwined with language (as will also be shown below), representing masculine and feminine binary spheres. Through this socially constructed language, stark contrasts are evident between the city/masculine and home/feminine binaries, thus perpetuating gender divisions between the two areas (Weisman 17). This point can be argued to be somewhat reductionist in the explanation of gender divisions in cities, given the complex mechanisms that cities are: full of history, culture and people that make up the myriad of layers that jointly form the urban environment. However Doreen Massey explains that:

> Space and place, spaces and places, and our sense of them (and such related things as our degree of mobility) are gendered through and through […]. And this gendering of space both reflects *and has effects back* on the ways in which gender is constructed and understood in the societies in which we live (186).

10   The construction of space not only impacts upon the sense of belonging that groups can experience in urban spaces, but also on the different gendered uses of these constructed spaces and on gendered relations to these constructed spaces. This becomes particularly evident when considering the construction of the built environment in terms of the monitoring of city space: new forms of architecture and the growing use of surveillance in cities have rendered urban spaces less predictable (Koskela 2000). The gaze, power and control are key terms in looking at more subtle forms of the built environment, such as surveillance cameras, that change the ways in which city space is controlled and the ways in which people relate to that space. In shifting away from the built environment in a traditional architectural form, surveillance can turn space into a more fluid, intangible, heightened space that is difficult to grasp within its alternative dimensions. (Koskella 306). This can be argued to again create alienation and disorientation in bringing a gendered aspect to the use of surveillance cameras in urban spaces. Koskella puts forward the point that they reproduce patriarchal forms of power - women do not rely on those behind the cameras, due to the police and guards that are responsible for the daily routine of the surveillance, yet do not

necessarily consider who is behind the camera. The power and control over women in public urban spaces could be argued to perpetuate the objectification of women through the male gaze due to a predominant male group behind the camera and the mainly female group who move in areas more likely to have surveillance. (Koskela 255)

11   Another example of a heavily regulated and controlled space is that of shopping centres in which women habitually spend more time than men. In the initial construction of its predecessor, the department store, Elizabeth Wilson states that: "[The department store] created an 'aesthetic demi-monde' for the bourgeoisie in which beauty was for sale as a commodity" (Wilson 59). Still, towards the end of the 19th Century, the shopping mall was a space in which women could wander unchaperoned, without the protection of men (Wilson 60). The mall, like its earlier counterpart, the department store, is a "woman's world" (Weisman 44-5). Indeed, the term 'women's world' is used deliberately in relation to the shopping mall due to the rather obvious and narrow assumptions that shopping and consumerism constitute typically female leisure activities related to typically feminine attributes. Moreover, the shopping mall represents how a typical female space is linked to hegemonic ideals of femininity such as seeking enjoyment through shopping and consumerism. Shopping malls, which are carefully planned structures, aim to be the perfect place for women to spend their time – and money. "Malls are artificially controlled environments designed to create illusion and fantasy […]." (Weismann 44) Having put forward the argument that the city is a habitually masculine space, the shopping mall is considered as a more feminine space. As the image of the shopping centre, or of shopping in general, is most commonly associated with women, upon further scrutiny, even consumerism and shopping may come to signify forms of social control over women, e.g. through advertising and through its intrinsic ideology, as well as the heavy surveillance of those areas.

12   Paradoxically they are spaces that have always been associated with heavy monitoring and control, even from the 19th Century onwards. Today, shopping centres have become typical places of surveillance and thus reflect the male/female division in rather intricate ways. This can call in to question women's mobility in urban spaces and show its restrictions: women are not free to wander at their will without being controlled in and by their environment.

Language and the Urban Narrative

13   Language and space are connected in the construction of the city as a male space in which women have been kept on the margins. Feminists have argued that both the built

environment and the language used have been the driving forces in the creation of a masculine, gender blind narrative that has perpetuated the invisibility of women, both in urban spaces and urban scholarship. In moving from the built environment skyline to the street and the creation of a male narrative in city life, the cities of the 19th Century and the era of Modernity play a key role in the marginalising of women from the story of the city. Deborah Parsons' work is concerned with the 'urban wanderer' or the flâneur who was a key figure in the writings of Baudelaire. She contends that the modernist male figure painted as typically an artist, removed from financial responsibility, who is associated with "aesthetic circles of café life" (17), is a representation of the bourgeois male figure that dominates the image of the city and is permitted to wander the urban environment (17). The female, she argues, is not: "The city has been habitually conceived as a male space, in which women are either repressed or disobedient marginal presences, has resulted in an emphasis in theoretical analysis on gendered maps that reflect such conditions" (2). Janet Wolff claims that "there is no question of inventing the flâneuse; the essential point is that such a character was rendered impossible by the sexual divisions of the 19th Century" (47). In the above statements, it is demonstrated that there cannot be a female equivalent to the male urban wanderer due to the oppression and invisibility of women through writing and the construction of language of life in the city. In analysing the construction of language around city life and urban wandering, the masculine narrative has very much laid the foundations of a gendered map of the city in which men have historically been free to roam and women kept on the margins.

14   Language can also be used to show the differences in the way that women are referred to in contemporary society, creating a subordination and the existing invisibility of women through masculine narrative. In local colloquialisms this can be manifest, such as the North-East of England with such terms as hinny, pet, love and darling that are used to greet women. Although seen as rather harmless terms and classed as part of the local culture, they could be deemed sexist given the lack of equivalent vocabulary for men - with the overall possible aim to infantilise women (Jarvis 93). Judith Butler even further deconstructs the binary divisions of gender, calling for language that is not heterosexually presupposed. She cites Wittig in her assertion that language is an "institution that can be radically transformed […] weakened by the collective actions of choosing individuals" (36). In creating gender binary divisions and the language used to define and describe gender identities synonymous with masculine and feminine; they are based on a "heterosexual contract" (36) and do not include homosexual identities or identities removed from reproductive function (36).

15   What Helen Jarvis claims is that in local cultures, language used as terms of endearment towards women also has chauvinist meanings at their root. What makes this apparent may not be the words themselves, but the point that there are no words that represent the male equivalent due to the lack of a female narrative until relatively recently. The Slutwalks could be argued to be an attempt of weakening such a derogatory term as 'slut' in the strive to reclaim a word so steeped in misogyny.

 The Body

16   While language works in subtle ways, images of the body are more evident in the urban landscape. Quite often, they propagate hegemonic feminine and masculine identities. It is particularly in the West that images of hyper-sexualised females dominate billboards and shop windows and thus imply a dominant feminine identity. In recent years, feminists have begun to link the body and its relation to space more concretely, both in a contemporary postmodern context but also retrospectively.

17   Whilst in the 19th Century, the above-mentioned shopping malls were emerging as a female domain in which women could wander free of constraints, prostitutes were also a common presence within the modernist city. The prostitute in many ways resembles the binary opposite to the flâneur: "The public symbol of the female vice, the prostitute established a stark contrast to domesticated feminine virtue as well as to male bourgeois identity" (Walkowitz 21). What the prostitutes of the modernist era represented was not only how women of different classes and sections of society related to the city, clearly in different ways, but still on the margins. Yet they resided in red-light districts, as commodities for the male spectators and consumers. Red-light districts remain a consistent zone in many cities today, yet the growth of lap-dancing clubs and strip bars have meant that sexualised activity has become more mainstream, and a widely accepted form of leisure. The hyper-sexualised female body is not something restricted to red-light districts and billboards, but is as accessible on the high street as bars and cafes. In current feminist debate, contentions lie whether women becoming strippers and lap-dancing are a form of empowerment or not. Kat Banyard states that "the 1990s [was] the decade during which sex became managed, manufactured, marketed, and consumed" she further adds "lap-dancing clubs in the UK doubled between 2004 and 2008 to at least 300" (138-39). In *Female Chauvinist Pigs*, Ariel Levy claims that in today's hyper-sexualised, western society, that if you are against stripping and taking part in 'Raunch Culture' then it is considered passé in our supposed postfeminist era. What many feminists argue are the contradictions of this so-called empowerment, is that

the sex industry and the proliferation of strip bars and lap dancing clubs perpetuate a hyper-sexualised image of women that still controls and oppresses them due an identity based on a masculine ideal. The counter argument being that women now have the right to dress and act how they want, free from constraints and pressures to be the 'home-maker' and 'good wife' that they once were.

18   The cultural forces that shaped gendered bodies have attracted a growing interest by feminist commentators, bringing into question issues of controlling our own bodies and having them regulated by others (Jarvis 113). Moreover, this illustrated how our bodies are emblazoned with meaning around sexuality and reiterate the dominant ideals of heterosexuality. "Repeated performances of expected behaviours, then, establish regulatory practices for gendered, sexed and sexualised bodies – and these practices are, importantly, imprinted on space" (Binnie ix). In 'doing' our gender, Butler puts forward "that regulatory ideal is then exposed as a norm and a fiction that disguises itself as a developmental law regulating the sexual field that it purports to describe (185). In relation to the hegemonic ideal of the body, particularly the feminine body, it is a political and symbolic vessel open to much contention and discourse, which Butler has deconstructed and debated in her Queer Theory paradigm.

19   Since emerging in the 1990s Queer Theory has sought to challenge dominant notions of sexuality and heteronormative ideals around gender and question the unwavering notions of sexual identities and behaviours. Queer Theory instead places itself in opposition to the categorisations of sex and even gender by exploring and theorising marginalised groups and behaviours not seen as normative (Cohen 201). In cities, queer spaces have become the sight of designated quarters, in which marginalised activity takes place and marginalised identities are played out. Binnie puts forward the argument that sexuality and space can be somewhat ephemeral in that in the night time economy, queer practices take place in Gay Villages, yet during the day this can create problems with safety (Binnie 113). This demonstrates that acts of marginalised activity – that is behaviour removed from the norm - is not regarded as something as accepted within mainstream society.

Gendered Social Protest

20   The body in protest is an example of the political subjectivity that can be directed at gender, with various perceptions of how not just the individual body, but a body of people taking political action can be interpreted by onlookers, commentators and hegemonic discourses. In the growing field of gender and social movements, observations of the

complexities and contradictions involved in gendered (and non-gendered) protests have been made. Einwohner *et al* claim that "movements that draw on feminine stereotypes face a double bind that hampers their success" (679). In protesting about non-gender issues, when images are attached to the protest, cultural ideas around masculinity and femininity can be constructed. The portrayal of the protesters in action is significant due to the construction and manipulation of gendered meanings and identities. Einwohner *et al* also put forward the point that whether it is intentional or not to manipulate the gendered meanings of demonstrators, that the legitimacy and potential outcomes of a protest can be obstructed. However, what they assert is that "movements that are associated with traditional meanings of gender will be more acceptable than those that resist such meanings" (679). Seemingly conventional notions of femininity and masculinity still prevail, even in rather unconventional activities such as demonstrations. This notion of attaching typical gendered traits to a protesting crowd is somewhat impervious to change, as Deborah Parsons asserts: "Scientific studies of women centred on the female species as less evolved than the male, and thus less intelligent, less morally reasoning, more emotional and prone to violence […] the mass as irrational, excitable, childish, and easily led, all traits they associate with feminine instincts (Parsons 44-45). In focussing on stereotypical feminine traits, a narrative has been established in portraying the female protester as irrational and ultimately situating female protest beneath that of the predominantly male protest. Such patriarchal explanations as this have been used to undermine female protests; the very protests that have sought to fight against such patriarchal controls and narratives set against them. The juxtaposed quotes from Einwohner also highlight the complexities of gendered protest in that conventional notions of gender are seemingly more acceptable to the onlooker, yet gender stereotypes are perpetuated because of this.

21   Today stereotypes are still drawn on as explanations for certain gendered behaviours and motivations. In turning the argument around to a predominantly male crowd of demonstrators, typical traits such as intelligence, being politically active and men as natural leaders, could equally be used as motivations and justifications for an equivalent male crowd of protesters. In conforming to overriding gender traits, it is debatable as to whether this can be a hindrance or a help to women's protests that focus on gender equality. Being seen to display typical gendered characteristics could be viewed as rebellion and the refusal to conform to more masculine language and set of actions. This may demonstrate the reclaiming of femininity and the celebration of qualities that could have been traditionally seen as weaknesses. Taylor investigates the gender processes in women's self-help movements and

found that they promoted essentially feminine traits and qualities during their demonstrations, using "open displays of emotion, empathy, and attention to participants' biographies" (20). Rather than claim that men do not possess any of the above qualities, they are traits commonly associated with femininity and were used, with the inclusivity of males, as structural forms in the organisation process. What Taylor goes on to add is that a gendered analysis of social movements needs to be aware of the gender binary representations which activists use. This is to recognise and categorise themselves in order to share both commonalities with each other to stimulate collective action, but to also draw a boundary between themselves and their opponents (21). The 'collective' is clearly significant is sharing a common goal in protesting for a certain cause, yet linked with personal benefits and self-identities thus relating a united mass of people to individual motivations for demonstrating (Oliver & Marwell 252). Yet, in using the gendered body within protest, Theresa O' Keefe is critical of the "emancipatory potential of the Slutwalk movement" (10) and how inclusivity of the protests to bodies that do not fit within the 'norm' which she feels The Slutwalks portray. O' Keefe asserts the argument that a protest that uses the body so explicitly in its portrayal can be deemed as creating and widening gender hierarchies based on body difference. What O' Keefe calls for is, given that bodies are both the medium and the message within The Slutwalks that there is a "blindness to structural oppression" and that they "form a category of femininity that is rooted in sexualised and patriarchal notions of autonomy and agency" (10). In her criticisms of Slutwalks, O'Keefe places The Slutwalks firmly in 'Post feminism' in which structural patriarchy is ignored in the hyper-sexualised body protest that has taken place. The question of lack of inclusivity to different forms of sexuality and encompassing of women's experiences calls in to question the commonalities and collective conscious that the Slutwalks may have. The politics of the body and the discursive practices that occur around the representation and perception of the female body, demonstrate that the very reason and message of the political protest itself can become somewhat secondary.

RESULTS

22   Each interview conducted brought fresh perspectives and shed new light on issues under discussion, and a great diversity of thoughts, opinions and perspectives emerged. The crucial focus of the analysis is to draw parallels between the responses and the main research question, to show in what ways they challenge the androcentric city and to what extent they reappropriated gendered space in their respective cities. The categories and concepts will be listed in order to give structure to the analysis.

Reappropriation

Space

23   Throughout the interviews, the protest was often referred to as a space that allowed the protesters to act, dress, say what they want and be safe due to being part of a collective group and fighting for the same cause as each other. The moving, unfixed space in which the body of people moved somewhat symbolised a space in which they could perform without judgement.

24   El: "For me, the people in the demonstration felt like they were doing something that was important to them and also the feeling having a free space and having fun wearing something they wouldn't usually wear on the street. That was this empowerment feeling that had a great effect"

25   Hu: "It was made quite clearly that people should dress in what they feel comfortable in and for some people they just went in their normal clothes, for other people it was an opportunity to wear clothes that they wouldn't feel comfortable in because, as my Mum pointed out, when you are in a big mob of people, you can wear what you want and you can say what you want because nobody can attack you in that space and nobody can make you feel bad about yourself while you are in that group of people, so there were some people that jumped on the opportunity to go in underwear or something but people just wore what they wanted to."

26   What the protest allowed many to do was be creative in wearing and acting as something that they feel they may have been judged doing outside of the group that they were in. The two respondents above took part in separate Slutwalk protests yet both felt that it created a safe space to have fun in. One respondent, from the Newcastle march was more uncertain of the march, due to it being the first Slutwalk and the messages that it was giving out:

27   Ru: "it was quite small and it went really fast rather than go slow and take the space that we were wanting to reclaim and because of the message – it's an angry and provocative message I think… if you walk as a group of women telling men to fuck off basically then you are just vulnerable, it makes me feel empowered and fantastic to be with those women, to have strength in numbers, but it is a really provocative message, I'd be surprised not to get a reaction."

28   This respondent felt empowered within the space that the protest itself created yet did not feel that it reclaimed the physical space that it had the potential to in order to get the

message across due to its fast pace. Although there was a feeling of safety within the group amongst the respondents, there was clearly still reluctance due to its mixed messages and possible hostile reaction.

Language and the Urban Narrative

29   The discussion of the word slut surfaced naturally in a lot of the interviews with many respondents saying that they wanted to get involved in spite of their reservations about the so-called reclaiming of the word. There was a clear trend in responses and opinions on the much contested name of the protest:

30   Ly: "I've got to say probably because I'm an older woman, when I first heard about the Slutwalks I probably wasn't so enamoured with the idea with the connotations of a word I had grown up with was something I had fought against"

31   Rh: "For me, if we could ignore the word slut that would be good as I don't like the word and don't think it can be reclaimed as we never had it as a positive word in the first place."

32   Au: "I don't want to call myself a slut, I don't want to call anybody a slut, it's not the word itself but what is behind the word."

33   Ru: "I understand and support ideas around reclaiming words like queer, nigger maybe but I don't think slut ever had any positive connotations for women as I understand it, it's always been used in a derogatory way and doesn't have any emancipatory routes, I don't see it as a word to reclaim."

34   Most of the respondents were uncomfortable in reclaiming a word that, at its root is misogynistic. Rather than be in agreement with the critics of the Slutwalk itself, the respondents of my interviews are in support of the march yet have been able to put opinions aside on the name of the protest. What came across clearly in the interviews was the enthusiasm to get involved in the protest and the reasons for marching which in turn overcame doubts about the name of the march itself.

35   The Slutwalk that took place in Vienna brought about an interesting discussion on reclaiming the word slut. The connotations of the word slut in German; the participants felt would be too negative and even put off potential marchers for the protest. By using the English term it also meant that it was part of something bigger, the global Slutwalk movement as a whole rather than a localised protest.

36   Au: For me, I can imagine reclaiming the word in English but in German the word is so negative – *Schlampe* - I don't want to claim the word, I don't know if it is worth it, I think it is energy that isn't worth spending.

37   El: the word slut, I would say that it is connected to the Slutwalk now and not so much connected to its usual meaning. Which also makes it difficult as for me personally I would have loved to use the German word as it is something that people hear and I would love to have the effect of reclaiming the word but on the other hand I think it would have meant that people would have been afraid to come.

The Body

38   In talking to The Slutwalk participants, it was surprising to find that the lot of marchers had not in fact dressed in a provocative way. Having interviewed the organisers of the Newcastle and Vienna Slutwalks, they had made it clear to anyone that wanted to join that they could wear what they wanted for the protest. What many did was have fun and be creative with how they dressed on The Slutwalk, given that it was a safe space in which to do that. Yet the image of the provocatively dressed women who took to the streets dominated the images in the press.

39   Ro: "The media will always pick up on something negative, regardless of what happens. I dressed on the Slutwalk the way that I normally dress and my message was I get shit for dressing like this too, for not dressing like their version of feminine."

40   The Vienna Slutwalk organisers and protesters, after seeing the images that had dominated newspapers, were savvy about getting the press coverage that they wanted for the protest, to get the message across through banners and placards rather than in the provocative images.

41   El: "I had the impression that when people got photographed at ours, people tried not to be super sexy and to put a lot of signs in front of their bodies."

42   The way in which the respondents approached the Slutwalk depended on what they felt comfortable in. The messages of the protest and the wider societal discussion about women's bodies, sexuality and the reclaiming of language created a gap that left some of the participants questioning whether these discussions should have taken place initially. One respondent in particular felt that it was what the Slutwalk lacked:

43   Rh: "I think that the way in which women's bodies are controlled has a lot to do with clothes, fashion, and shopping and consumerism and global capitalism so I think that's a massive discussion to have when you take all of those extra things that it impacts on."

44   The contradictory messages of the Slutwalk were of concern to some of the participants. In being aware of the hegemonic images of women's bodies as sexualised and the oppressive controls that are placed on them, there were small tactics by some participants to still get the core message across about sexual harassment and the objectification of women, by not dressing and displaying their bodies in a certain way. The quote above is representative of broader questions asked of how to tackle these patriarchal controls in a discursive terrain that has already been set through a history of oppression towards women's bodies and the dominant ideal that persists in society. Although serious questions needed to be asked, responses from other interviewees reflected an alternative empowered attitude to dressing provocatively for the demonstration.

45   Hu: "if you think that this is the wrong way to empower myself, well I haven't got any other alternatives at the moment. I haven't come across any other movement recently that has been as big as this and I am happy where I am."

46   Ra: "A lot of women do feel like they have to dress a certain way but it's more because a lot of them dress the way they want to because it makes them feel better about themselves and their bodies and they can show it off how they want."

Mobilisation/Gendered Social Protest

47   From the concepts presented above, there were conflicting viewpoints on the protest and its messages, raising questions and doubts in some participants' minds and giving empowerment to others. What every respondent was wholly positive about was the mobilisation of a predominantly young crowd to take to the streets in anger at the way they had, and the way they had saw other women being treated. The majority of respondents had been involved in activism before and commented that they saw many new people getting involved who were enthusiastic about The Slutwalks. Although the protest raised questions, there was no doubt it had mobilised many women and men to get involved.

48   El: "it was a new way of doing political work and what attracted me was its openness and you could see people that would never normally campaign and never going on the streets but I thought it concerns me and it is about me and feel like you can be around other people and have fun with it with something that is normally very negative."

49   Rh: "it was the first demonstration I had been on and I had wanted to get involved with more activism. So we decided to get involved and a good opportunity to get feminism on the streets of the city centre and bring people together."

Feminist Movements

50   Every respondent's feminism was something unique to them. Motivations for getting involved all differed between one respondent and the next; whilst for the young respondents The Slutwalks is something that they can identify with and for the older respondents who had been involved with feminist activism before; it was a youthful movement that they wanted to support, in spite of reservations.

51   Ru: "a new movement of women who are getting angry and pissed off and doing something about it. They are doing things differently to how we did things in my generation I think, in a more D.I.Y, punk, music oriented, informed by anarchism stuff like that."

52   H: "I have a problem with some women that aren't involved in the Slutwalk that criticise movements like this because for some reason like, I happen to like shaving my legs that this means that I'm not a proper feminist and I really, really dislike the idea of a proper feminist because it means something different to a lot of people…Stuff like that is really lovely because you do get an idea around the fun sense of it, it needs to be creative, you can't sit and petition from home or anything like that because you need something so creative that it will engage people."

53   Ro: "I'm incredibly hopeful that there is a lot of energy, a lot of enthusiasm and a lot of young people incredibly motivated to support feminism and I want to be there to support them to do that and their own kind of feminism, not just what I believe it to be but around what they're doing."

54   In seeing the diversity in respondent's own feminism, The Slutwalks gave them a clear space in which to mobilise as part of a collective and fight for the same causes and against the same oppressions. The creative space that The Slutwalks established, also allowed an open space in which protesters could be individual, which demonstrated the inclusivity of different feminisms and people from different backgrounds and ages.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

55   This study sought to explore the question: In what ways do the Slutwalks challenge the androcentric structural norms of the city, and to what extent do they represent a tactic of the reappropriation of gendered space in cities?

56   In deconstructing the city as androcentric, and seeing space as gendered, The Slutwalks have been analysed in this research as a protest that challenges the hegemonic norms of feminine identities and the oppressive constraints that women come up against in everyday life. As Doreen Massey states: "Space and place, spaces and places, and our sense

of them (and such related things as our degree of mobility) are gendered through and through" (186). The Slutwalks have challenged, through controversial strategies, gendered norms and hegemonic values evident within city spaces, in mobilising and taking up a mobile space through city streets; the reclamation of the word slut and the attire associated with being a slut has been pursued.

57   The word slut, within this study however, was as much contested by the Slutwalk protesters as it was in the media. In fact, the word slut has not been reclaimed. Rather, there is reluctance in putting forward the argument that the attempt at reclaiming a derogatory word, represented empowerment and reappropriation. The overall attitude and nature of the protest was angry, uncompromising and energetic, which is reflected in the name of the protest itself. Yet mainly, through mobilising in this fashion and taking to the streets, demonstrates that the participants of the study and the Slutwalk protests they belonged to, created a (safe) space in which their voices could be heard, they could feel empowered, have control and feel a sense of belonging. In the construction of the mobile space that the protests took up, a predominantly female narrative, awash with people with their own individual feminisms could exist.

58   In protesting against sexual harassment, the objectification by men towards women, sexual violence and 'slut-shaming', the Slutwalks have challenged male authority and fought against the inequalities that women face in everyday life. In taking to the streets in the first place, on a fundamental level, the androcentric, patriarchal terrain of the city has been challenged. In adopting the language and dressing in the clothing that is deemed 'slutty', Slutwalk protesters were using the very language and attitude used to oppress them as forms of empowerment. This image of empowerment is of having the freedom to express themselves sexually, to dress the way they want, to not feel objectified, or be judged for the choices they have made. However, the aforementioned image of empowerment is based on masculine notions of female sexuality and to some extent reflects hyper-sexualised culture. The strategy of reclaiming both the word slut and 'slutty clothing' in the protest has been the reason for much media attention. Not only have there been prolific debates about using the word slut and dressing in a sexualised way, but paradoxically, the images used to accompany the vast majority of articles have been of young women, dressed in a hyper-sexualised way whose bodies do fit within a dominant heteronormative ideal of being white, slim, young and sexualised. With the dominant images that sweep the west where forms of empowerment for women are synonymous with sexualisation; the overall strategy of the Slutwalk and the messages that it gives, means that there is a disconnect between the core message of the

protest and that which is being received by its observers and even some of its participants. In *Female Chauvinist Pigs* Ariel Levy discusses this very predicament of modern day western culture.

> Because we have determined that all empowered women must be overtly and publicly sexual, and because the only sign of sexuality we seem to be able to recognise is a direct allusion to red-light entertainment, we have laced the sleazy energy and aesthetic of a topless club or a Penthouse shoot throughout our entire culture (26).

59   Within the research, this contradictory form of empowerment that Ariel Levy states above has been debated. Rather than to draw the conclusion from this discussion that The Slutwalk participants have not empowered themselves through being overtly sexual; rather than just dressing provocatively and striving to reclaim derogatory language, it was belonging to a collective and the solidarity that this created amongst those that took part which contributed heavily to the empowerment felt amongst the marchers.

60   The *tactics* of reappropriation are conceptual rather than concrete. To give a brief statement in answer to the question: The Slutwalks do not reappropriate gendered space in cities, but create a (safe) space of reappropriation. Within the confined space of the protest, respondents felt they could be creative and imaginative with what they wore and the placards that they carried, that they could say and be who they wanted and not feel threatened. A quote from the organiser of the Newcastle Slutwalk illustrates this:

> L: "the open megaphone session, a lot of people wouldn't have said those things in a public capacity such as in that group. The way that they saw it was that they were supportive of the cause and sympathetic to the experiences and you're not going to be attacked for anything that you come out with."

61   The opportunity to speak out about personal experiences and the causes for the demonstration was something that the protest allowed them to do. In creating a (safe) space of reappropriation, what the protest did was within the confines of the group, reappropriate the very language and attitude towards provocative dress as a justification for rape, and turn this around as a form of power and control for themselves. The tactics themselves were not spatial, they cannot be measured. But the space in which the protest took place symbolised a move towards reappropriation of the body, control, language, sexuality and safety for many. In this respect, parallels can be drawn between Slutwalks and the Queer Theory ethos. Its very name indicates that empowerment can be gained through the reappropriation of language and representing behaviour that goes against dominant, normative ideals. An alternative message from the Slutwalks is that the aggressive, angry attitude of the protesters does go against heternormative ideals synonymous with femininity and rather, creates a space for marginalised activity to take place in a fluid, moving zone.

62   What protesters wore on the march was the focus of much media attention, with the majority of articles written about the Slutwalks accompanied by images of proactively dressed women. From speaking to one particular respondent who wore her usual attire to the protest because of the negative responses she gets for dressing like a "dyke", what struck was the significance of dressing in everyday dress, removed from the media spectacle created, yet still mocking the very notion that dressing a certain way would ever justify being harassed and/or assaulted, that this in any way should have a bearing on whether they are attacked, both verbally and physically. By doing this, social norms and values that oppress and judge women for what they wear both in a provocative and 'unfeminine' sense and how they act, are being deconstructed. In drawing on feminist work that has informed this research, particularly from Weisman and Massey, it is clear that the Slutwalks have challenged traditional notions of the androcentric city which is informed by patriarchy. In an attempt to regain power and control they have come right up to the face of the systems that oppress them, giving them a sense of belonging and solidarity in a collective, mobilised group.

63   The Slutwalk is not without its contradictions and nuanced messages which unsurprisingly have been interpreted in various ways by its participants. The dominant media image and sometimes condescending tone of the newspaper articles written paint a distorted picture of what the Slutwalks are, which perpetuate these mixed messages. Having the opportunity to interview Slutwalk participants really brought the protest to life and added a true human and feminist narrative to this story. The personal motivations and experiences behind the façade were not only interesting to listen to but added multidimensional layers to the research. Although The Slutwalks present contradictory messages at times, in western society women all over are fed riddling contradictory messages of how to be, how to act and rather than realistic notions of femininity being visible, more and more synthetic images are evident in popular culture. In conducting this timely research, commentary has been made on what mobilised younger and older women are doing to fight the inequalities. In one rather disheartening yet uplifting quote, the youngest respondent of sixteen years stated that:

64   "I don't feel like I have much control over what I want to do or just what I can do. I mean I think I have a lot more opportunities than other people but it doesn't feel like it especially now when everything is being cut and it's like if you want to do something then you have to do it yourself and you won't get help, in fact you'll probably be discouraged from it so it's nice to find a group of people that you can do this sort of thing with."

65   In an era of austerity, the statement made from one young woman indicates that although there may not be much opportunity on the horizon; belonging to a youth group and

meeting friends from taking part in The Slutwalks has allowed her to be amongst likeminded people who wish to make a difference in society. Since the Slutwalks took place in Newcastle-Upon-Tyne, a new feminist energy has been induced in to the area with grassroots events taking place involving feminists of all ages.

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Dowry Practices and Gendered Space in Urban Patna/India

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Abstract:
In arranged marriages, bride-givers and bride-takers participate in the transactional space with different intentions during marriage solemnization. Hypergamy along with caste-endogamy restricts the options for brides' fathers in the selection of grooms leading to dowry competitiveness while grooms' families feel justified in demanding dowry as a return for the investment in their son. Raised lifestyles and more disposable income due to modernization in Indian cities have aggravated the phenomenon further. This article investigates how dowry practices create and sustain a highly gendered space in urban Patna/Bihar. The representational space of the social practice of dowry is analyzed in 16 unstructured in-depth interviews with fathers of brides and women of the Hindu Kushwaha caste in West Patna and old Patna city. To examine how transactional space is created, groom's family factors and bride-giving family factors that encourage dowry practices are identified. Furthermore, the discriminatory spaces in the brides' parental and marital homes as well as strategies and attitudes to deal with dowry are investigated.

1   North India is considered as the patriarchal heartland of India, as here patriarchy creates a highly gendered space (Datta 127). The patriarchal system leads to the institutional establishment of gendered practices that reinforce the subordinate position of women and girls in society; it is particularly the latter group who has minimal decision-making power. This becomes evident, for instance, in dowry as one such gendered practice. Dowry refers to the property that is given, at the time of marriage, by the bride's parents to the groom or his parents under duress, coercion or pressure (Teja 94), through the transactional space created by the grooms' families. This article investigates how dowry as a social practice creates and sustains a highly gendered and utterly discriminatory space in urban Patna, Bihar.

2   In contemporary India, the totality of dowry assets in marital arrangements can be divided into three parts. First, there is a property transfer, called *streedhan*, as a form of pre-mortem bequest from the parents to their daughter upon her marriage, over which she has, however, no legal control (Goody and Tambiah 85). Second, gifts are part of a ritual exchange between the families of the bride and the groom to symbolize their union. Third, cash is given as "marriage payment" with the explicit understanding that without it the marriage contract will be voided (Sen 78). Strictly speaking, only the last item can be categorized as dowry, which then is not a freewill gift of money or property, but has a coercive element attached to it (Sen 78).

3   Marriage practices in societies with dowries are typically monogamous, patrilineal (i.e., class status follows from the husband's status), and endogamous (Anderson 271). Endogamy is referring to marriages of men and women of equal status or of the same caste. This caste monogamy preserves caste purity. Furthermore, societies with dowries exhibit substantial socio-economic differentiation and class stratification. According to Kodoth (5), the caste system and its related traditions of hypergamy as well as endogamy are responsible for the dowry system to a great extent in India. Hypergamy is a way for women's upward mobility in the social hierarchy, because they marry men of the same or higher social status. Teja (16) states that when the endogamous restrictions became rigid and prestige solely determined by social hierarchy, hypergamy became the widely accepted form of marriage.

4   From a historical perspective, Srinivas (12) traces the origins of dowry to the prevailing ideology of kinship structure, which enforces the caste system as well as hypergamous marriage. In earlier times, only upper castes, such as Rajputs and Brahmins, practiced dowry customs, but with modernization in cities it has now spread to all other groups including scheduled castes, Muslims and also Christians (Sheel 26) and introduces its inherent gender relations into these social groups. In the Hindu lower castes (in this study the Kushwaha caste), men have begun to emulate upper caste customs, which include female feticide, infanticide and the neglect of the girl child that enables them to tap into upper caste economic networks and further upward mobility. Also, with regard to dowry, the earlier concept of *streedhan* (the Hindi term for women's property, Gandhi & Shah 52) of primitive societies has taken the vulgarized form of dowry due to the secondary status of women in society. Dowries were paid in accordance with one's means and almost always constituted a one-time payment (gift) at the time of marital celebrations. Though hegemonic assertions of the past do not persist anymore, their by-product still persists through socialization in North India (Srinivas 13).

5   In India, grooms and brides are usually matched in such a way that men marry younger women. An exogenous increase of the population growth rate causes the entry of surplus women from the younger cohort into the marriage circle. Consequently, the average age of potential brides decreases, while their numbers increase. As there are thus very few desirable grooms compared to the large number of brides available due to the age cohort, this results in fiercer competition for scarce grooms and induces an additional upward shift in dowry demands, the so-called "marriage squeeze" (Rao 669). This scenario leads to space for dowry demands among grooms' families, within the marriage circle, where desire for dowry is used by grooms' families to create a transactional space, through which they negotiate

about the amount of dowry to be paid with the brides' families. This space is finally used to transfer the dowry property from bride givers to bride takers. Though grooms' families create this space the bride's families are drawn into it, as they have to participate in it willingly or unwillingly due to the fear that their daughter might stay unmarried.

6   Dowry as a social practice creates a transactional space within the marriage circle, in which both bride and groom parties interact to negotiate and, eventually, to transact. According to Floysand (4), social practices can be defined as interactions between two or more agents that are characterized by overlapping processes of transaction and signification or as the interchange of goods and signs (s. figure 1). An agent is synonymous with a social person (Floysand 4). The purpose of such interaction can be to interchange goods and signs that confirm the agents' gender identity, professional identity, political or economic position, etc.

7   Henri Lefebvre, in his book, *The Production of Space*, outlines the correlations between social practices and space in more detail. According to Lefebvre (233), social space, here the transactional space established by dowry practices within the marriage circle, can be described and explained, at least partially, in terms of an intentional signifying process. The intentions of the grooms' families are to accumulate wealth, whereas those of the brides' families are to compete amongst each other to procure the best match for their daughters to marry. According to Teja (95), the groom's family may use dowry to assert their superior position over that of the bride's at the time of marriage negotiations. Dowry is both the origin and the result of such assertions. Marriage is often used as a tool by the groom's family to enhance their financial status. In the process, they directly or indirectly demand dowry from the bride's family (Sriniwas 935). Thus, dowry plays its role as goods or signs in creating a new transactional space within the marriage circle where both bride and groom parties negotiate and transact.

8   Lefebvre (33) further argues that space is not an inert, neutral, and pre-existing given, but rather an on-going production of spatial relations. Spatial practice refers to the production and reproduction of spatial relations between objects and products. It also ensures continuity and some degree of cohesion. The emphasis on the production of space firmly situates Lefebvre's work in a post-structuralist or post-modern critical discourse. He states:

> 'familiar' everyday practice is constantly referring from representations of space(maps and plans, different social systems, information conveyed by images and signs of earlier generations) to representational space of lived emotions and experiences. The social control of space weighs heavy indeed upon all those people who fail to reject the familiarity of everyday life. (Lefebvre 233)

Lefebvre sees the prospect of emerging new spaces—differential spaces—that serve as sites of resistance to the forces of homogenization present in what he calls abstract space. As such, in the contemporary moment, Lefebvre shows the dialectical conflict between this abstract space and its antagonist, differential space.

9   Furthermore, in his book *Production of Space*, Lefebvre discusses that anthropology has shown us how the space occupied by any particular 'primitive' group (for instance men in the patriarchal societal space) corresponds to the hierarchical classification of the group's members, and how it serves to render that order always actual and present. The members (all men and women) of archaic society obey social norms without realizing it. They rather live them spatially: they are not ignorant of them, nor do they misapprehend them, but they live them immediately. The underlying continuity does not exist solely in spatial reality, but also at the representational level (i.e. at an emotional and experiential level). Pre-existing space underpins not only durable spatial arrangements but also representational spaces and their attendant imagery and mythic narratives- i.e. so called "cultural models" (Lefebvre 229).

10   This study analyzes familiar everyday practices related to dowry referring to norms and values from representations of space of the patriarchal society to representational space, the emotionally lived space of women and the bride-giving families. There is social control of the patriarchal society over the life of women, and those who do not comply sufficiently have to pay a huge price, be it directly or indirectly. Women have to bear the consequences of not fulfilling the grooms' families' demands. A direct consequence is that the bride would not be accepted before marriage and indirect experiences would be after marriage harassments, be it physical or mental, thus victimizing the women due to lack of sufficient dowry. This depicts the highly gendered nature of the Indian society in general and a highly discriminatory gendered space established by dowry practices in particular.

11   Bihar lies in the patriarchal heartland of North India. This becomes especially visible at the time of marriage when the grooms demand a high dowry price to tie the conjugal knot. Bihar ranks second (behind Uttar Pradesh) in dowry deaths and dowry-related crimes against women (Choudhury 2012). Though the government of Bihar passed the *Bihar State Prohibition of Dowry, Rules 2003* in an attempt to dissuade the practice of dowry in the state, there is only slight improvement. In Bihar, 918 dowry deaths were reported in the year 2010, as compared to 1,210 in the year 2008 (peopleofbihar.com).

12   According to the census report of Bihar 2011, Patna district (including rural and urban Patna), the capital of Bihar with a population of 5.7 million, has the lowest sex ratio in the state (873/1000) while India's average sex ratio is 933/1000. Bihar ranked fourth in the index

(24.5) of son preference in India in 1990 (Patel 14). An increasingly important factor in son preference is the desire to accumulate wealth (Mallik 1). Sev'er (68) states that there is relation between dowry and sex ratio. This as well as the male literacy rate of 80.28 % and female literacy rate of 63.72 % clearly reflects gender discrimination to be especially pronounced in urban Patna.

13   In recent years, urban areas in Bihar show a new and contradictory trend, as cities have higher female literacy rates in comparison to rural areas, while gender discrimination is more prevalent in these urban areas. For example, urban Patna has 78 % female literacy rate while that of rural Patna is just 52 %, but the sex ratio of rural Patna is 899 in comparison to urban Patna of 883. Comparing rural and urban Patna, work participation rate, too, shows a gender gap. The gender gap of the work participation rate of 30 % in the rural part and 36 % in the urban area manifests that higher female literacy in urban Patna is mainly a prerequisite for better marriage prospects, and not of increased inclusion in the work force.

14   Escalating dowry cases in the news, high sex differences in wages, low female education and few economic opportunities for women in Bihar reveal that the status of women is relatively lower than the status of men. In Bihar, the situation has gotten so bad that grooms are regularly put on display and brokers negotiate the best dowry from would-be bridal families (Sev'er 61).

15   The selected Kushwaha caste is divided into two sub-socio-cultural spaces within urban Patna. One is old Patna city in the east and the other is new West Patna. The older part of the city has been inhabited by original residents for many generations, and newer West Patna is settled by migrants from other districts of Bihar who have been residing there only for one or two generations. Residents of modern West Patna are mainly absorbed in tertiary sector jobs with more disposable income while old Patna city residents are engaged in the primary sector and businesses. This stratification allows examining similarities and differences between the dowry practices of native residents and migrant residents of the same caste in the two parts of the city.

16   This study examines spatial factors and processes of dowry practices by utilizing spatially disaggregated community knowledge of members of the Kushwaha caste. To understand how dowry creates a highly gendered space and sustains it, an explorative qualitative case-study research design was chosen. An equal number of households were chosen from two different socio-cultural spaces, old Patna city and West Patna (16 in total). Selected households had at least a daughter and a son of marriageable age. The main members of the households above the age of 30 were selected as respondents. Methods used

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include in-depth unstructured interviews and focus group discussions, field observations and field notes. At first, two reliable key-informants, one from Patna city and the other from Patna West were selected. With their help, households were mapped and further interview partners contacted. Then, in-depth unstructured interviews were conducted with selected respondents from each stratified group from both study areas. As a last step, a group discussion on dowry as a spatial practice was conducted with members of the Kushwaha caste of the Sakarma Organisation, an organization for the intellectual development of Kushwaha caste people. This organization was selected as it is one of the literary organizations run for and by the local Kushwaha caste people in the study area and as it actively participates in the discussion and problem solving issues of the caste. Analytic methods used were narrative and thematic analysis and graphical representations through flow diagrams.

17   The transactional space within the marriage circle lays the foundation for the gendered space created by dowry practices in urban Patna. Marriage is the principal source of social security for women in India (Kodoth 8). This perception encourages the grooms' families to demand high dowry of the bride-giving families. Grooms with jobs are in particularly high demand in the marriage market in Bihar. Such desirable grooms are scarce in the Kushwaha caste, however, because their ancestral occupation is vegetable farming. This is the economic explanation for dowry inflation that recognizes dowry payments as a price that increases with a scarcity of grooms (Anderson 6). Grooms' families invest in their sons' quality education, intending to get such investment back at the time of their son's marriage. Thus, many grooms' families feel justified in demanding dowry as a return for their investment in their son: The groom's education expenses are supposed to be born by the bride's family. Also, the amount of the dowry has become an indication of the status of the groom's family. Increasing materialism in urban Patna is reflected in the attempt to accumulate free surplus wealth at one go during the wedding arrangement. Grooms' families are especially interested in obtaining valuable land from bride-giving families in old Patna city. Moreover, dowry acceptance is a necessary proof of the groom's potency, too. Respondents expressed that if no dowry is demanded from the groom's side, then the brides' families get confused about his potency and underrate him so that, ultimately, he would not get good marriage proposals.

18   For bride-giving families, the major factors for participating in the transactional space are hypergamic and caste endogamic social factors, gender role factors, raised life styles and more disposable income in urban Patna (see Fig. 2). Hypergamy along with caste-endogamy is the most important factor that restricts the options for a bride's father in selecting a groom

and, consequently, leads to the practice of dowry competitiveness. Dowry competitiveness means bride givers compete in the marriage market by paying the maximum amount of dowry to procure a groom for their daughters. As one of the participants from West Patna City expressed: "Every one wants to marry one's daughter in a better family, who wants to marry her in a lower status family. In the process dowry has to be given" (Case 1). This shows hypergamy as the norm in society, enforcing bride-giving families to compete among each other. Dowry is an essential part of hypergamy among high status families who use arranged marriage to consolidate or enhance their social status. Parents want to procure relatively high earning grooms, preferably with government jobs, to make their daughters' future safe. But there are very few such grooms available due to limited education in the traditionally agrarian Kushwaha caste and also due to uneven development through modernization. Anderson states that modernization has meant not only an increase in average wealth, but also an increase in within-caste heterogeneity of incomes (s. figure 2). He explains:

> Since dowry can be viewed as an offer that a bride's family makes for a groom of certain market value, an increase in the relative heterogeneity of grooms will increase the spread of dowries. (Anderson 3)

19   Gender role factors include the compensation for physical and educational qualification of a bride. If the bride is not very beautiful or if she is not well educated, the bride's family has to pay more dowry to get the desired groom. The compulsion of marrying one's daughter within the marriageable age of 18 to 25 years also compels anxious fathers to compete with dowry for desirable grooms. Otherwise, older brides have to contest with younger brides in the age cohort by paying even more dowry, leading to extra financial burden on the family. People in the field shared that keeping daughters unmarried spells dishonor. This mentality compels bride-givers to pay large amounts of dowry to marry off their daughters and, in turn, inspires bride-takers to demand increasing amounts of dowry, too.

20   Even if a woman is educated, her education is mainly for matrimonial qualification, as women usually do not work and earn their own living. Instead, they have to get into nurturing roles. So minimum education is imparted to them because as educated mothers, they can better nurture their children and assist them in their schoolwork than illiterate mothers. For men, on the contrary, education is the first priority, as they have to fit into the earning roles, depicting the stereotyped gender roles of most of the families in India. Kodoth (8) argues that working class people in agricultural labor and traditional industries invest inordinately in

marriage payments in order to attract men who would shelter their daughters from the harshness of capitalist labor. There are different kinds of investments for boys and girls to fit them into socially accepted gender roles. A woman from east Patna city shared "without dowry, the girl would not get married, so when it comes to education, her guardian think of dowry first; we have to give 2 lakh Rupees dowry to get her married" (Case 13). 2 lakh are 200,000 Rupees, which equals about 2600 Euros.

21   Parents often see daughters as a liability for whom they have to find a financially stable groom to provide throughout her whole life, due to the stereotyped gender roles within the family. From the point of view of woman's parents, they have to spend a lot of money to procure her a husband. Women themselves take no part in the decision-making about their life, the kind of life they want to live or the way they would want their parents to spend money for their development to make them independent individuals. The decision is taken and imposed upon them. This shows that women are often regarded as commodities rather than independent human beings.

22   Women married at a young age are not given enough time and opportunity to be financially independent. Therefore, women are not able to earn social status and value for themselves. Dowry property is handed over to the groom and his family at the time of marriage; therefore women have no legal share of dowry property. Furthermore, brides' families get anxious to get their daughters married off as soon as possible because the older the bride, the more dowry needs to be given to procure a match for her, putting extra financial burden on the family. This has a negative effect on the emotional well-being of women.

23   Raised lifestyles and more disposable income due to modernization have aggravated the phenomenon further. According to Anderson, modernization involves two components: "Increasing average wealth and increasing wealth dispersion within status (or caste) groups. In caste-based societies, the increases in wealth dispersion that accompany modernization necessarily lead to increases in dowry payments" (269). Increased income for West Patna Kushwahas who are the educated elite group absorbed in the service sector stems from an increase in black money (bribes). For the majority of east Patna city Kushwahas however, income is generated through sales of high value urban land or dowry. Middle and lower income groups are dragged into dowry competition.

24   There is an obvious link between grooms' practices and bride-giving families' practices, which together delineate the transactional space within the marriage circle. All marriage and dowry negotiations take place in this transactional space. Thus, it can be said

that dowry practices create this transactional space within the marriage circle among Kushwaha caste people in urban Patna.

25   Obviously, though, the bride-giving families and the grooms' families do not experience this transactional space in the same way. Brides' families use this space to compete in the marriage circle for procuring a better match for their daughters, while grooms and their families use this space to acquire and accumulate more wealth. During the field investigation it was found that the transactional space within the marriage circle is normalized: as a consequence, it is hard to believe for all participants, but especially for parents, that dowry transactions simultaneously create and sustain a highly gendered space. A woman from old Patna city explains how a woman is restricted to a subordinate position for the rest of her life: "the girl has to get married and dowry needs to be paid, so her education gets compromised, while a boy is encouraged to study and prosper because he would not need dowry" (Case 13).

26   Dowry practice is loaded with conflicts and tensions between women and their families of orientation as well as families of procreation (Sev'er 61). Hegde points out "raising a daughter is like watering a neighbour's plant […] for fulfillment, many sons, for the sake of beauty, one daughter […] a son spells rewards, a daughter expense" (512). Such mentality restricts bride-givers from investing in the girl's quality education to make them financially independent and thus maintaining their subordinate position in society. Dowry practices have further added to the already existing gender discrimination in parental homes that is reflected in the declining sex ratio, the lower literacy rate or the neglect of the girl child. As the payment of large dowries is both the ideal and actual practice, many daughters are indeed a serious threat to the prosperity as well as to the economic and social upward mobility of the household. Such a situation causes discrimination in favor of boys and against girls.

27   The discrimination is thus only acknowledged by women who are victimized in their marital home for more dowry. Women shared that the money saved for dowry giving could be invested in their education and individual development instead. One woman (Case 13) asserted that she got discriminated due to dowry, which according to her should be "socially" abolished at practical levels, so that women can utilize the resources to develop themselves and become economically independent through education and work. The reason women receive minimum education is that the more educated the woman, the more dowry is required to procure a match suiting her standard. In the study group, marriage is prioritized over education for women, since marriage is seen as an institution through which people become

part of their society. These practices are so much internalized that the women's parents contested that they discriminate against their daughters. They feel that it is their duty as parents to get their daughters married. If they fail to do so, it will be seen as their failure as parents. Moreover, they fear that their daughters might be socially punished, since single women are stigmatized in their society. The threat of social criticism compels them to abide by the norms and values of the patriarchal society rather than taking their individual decisions to educate their daughters and make them financially independent. If the family does not get their daughters married off, they are looked down upon especially by fathers, brothers and other men in the community.

28   Apart from the discrimination experienced in the parental home, young brides and women face discrimination in their marital home as well. So-called dowry aggressiveness takes place when the groom's family is demanding more dowry in form of money or land after the marriage out of greed. Victims of dowry aggressiveness were mostly from east Patna city and reported that expensive land property and less education makes them more vulnerable to dowry abuses as greedy grooms torture them verbally and physically to get land from their parents.

29   A significant finding of the field investigations is the great difference in the experienced forms of dowry practices between Kushwahas in old Patna city and new West Patna. West Patna people are educated elites who are mostly influenced by modernization and who work mainly in the service sector. Therefore, there is higher dowry competitiveness before marriage in West Patna, while dowry aggressiveness in the marital homes has become a characteristic feature of Patna city in the east. Sev'er (59) states that due to inadequate political action and lack of political will to interfere in the private affairs of marriage, dowry continues to be a deadly business. Although there have been many dowry suicide and murder cases in Patna city, the community bonding among them is strong and people support each other in covering up the crime. In West Patna, the degree of dowry aggression is milder and the number of dowry death cases is less, as the brides' educated elite families are politically stronger to protect their daughters. Furthermore, the absence of valuable land properties makes brides in West Patna less vulnerable to dowry abuses.

30   Coping strategies adopted by brides' families in regard to dowry practices can be categorized in two types. At first, brides' families have coping strategies for dowry competitiveness and secondly, they develop coping strategies to deal with post-marriage dowry demands in the form of dowry aggressiveness, if such takes place. Women may be less respected if the bride's father could not afford to pay at the time of marriage. In contrast,

women whose fathers pay a substantial dowry to procure grooms for them are more likely to be in a better position. A guardian from West Patna asserted, "dowry is also given to fetch value and respect for the daughter in her husband's house" (Case 10).

31   Strategies adopted by the bride-giving families in women's parental home add to the discriminatory space in the marital home of the women. They depend on the amount of dowry money the bride-giving families can afford and the kind of challenges faced by them. Before marriage, this can be financial challenge, physical attributes challenge, and status challenge. After marriage, challenges are dowry demands by the groom's family and dowry aggressiveness.

32   Strategies before marriage adopted by the bride-giving families are for example that the family has to cut down their expenditure to save money for dowry. Certain families, who are not able to earn surplus money, are left with the only solution to cut down the educational expenditure that could be spent on women. Another strategy practiced by those bride's families who are not able to afford large sums of money at one go, but who do not want to compromise with the quality of the grooms, is to negotiate the marriage by paying some amount before marriage and the rest of the dowry in installments. In case they fail to pay the installments, women might experience dowry aggression in form of taunts and abuses, as she would not be respected as long as her father failed to keep his promise.

33   To give land to the groom to settle and set up business in Patna is the characteristic of Patna city people only, as they have extensive and expensive land properties. This can be perceived as one father from east Patna city shares his experience of arranging his daughter's marriage: "groom's demand was that he wants land to settle in Patna as he was from out of Patna" (Case 6).

34   Hypergamy can be compromised if a groom with poor present qualities is accepted. Depending on the amount of money they can afford, brides' families go in the marriage market to see which category of groom would be available within their limitations. Otherwise, there are few cases in which the bride's parents try to procure a groom who is to get a job in the near future. Before entering the job, the groom's market value is less, and, in fact, he has not officially entered the marriage market yet. Other women are getting married to grooms who cannot sustain them. Families with the attitude of saving the property for the sons to inherit discriminate between sons and daughters by depriving the daughter from her minimal share, by getting her married to a groom who is incapable to sustain her, simply to free themselves from their responsibilities and preserve their property for their sons.

35   Other marriages are arranged by negotiating with the groom's family that the bride's father will fetch a government job for the groom assuring them that he has some connections along with the money. The groom's family gets tempted by the offer and agrees to fix the marriage with them. Sometimes the bride's father is able to fulfill his promise, but this cannot be guaranteed. In that case the bride pays the price for her father's coping strategy by bearing with the taunts and abuses for the rest of her life.

36   In Patna city and West Patna, it was found that people living in city areas do not mind marrying their daughters to grooms settled in a village, if they cannot afford to procure a groom settled in the city. Comparatively, there is less dowry demands in village areas. The same category of groom can therefore be fetched at a lesser price. Such a coping strategy can be problematic as girls born and brought up in the city may find it difficult to adjust to village life.

37   Coping strategies differ in old Patna city and West Patna, in that old Patna city respondents indicated to give valuable land to the groom to negotiate marriage for their daughters, whereas in West Patna a limited number of girls are educated with the intention that their financial independence can serve as compensation for dowry.

38   After marriage, coping strategies adopted by bride-giving families are needed in case dowry aggressiveness develops. When a woman goes to her husband's (in-law's) house after marriage and her in-laws feel that the amount of dowry brought by the bride does not meet their expectations, she starts receiving taunts and abuses. These are aimed at pushing her to ask her parents to fulfill her in-law's expectations. In such a situation most insecure parents who are looking forward to settling their daughter in a specific family try to fulfill their demands as much as possible to prevent the woman from being abandoned by her husband and prevent her from physical and mental harassment.

39   In cases where the bride's parents are not rich enough to fulfill after-marriage demands, they have no choice than to wait and hope for the situation to improve. Some parents try to negotiate with the in-laws expressing their inability to provide anything further. In such a situation, they are at the mercy of the in-laws who might do them a favor by pitying them and stop making future demands, but who can also pressurize them to fulfill the demands.

40   In extreme cases where the bride's parents feel they cannot afford to fulfill the demands, families fear that their daughter would be tortured to death or suicide. Then the woman is brought back to her natal family without caring about the social taboo of keeping the daughter. Yet, not every woman is fortunate enough to be taken back by her natal family

in such a situation. If parents refuse to take their daughters back, woman is compelled to submit herself to her fate and take all the tortures and abuses for the rest of her life. The wife cannot leave her husband's house on her own initiative because it is a social taboo. Also, she cannot opt for divorce because options for divorced women's remarriage are very limited and old parents cannot afford to provide her lifetime security. In such situations the coping strategy for dowry translates the dowry aggression into domestic violence for the rest of woman's life.

41   It was also found that people generally avoid taking help from state institutions in the case of dowry aggressiveness. They do not avail law or approach police to cope up with dowry abuses, as most of the dowry cases that are taken to court finally lead to terminating the marriage, which is to be prevented to avoid social ostracism.

42   Interviewees also expressed that the anti-dowry legislation can only be implemented if dowry taking is apparent. Dowry is generally given and taken underhand or off the record. Grooms' families take cash instead of cheques to avoid any proof of such a transaction. For brides' families, it is a choiceless situation because if they do not follow the terms and conditions of the groom, they would refuse to tie the nuptial knot. People also acknowledged that filing a case is an economically exhausting and time-consuming process without any certainty of justice for the victim. If the bride sues the groom and his family, it terminates the marriage. Since unmarried and divorced daughters are stigmatized in society, people do not necessarily take the help of the law. This shows why this practice is sustained in the private space. State interventions are not able to modify the practice as it can only operate in public space where anti-dowry legislation is supposed to be utilized by the citizen, but this happens only in cases of dowry murders.

43   There is a strong discrepancy in the attitude of bride-giving guardians, groom's guardians and women interviewed. While bride-giving families felt dowry giving a compulsion to get their daughters married, grooms' families felt justified to assert their right to demand dowry because of the desire of wealth accumulation. Moreover, they openly acknowledged that, since they have to give dowry to get their own daughters married, they expect their son to bring back this dowry expense spent on his sister's marriage. This balancing act between bride-giving and bride-taking serves to prevent the family from getting economically exhausted.

44   Interviewees agreed that dowry is a social evil, but the majority of guardians of the bride-giving families did not agree that they are discriminating their daughters due to dowry practices. For them, the social structure is such that the marriage becomes the most important

affair in a woman's life. Practices of marrying them at an early age, getting a groom at a lower price according to their affordability, compromising on the daughters' education to save money for their dowry are not perceived as discriminating. Parents rather feel it is their first and foremost responsibility to get their daughters married. The acknowledgement of this predicament in itself is an important insight of this study.

45   When women were asked whether they get discriminated due to dowry practices, they gave a firm reply "yes". This shows that family and society decides the parameters of a women's well being. Women's choices of their well being are not taken into consideration. Still, women accept that they get discriminated in regard to their education that is compromised at the cost of their marriage, which according to society is the most important need for their social well being. Female participants who were victims of dowry aggression and who experienced discrimination due to dowry and whose well being was hampered believed that dowry should be socially abolished at practical levels. The women further shared that the money saved from dowry-giving could be invested in their education, their individual development and their financial independence. Since women are in subordinate position in the patriarchal system, their views hardly get taken into consideration. Since this space is particularly experienced by women, men, whether as fathers, brothers or husbands can hardly empathize with the lived experiences of women. Men's achievements are considered to be the priority in the family, because a family's status in the patriarchal society gets evaluated on the parameters of men's accomplishments. Hence the well being of women gets sacrificed and compromised for the overall family honor and status in society.

46   The discussed data show how dowry as a social practice creates and sustains a highly gendered discriminatory space amongst members of the Kushwaha caste in urban Patna, Bihar. The grooms' families create a transactional space in the marriage circle by demanding dowry directly or indirectly and by insisting on their superior position vis-à-vis the bride-giving families. Bride-giving families willingly or unwillingly are drawn into this transactional space due to the fear that their daughters might not get the desired groom or stay unmarried, contradicting the social norms of hypergamy and of marriage as a social necessity for women. In the process of arranging and saving money for the dowry of their daughters, parents discriminate against their daughters by compromising on their education and other means that would otherwise help women to become more independent individuals and to enhance their position in society on their own.

47   This study related experiences of women and their families, and gives a detailed account of causes and effects of dowry practice by a methodology based on thoughts,

attitudes and individual reasoning about people's behavior. In sum, it can be said that even though dowry is considered to be a social evil by outsiders as well as insiders, the social structure is such that the brides' families have no choice than to practice dowry. Although Bihar has an anti-dowry legislation law, it is hardly implemented. Grooms' families justify their act, by their obligation to give dowry for their own daughters. The individual well beings of women keep on getting sacrificed in the name of family honor and responsibility for their social acceptance.

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***Illicit Flirtations: Labor, Migration, and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo.* By Rhacel Salazar Parrenas. Standford: Stanford University Press, 2011.**

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1   The rhetoric of public officials and anti-trafficking activists, academic discourse, and the media often focus on sex trafficking as the sole defining feature of trafficking. TV programs and movies dramatize and/or sensationalize the plight of trafficking victims, mostly women from Asia and Eastern Europe, in forced prostitution. According to the US Department of State's *Trafficking in Person* Reports in 2004 and 2005, Filipina hostesses are the largest group of victims in global sex trafficking. Parrenas challenges the label of Filipina hostesses as trafficking victims coerced into prostitution. She argues that empirical studies are needed to assess the exact scope of trafficking among Filipina hostesses (or any groups of migrant women) and to formulate appropriate policies for redress. In *Illicit Flirtation: Labor, Migration, and Sex Trafficking in Tokyo*, she deconstructs this generalized portrayal of Filipina hostesses in Japan as trafficking victims through months of fieldwork. She works as an insider (a hostess) and conducts in-depth interviews with hostesses, club owners, brokers, non-governmental organizations, and government officials to understand these women workers' subjectivities and to accurately represent the lived experiences of Filipina hostesses.

2   Parrenas makes significant contributions both methodologically and substantively. While taking a case study approach, she provides comparative analysis without homogenizing Filipinas as a group. For example, she includes transgender women in her study and compares them to other hostesses. In addition, she stresses the importance of differentiating hostesses' experiences based on their immigration status, such as entertainers (contract workers), undocumented workers, and legal residents (often through marriage). These groups face different challenges and obstacles. Undocumented workers, such as women who overstay their visas or leave their clubs during contract, are far more vulnerable to exploitation by club owners or co-ethnics. To avoid detection and deportation under the criminalizing nature of the Japanese government policy, they have to remain invisible and live in the shadow. The comparison among different groups provides a more nuanced depiction of these women's lives in Tokyo.

3   She also provides various insights substantively. Her central argument is to problematize flattening forced labor and trafficking and generalizing certain cases of sex trafficking to a whole group of migrant women. She acknowledges that forced labor exists, not only in the case of hostesses but also those of foreign domestics and migrant farm workers. However, forced labor cannot be automatically translated into trafficking or sex trafficking in this case. Many of the women she interviews deny that they are trafficked victims. They might knowingly enter Japan illegally through the assistance of brokers. They know they would accrue debt and most of their wage would be deducted. They know that they would work as hostesses and understand that working conditions could be difficult. Yet they choose to work in Japan for the better earning. Parrenas uses the term "indentured mobility" to describe the experiences of these women. That is, while these women face structural constraints, such as poverty at home, deplorable working conditions, and illegal status, they do have agency and make their own decisions to work as hostesses. In other words, their actions are a result of the interaction between structure and agency. In addition to taking women's agency into account, she argues that Filipina hostesses' work should be considered as a labor migration issue rather than that of trafficking.

4   Parrenas places Filipina hostesses' vulnerability to exploitation both during and after migration under the context of the Philippine and Japanese government policies. While protective measures, such as minimum age, an accreditation system, standards of employment, and broker regulations, are established for the best interest of these women, these policies, embedded with a culture of benevolent paternalism, end up legitimating women's dependency on middle brokers (promoters, promotion agencies, and talent managers) for overseas employment and decreasing their ability to work overseas as independents. This state sanctioned dependency through paternalistic regulations engenders their vulnerability to servitude and deprives women of their agency.

5   In addition to the disempowering nature of state policy and brokerage system, she examines the intricacy of the labor regime and its bodily discipline within the clubs, which is another contextual factor constraining women's agency. Parrenas uses the term bodily capital to refer to hostesses' efforts to maintain their appearance to fit the beauty standard desired by the customer. The requirements for hostesses' bodily movement and appearance aim at reinforcing their femininity and sexual desirability. For example, hostesses have to sit with their back

straight, one leg in front of the other, and their head tilted to one side. During the waiting time, hostesses are expected to sit or stand with their back straight, maintain a delightful demeanor, and express their excitement when being selected by a customer. They must constantly display their sexual desirability and use their flirtations to maximize their sale. Hostesses' provision of feminine appeal is to strengthen Japanese men's sense of masculinity through emotional, bodily, and ascetic labor. She makes an insightful observation about the similarity between the clubs' bodily control and the principle of Talorism and its scientific management in assembly line. However, this is not to say that hostesses are completely powerless to resist. While they have to obey rules at the clubs, they are able to utilize their flirtatious skills outside clubs for financial gains. They invoke men's expectations for romance, love, or even sex when possible. Their flirtation and display of affection mean little to them. This pragmatic strategy does not necessarily violate their sense of moral value.

6   It is often questioned whether the hostess' occupation is considered as sex work and whether hostesses are prostitutes (or sex workers). While the Japanese society considers hostesses as prostitutes, women have their own definitions about their work depending on their own moral system. She divides these women into three groups, moral conservatives, moral-in-betweeners, and amoralists. The boundaries between these groupings are shifting and blurred. Further, clubs also impose their own moral regimes. She points out that moral regimes are different depending on the clubs and are thus not static. Women often find clubs of which the moral regime fits their value system. She also stresses that women's moral value does not remain stable and would switch their workplace based on their changing value system. This demonstrates the shifting and contextual nature of women's moral value. The important question we need to ask is: Who should have the authority to define these women's work and thus who they are? Should it be by government officials, activists, or women themselves?

7   Finally, Parrenas makes an important critique about the solution of anti-trafficking policies and campaigns, which frame these women as victims in need of rescue, rehabilitation, and reintegration. This paradigm of victimhood contradicts women's own view of themselves as agents capable of making choices, including choices to engage in sex work. The dominant discourse on sex trafficking, espoused by many Western feminists, denies women's agency and leads to their disempowerment. She argues that anti-trafficking needs to be delinked from anti-

prostitution, which is often based on white middle-class moralistic value about proper womanhood. Further, eradicating the opportunity for women to work as hostesses deprives them of their livelihood. Efforts to reduce their dependency on brokers, enable them to work as independents, better their working conditions at the clubs, de-criminalize their immigration status, and ensure their citizenship and human rights would be central to their empowerment. Most importantly, empirical work is needed to assess the true extent of trafficking and to formulate appropriate policies accordingly. What it entails is to listen to women's voices and understand their subjectivities.

8   Throughout the text, Parrenas maintains a delicate balance between structural constraints and women's agency. As mentioned earlier, Parrenas makes significant methodological and substantive contributions. This is an excellent book. Her study sets an important future research agenda that calls for more empirical work and has policy implications. This book is definitely a must read for scholars interested in fields of migration and trafficking.

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