Resilience and Urban Capabilities in Denise Mina's Garnethill Trilogy[1]

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Abstract

This paper examines Denise Mina's Garnethill trilogy from the standpoint of spatial and capabilities studies. It analyses the representation of spaces of resilience, as well as their role in the gendered redistribution of urban and domestic power portrayed in the narratives. In order to do so, it contextualises these books within the framework of contemporary Scottish crime fiction and subsequently studies the contraposition and subversion of emotional spaces in Glasgow and London in the process of recovery from the trauma of the child sexual abuse their protagonist has undergone.

Keywords: Denise Mina; Garnethill Trilogy; Scottish crime fiction; Tartan Noir; urban capabilities; resilience.

1. *Introduction: Gendering Tartan Noir*

In his study of the Glasgow novel, Liam McIlvanney contends that "in a city of mythologised violence, crime fiction has been a vigorous strand" (2012: 230). Indeed, crime fiction has become a distinctive landmark in recent Glasgow writing and is part of a long-lasting Scottish tradition originating in Arthur Conan Doyle's dark short stories, and continued by renowned authors such as William McIlvanney, Alexander McCall Smith and Christopher Brookmyre, as well as by the "totemic figure of Ian Rankin" (Pittin-Hedon 2015: 33). Gill Plain situates this writing in a hybrid tradition comprising American hard-boiled fiction,[2] "an indigenous tradition of Scottish urban working-class fiction" and, very importantly, the recurrence of the trope of the *doppelgänger*, "of duality, deceit, repression and hypocrisy" (2007: 132), associated with the legacy of James Hogg's *Confessions of a Justified Sinner* and Robert Louis Stevenson's *Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde*. In a similar vein, Rankin connects the tradition of "quite dark, psychological, Gothic horror stories" with contemporary Scottish crime fiction, a heterogeneous field that, according to the author, has allowed writers not to "be worried about writing in a certain tradition" (2012: 6). Freed from such constraints and arguably from the "anxiety of influence," contemporary Scottish crime fiction has become popular internationally, and the most recognisable Scottish genre beyond the nation's borders. Labelled, somewhat controversially, as "Tartan noir," "the name accorded by James Ellroy to the robust industry of crime fiction that has come of age in Scotland over the past thirty years" (Wickman 2011: 87), these novels address a wide range of styles and topics characterised chiefly by their "many irreconcilable differences" (Wanner 2015: 8).[3]

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[2] For a discussion of the relatively lesser influence of English narratives upon Scottish crime fiction, see Plain (2003, 2007).

[3] In this same vein, Thomas Christie explains that Tartan Noir "spans many examples of the police procedural story, the detective novel and (…) hard-boiled crime fiction." According to him, this "form of writing does more than merely superimpose established tropes of the genre onto Scottish locales. National

Yet, such an open definition of contemporary Scottish crime fiction seems insufficient to contextualise the work of a generation of women writers whose novels are also characterised by a strong feminist agenda. Authors such as Denise Mina, Val McDermid and Louise Welsh have legitimately appropriated a space of their own within the crime fiction scene, an area that Marie-Odile Pittin-Hedon describes as a "space of transgression where the safety of borders is questioned" (2015: 36). They have transcended the conventional borders of the genre and engaged in debates about the construction of working-class urban identities from a feminist perspective that is in line with that of other Scottish women authors like Janice Galloway, Jackie Kay and A.L. Kennedy.[4]

Denise Mina's Garnethill trilogy, published between 1998 and 2000 and the first part of which received the Crime Writer's Association John Creasy Dagger for Best First Crime Novel, occupies an important space in this niche, given its exploration of violence in the city of Glasgow, which, as Gill Plain contends, in Mina's work becomes a "world in which those systems central to a healthy body politic —the law, medicine, social services— have broken down or been withdrawn, leaving the individual to negotiate a corrupt society as best they can" (2007: 133). In the trilogy, this struggle is incarnated by an accidental detective, Maureen O'Donnell, an ex-psychiatric patient and alcoholic who has to navigate the city's geopolitics from the embodied axes of gender, class and mental health. Mina's inspiration for her character originated while she was working on her PhD thesis at Strathclyde University, where, as she explains, she was researching "how courts interpret mental health categories and how language use changes once you get into the court, and how the world of law co-opts the language of mental health and uses it for its own purposes. So, for example, women are much more likely to be labelled mentally ill and treated with compassion because they are not a physical threat" (Major 2017). Instead of completing her PhD on the topic, Mina created a fictional character that traverses these preconceptions, a fragile, but increasingly empowered young woman who develops extraordinary competences for living. This strong feminist standpoint is in fact intrinsic to Mina's writing, which is also characterised by her emphasis on gendered embodied experiences. In fact, her focus on her protagonist's embodiment of space is in line with contemporary analyses of urban socialisation, which often examine "how embodied subjects are located within more general structures and relationships (…) not defined by the limits of the individual body: they involve social relations that extend across and are shaped by space" (Tonkiss 2005: 94). As such, this positionality infuses the violence described in the books with an acute awareness of gender-based motivations.

This article analyses Maureen's resilient strategies —developed in an unprotecting environment— in relation to her embodiment of urban spaces —Glasgow and London— within the framework of the collaborative action through which she finds radical means to transform them. Added to this, it studies Maureen's urban capabilities and their relation to her experience of post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD).[5] In order to do so, the article firstly focuses on the concepts of resilience and urban capabilities, to then explore them in relation to the different urban spaces Maureen navigates across. Finally, it concentrates on her embodiment of the domestic realm by analysing the interconnectedness of her affective practices and her capacity to appropriate and transform her symbolic apartment, situated at the top of one of Glasgow's most iconic hills, Garnethill.

2. *Resilience and Crime Investigation*

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cultural and political issues are explored by many writers in the field, in ways which are intensely socially aware" (2013: 119-20).

[4] See, for instance, Alan Bissset's discussion of their prominence in "The 'New Weegies': The Glasgow Novel in the Twenty-First Century" (2007: 59-67).

[5] The American Psychiatric Association defines PTSD as "a psychiatric disorder that can occur in people who have experienced or witnessed a traumatic event such as a natural disaster, a serious accident, a terrorist act, war/combat, rape or other violent personal assault."

Resilience is a controversial concept that has gained prominence over the past years. It is often defined as "a dynamic process encompassing positive adaptation within the context of significant adversity" (Luthar et al. 2000: 543), and is thought to be crucial to develop a positive self-identity; to "bounce back" in order to "craft normalcy" after a traumatic experience, as Patrice Buzzanell explains (2010: 1). . Resilience is seen to be particularly important for subjects with PTSD, such as Mina's protagonist, in their efforts to come to terms with their trauma, but, in the novels, it appears also as a symptom of the deficiencies of a system —social, familiar— that favours different degrees of vulnerability. Concepts like "normalcy" and "positive adaptation" recur in the literature hinting at a normative understanding of socialisation. Yet, as Brad Evans and Julian Raid explain, what is missing in these analyses is how resilience is often celebrated as an individual virtue rather than acknowledged as an extension of neoliberal practices, which elude social responsibility by promoting instead a care for individual wellbeing (2014: 65). This perspective is clear in Denise Mina's Garnethill trilogy, whose protagonist is struggling to cope with the psychological consequences of the sexual violence that her father, Michael, inflicted on her: anxiety, blackouts, flashbacks, nightmares, panic attacks, and her inability to maintain healthy relationships with lovers.[6] To complicate things further, in the first book, *Garnethill* (1998), Maureen also has to cope with the death of her lover, Douglas Brady, a psychiatrist who worked in the same mental institution where she was treated previously, who is found brutally murdered in her apartment. Maureen's resilience develops in an environment that is characterised by a general lack of support from her family —her abuse is only acknowledged by her brother Liam— as well as institutions —for instance, the psychiatric hospital is in fact an unsafe space for the women patients, and the police systematically view her as a potential criminal. In this context, she has no choice but to resort to her deteriorated personal competences and the support provided by what David Goldie describes as "the community of vulnerable but articulate people with which she surrounds herself" (2012: 200) in order to eventually escape both the constrictions of her city and the instability that characterises her emotions, bodily reactions and relationships.

The three books can be read as three independent crime novels, each with a murder to solve, even though the central crime in the narratives is actually the metonymic violence suffered by their protagonist, which is gender-based and reaches beyond the individual circumstances of Maureen's life. In order to identify the actual murderers in the novels, Mina interrogates the geopolitics of this urban body —Glasgow and to a lesser extent London— by means of Maureen's embodiment of the spaces she inhabits or trespasses. This is an important decision, since all the narratives are constructed upon Maureen's unreliability: her fragile psychological state, her alcoholism, her inclination to tell lies and her memory problems. Her trauma is individual, although it must be born in mind that "trauma at the individual level resembles crisis at the societal level" (Eyerman 2013: 42), and in these novels, this crisis is caused by a patriarchal structure that systematically victimises women.

In spite of this, Maureen becomes an accidental yet effective investigator, due in part to the competences she has developed because of her unstable family background: "hypervigilant, (…) always looking for signals and signs, clues about what was going to happen next, because nothing was predictable" (2000: 19). Added to this, her flaws become crucial in her investigations, for instance, when she has to lie as a protective measure, when her emotions follow an unexpected pattern, or when her body is misread as a sign of a fragile personality. As such, in the first book she must struggle to find evidence against her apparent incrimination in the murder of Douglas,

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[6] Dominick LaCapra describes the impact of trauma and PTSD as "a state of disorientation, agitation, or even confusion [which] may induce a gripping response whose power and force of attraction can be compelling. (…) One remains possessed or haunted by the past, whose ghosts and shrouds resist distinctions (…). Indeed, in post-traumatic situations in which one relives (or acts out) the past, distinctions tend to collapse, including the crucial distinction between then and now" (1999: 699). In a similar vein, Cathy Carruth explains that trauma is "a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviors stemming from the event, and possibly also increased arousal to (or avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event" (2008: 4). When trauma derives from childhood abuse, this also has an effect on the way attachment is formed, and, as Larsen et al. discuss, "these disorganized patterns of attachment can lead to an inability to regulate emotions, which is a key aspect in forming and maintaining healthy relationships" (2011: 436).

which will eventually lead to her discovering the real culprit. In order to avoid being incarcerated, she must set out on a quest that will require her traversing and trespassing of social and emotional barriers in the city of Glasgow. This process of personal empowerment also signifies an alternative means to find coherence in her deregulated life. In this regard, her private pursuit becomes public, since some of her highly complicated family relations are exposed by the tabloid press covering Douglas's death, and also by the public institutions observing her, especially the police.

In the course of her investigation she discovers the identity of the murderer, Angus Farrell, a colleague of Douglas's who treated her for a brief period of time, and who is also the perpetrator of the serial raping of a group of women patients where he used to work, the George I hospital. His victims are so traumatised they cannot even verbalise the abuse. The murder is connected to Angus's power over Maureen, and so, when Douglas discovers the crimes and simultaneously acknowledges his own objectionable relationship with Maureen (although he was not her doctor, he started the relationship knowing she was one of the vulnerable patients at the hospital), Angus decides to kill him in such a way that her psychiatric history implicates her, as will be discussed further later in this article. Even though her initial impulse to pursue the investigation is finding the killer, this changes as she gradually discovers the details of Angus's behaviour. She diverts her own emotions and channels them into helping someone who is even more vulnerable than she is, Siobhain, one of Angus's victims, until she manages to prove his culpability, not only for the murder, but also for the crimes committed in the hospital: "she knew that she didn't just want to stop the man […] she wanted to hurt him, to make him feel a little of what the women had felt. It wasn't enough to stop it happening again" (2014: 300). Indeed, Maureen's anger —motivated by an urge to mete out justice— is her most powerful driving force, and is what allows her to overcome her vulnerability in relational terms. Her questionable understanding of her right to impose justice is in line with Sara Ahmed's analysis of anger as implicit in a feminist consciousness, since, according to her, this emotion is "a response to pain," and because a "call for action, also requires anger; an interpretation that this pain is wrong, that it is an outrage and that something must be done about it" (2004: 174). Maureen's sense of collective justice, then, responds to an ethics of collective protection that reaches far beyond her own personal circumstances.

In the second book, *Exile* (2000), Maureen's motivation to investigate crime becomes further complicated as it is linked to her need to leave Glasgow when she finds out that her father has returned to the city, and to her family. She travels to London in order to learn what has happened to one of the women, Anne, from the refuge where she used to work, and whose body has allegedly been found in the Thames bearing signs of torture. Her husband is initially suspected of being the murderer, and that it is a case of domestic violence, but Maureen discovers that, in fact, Anne is alive, and hiding from the gang of drug-dealers for whom she has been a courier but has betrayed. Her resilience is based, once again, on the transfer of her energies to helping somebody else, as the omniscient narrator acknowledges: "She was still alive and having another day, losing herself in the problems of Jimmy and Ann and feeling all right sometimes" (2000: 126).

The title of the last book of the trilogy, *Resolution* (2001), conveys the duality of Maureen's experience in the course of what LaCapra would term "acting out" and "working through" her trauma:[7] she solves the murder while she becomes more resolved, resolute about her own life, finding meaning, and narratives, in the process of trying to cope with her past and her present. The murder here is again a crime of patriarchy, in this case related to the trafficking and sexual exploitation of women. The narrative is also constructed on the spatial distribution of power in contemporary cities and on the false dichotomy of safety and danger associated with the private and the public domain. Specifically, it questions how gendered bodies are affected by

[7] He distinguishes between these two processes, "acting out" and "working through" explaining that the former implies a tendency to compulsively relive the traumatic event, whereas the latter refers to the process of healing, to "an articulatory practice: [where] one is able to distinguish between past and present and to recall in memory that something happened to one (or one's people) back then while realizing that one is living here and now with opening to the future" (2001: 21-22).

what Fran Tonkiss denominates "the interaction of spatial practice, social difference and symbolic associations in urban contexts" (2005: 94), which Maureen subverts in each of her spatial performances, and which in this last book have a transnational as well as a local dimension. Her, once again accidental, involvement with the investigation into the suspicious death of extravagant old Ella McGee, a former prostitute, is here determined by common social factors: she is approached by illiterate Ella, who asks for help to fill in a form to initiate proceedings against her son and daughter, Si and Margaret, while Maureen is selling smuggled cigarettes in Paddy's Market. What initially seems a trivial action eventually draws Maureen's attention to Ella's problems, and she empathises strongly with her. In the course of her investigation, she unveils Si and Margaret's involvement in the sexual exploitation of women trafficked from Poland. Yet once again, Maureen is simply distracting herself from her real concern: the menace represented by her father now that her heavily pregnant sister is about to have a baby.

As such, solving the crimes of the novels is chiefly a strategy to find coherence in her own life, to gather her split self together by investing effort in helping other women in the unprotecting environment where they live. She becomes more resilient through a process whereby she is both the victim and the perpetrator of violence, as will be discussed later, which she sees as justified in her attempt to restore justice. If, as Richardson (2002) surmises, research on resilience is concerned with what, how and why resilience is developed, in Maureen's case it could be argued that the answers to these questions revolve around her indefatigable exploration of space and her capacity to empathise with other women's traumatic experiences. This is in line with Sweta Rajan-Rankin's relational understanding of resilience "as a situated and embodied process," which is based on "the location of emotion within socio-political and cultural contexts, and the connective thread of self-identity" (2014: 2430). Indeed, as Evans and Reid contend, "vulnerability is not a universal experience," and our coping mechanisms "are highly contingent in terms of the experiencing subject, as it appears in space and time" (2014: 21). From this perspective, and given the importance that space has in the trilogy, the following sections concentrate on Maureen's situatedness, as well as on her (lack of) urban capabilities in relation to her unconventional embodied practices.

3. *Incapable Spaces*

In *Women and Human Development. The Capabilities Approach*, Martha Nussbaum defines human capabilities as "what people are actually able to do and to be — in a way informed by an intuitive idea of a life that is worthy of the dignity of the human being." She goes on to clarify that her approach is grounded on the "*principle of each person's capability*, based on a *principle of each person as an end*" (2000: 5, italics in original), a focus that she believes is of special importance to women, whose individuality tends to be subsumed in their role as supporters of those to whom they are related. In a similar way, in *Frontiers of Justice. Disability, Nationality, Species Membership*, Nussbaum defines her approach as a "noncontractarian account of care" and calls for "some necessary conditions for a decently just society, in the form of a set of fundamental entitlements of all citizens […] [which] are held to be implicit in the very notions of human dignity and a life that is worthy of human dignity" (2006: 155). In her analysis, the wellbeing of the individual takes centre-stage, not the well-functioning of larger collective structures, like states or even the family, whose role should be to provide each person with the necessary conditions to develop her/his capabilities.[8] An important conceptual differentiation is made by Amartya Sen between functionings —"beings and doings"— and capabilities —the set of functionings a person can actually achieve. A difference is thus established between the freedom to choose among the opportunities available to subjects and the outcomes of these choices (1992: 39-40). Added to this, Sen includes the concept of agency, which refers to a person's role in society, to her

[8] Nussbaum's list of "central human capabilities" includes: 1. life; 2. bodily health; 3. bodily integrity; 4. senses, imagination and thought; 5. emotions; 6. practical reason; 7. affiliation; 8. other species; 9. play; 10. control over one's environment (2006: 76-78).

"realization of goals and values she has reasons to pursue, whether or not they are connected with her own well-being" (1992: 56).

Drawing from Nussbaum's focus on "each person as an end," Saskia Sassen configures a political collective model of capabilities, which she contextualises in the contemporary concentration of people in large (global) urban settings, our new "frontier zones," where people from different social strata, geographical or ethnic origins coexist. She argues for the existence of a set of political actions that are specifically urban, since, she contends, "access to the city is no longer simply a matter of having or not having power. Urban spaces have become hybrid bases from which to act via an increasingly legitimized informal politics" (2012: 86). As such, the disadvantaged can find new forms of solidarity and capabilities in environments that are often hostile, and affected by challenges that transcend the locality (2012: 93). Interestingly, Sassen introduces another element in the debate when she reflects on the positive or negative valences of capabilities, whether a system benefits at the expense of individuals' efforts.

In the trilogy, Maureen's individual urban capabilities are constrained by the socioeconomic and traumatic circumstances of her life: her lack of physical protection, appropriate psychiatric treatment or affective support. Additionally, her functionings are always provisional, interrupted by her crises. Despite this, she has learned to navigate these limitations by means of her strong resilience, which, as has been discussed, is highly relational. Her capabilities also have a collective projection, given her strong sense of responsibility towards other vulnerable characters and her urge to compensate for their lack of a real support system. In her life, public and domestic spaces are dysfunctional, contaminated by institutionalised patriarchal malaise, this being the reason Robert P. Winston interprets Maureen's role by extending the professional "duty to care" trope to her internalisation of her duty to protect defenceless, "incapable," women. To this end, Winston argues that Mina "builds on this term to articulate standards of social responsibility, the obligations of society and its agencies to safeguard the well-being of its citizens" (2008: 66), which she does by encouraging "a shift from an ethic of rights and individualism to an ethic of responsibility and collectivity" (2008: 76). In the absence of an appropriate care system, Maureen's adaptive functionings are highly dependent on her surrounding environments, both public and domestic. These functionings are necessarily unstable since she has never received proper assistance and her PTSD interferes with almost every aspect of her present life. That said, her growing agency allows her to develop new capabilities —not always conducive to her well-being— that have a strong transformative effect on her corporality and her environment.

In his study of the "architectural crime novel," Peter Clanfield explains that "the connection between dysfunctional social systems and menacing urban environments is a foundational convention of crime fiction" that is particularly distinctive of Scottish narratives (2008: 80). As has been discussed, these dysfunctions are explored from a gender perspective in Mina's trilogy, where, compensating for the lack of appropriate institutional support, Maureen aligns herself with other ex-centric characters, who will prove essential in her investigations, as well as in her acting out her trauma. Sassen contends that "when cities confront major challenges, it is often the need for new solidarities that can bring this shift about (2012: 87). The new solidarities she becomes part of help Maureen escape the restrictive signifiers attached to her in terms of medical and socioeconomic categorisation, and also compensate for the lack of spatial and emotional support from her family:

> Maureen had often wondered how the horror of her own abuse could have occurred under the noses of neighbours and friends, teachers and doctors, priests and the gang of interchangeable nuns who taught them catechism. She felt sure someone must have seen something, a change, a withdrawal. Some adult somewhere must have seen some small clue and they ignored it, did nothing, sent her home to Michael. She could see the clues now and she wasn't going to ignore them. (2014: 199)

Indeed, the noxious dynamics established in her family, chiefly by her father, but also by other members —her sisters and her highly unstable alcoholic mother Winne, who refuse to acknowledge the abuse— reinforce the restriction on the urban capabilities Maureen has available to her. This is in line with Nussbaum's reflections on the importance of emotions in the

development of capabilities, and on the role that families should play in providing appropriate care to all their members. As such, she contends that "when we talk about love and care, we are talking both about emotions and about complex patterns of behavior, mediated not only by desire, but also by habits and social norms" (2000: 264). In light of this, Maureen's unsuccessful socialisation not only responds to her childhood trauma, but also to her exposure to harmful emotional patterns following her father's departure. Her emotions are erratic precisely because she has grown up in an environment incapable of providing her with the necessary "identity anchors" to develop a positive self-image or healthy affective practices.[9] Similarly, her functionings barely contribute to her well-being until the end of the trilogy, when she gains the necessary agency to eliminate menace from her life and the lives of those she has decided to protect.

4. *Moving through Urban Spaces*

In her role as an outcast, Maureen becomes a trespasser, capable of accessing spaces forbidden to women precisely because of her identification as a mentally-ill person, but also because she is capable of taking advantage of what Maureen Flanagan and Maryann Valiulis recognise as the "historical and concrete [...] tension between the visibility and invisibility of women" in cities (2011: xiv). And also because the geographies of fear stopping women from exploring these spaces have become irrelevant to her.[10] Her resilience is directly related to her competence in finding alternative emotional routes in a city, Glasgow, that is presented both as a space of trauma and resistance. Her incessant movements through the city are individual —mostly walking— but also collaborative: she is helped by her brother Liam, who, despite being introduced as a drug-dealer in the first book, acts as her only positive reference point in her family and provides her with a "home" when needed; and also by her friend Leslie, who grants her more freedom and speed of movement, with her motorbike in the first book and with their shared van in the third. In fact, moving is what keeps Maureen alive, as she acknowledges while setting the trap for Angus at the end of *Garnethill* (380).[11]

Ahmed explains that "emotions work to align bodily space with social space," and that vulnerability produces specific bodily reactions to the world, because "in fear, the world presses against the body; the body shrinks back from the world in the desire to avoid the object of fear. Fear involves shrinking the body; *it restricts the body's mobility precisely insofar as it seems to prepare the body for fight*" (2004: 69, italics in original). This is one reason Mina's character is so subversive: her individual embodiment of fear is associated with domestic, not public spaces, and this facilitates her escape from the social restrictions imposed upon women in open spaces. Her resilience has a mobile dimension, thus she can move around, inscribing her presence on the city, in the course of what Edensor would define as the mutual "process of continual remaking" between bodies and cities produced by such movements (2000: 121).

[9] Margaret Wetherell defines an affective practice as "a figuration where body possibilities and routines become recruited or entangled together with meaning-making and with other social and material figurations. It is an organic complex in which all the parts relationally constitute each other" (2012: 19).

[10] Feminist urban geographers study these gendered geographies and the paradoxical spatial fear which restricts women's movements. According to official surveys of victimisation, "women are less likely to suffer violence than men" or to be "assaulted by a stranger." Similarly, they are "at greater risk of being sexually assaulted in 'private space' by someone they know" (Mehta and Bondi 1999: 67).

[11] Interestingly, she must leave Glasgow for Millport, a small village on the Isle of Cumbrae, in order to catch the murderer. She is not only escaping from the restrictions of the city, but also finding an emotional environment where she can gather the courage to face him. Indeed, Millport, where she spent some time after leaving the Northern hospital, represents a healing space for Maureen, a space of reintegration into socialisation, but also a space of care and protection provided by Leslie and Liam.

Moving also implies an urge to escape her personal trauma. Her embodiment of the city of Glasgow is deeply conditioned by the abuse, and her emotions re-emerge when exposed to external agents, for instance, the proximity of men resembling her father: "She was sitting upstairs on a bus. A fat man sitting behind her was breathing mucosally in her ear. (…) She waited for him to hit her, a fisted slap on the side of her head. When it didn't happen, she screamed for a bit and threw up" (2014: 20). Similarly, when Michael returns to Glasgow and she learns he is living in "a council flat, in Ruchill," "a burnt-out, boarded-up area with no shops and a notorious pub built from concrete slabs" (2011: 15, 26), she loses the strength she had gained at the end of *Garnethill*. The looming presence of the symbolic phallic tower of the abandoned hospital in Ruchill that she can see from her bedroom window also haunts her, provoking strong physical and psychological reactions. All this contributes to her decision to leave the city, which she feels she "could flood (…) with tears" (2011: 4). Her leaving is also marked by her desire to escape her passive-aggressive mother and her fears about starting a relationship with Vik, a man of Pakistani descent she has gone out with briefly: "she felt the pull to London, the draw of the anonymous city without Ruchill and her family and the hospital and her history" (2011: 209). The night bus trip to the English capital is described as "a Glaswegian rite of passage" (2011: 213) that people often try only once, except for the outcast, like her and the dealers' couriers. On arriving, Maureen feels elated, "for the first time in months, she was walking with her head up because the weather was so mild and Michael wasn't here and Vik had come to see her off" (2011: 223). However, this idyllic portrayal of the city will be contested as the story unfolds.

London appears as an ambivalent space of optimism and extreme cruelty. It is also a space highly permeated by Scottish presences: the blocks of flats where she leads her investigation, Brixton Hill, all have Scottish names ―Dumbarton, Renton, Steps― and the pubs Maureen enters are full of "wild men. Scots and Irish mostly" (2011: 236). In spite of being a young woman travelling alone, she traverses the geographies of fear in London ―derelict buildings, pubs controlled by gangs and dark streets of delinquency. Her emotions are extreme and she is aware of the dangers she is exposed to, but in spite of this she feels she has gained some control over her actions, unlike in Glasgow. Yet, her emotions shift as she becomes more engaged in the investigation, and is eventually attacked for her intervention. Her growing fear makes her wish she were "at home," back in her city (2011: 320), with which she will have to reconcile in the last book of the trilogy. Here again the resilience she develops through empathy becomes crucial, since she decides to "fight back," just as the woman who was found in the Thames did, according to the marks in her body. In order to do so, she reports the crime to the London police anonymously and returns to Glasgow empowered, feeling "she wasn't afraid of Ruchill any more" (2011: 371), albeit on the bus after missing the plane Liam had booked for her in his attempt to help her out of the situation. In a reversal of her motivation to leave the city of her trauma, returning to it means "going home to face them all" (2011: 376), after experiencing the alienation of the British metropolis:

> She was going home to Glasgow and for the first time remembered that she had a life beyond her present troubles. She loved the colours of the city, she had a place and history there, she understood the obscure kindness of the people and the rationale behind brutal weather. She'd missed the cleanness of the air, the archaic turns of phrase and the rasping guttural speech. (2011: 376)

Maureen's provisional reconciliation with the city will materialise in a radical act of empowerment after she walks up Maryhill Road to Ruchill, to the "looming hospital tower" that had disturbed her so much in the past. Once there, she sets it on fire, promising herself "she must never, ever tell anyone what she had done" (2011: 386). This is in fact a proleptic passage, where the symbolism associated with the space resembles Maureen's later attack on her father in *Resolution*.

The third novel of the trilogy situates Maureen's story in an interstice that again has strong spatial and emotional connotations. As such, Glasgow is presented as an "unaccustomed city," where "everybody was dangerously out of character" (2014: 5), due to some anomalous meteorological conditions, which are, part of "a five-to-ten-year cycle, [when] the weather turns and the city doesn't know itself" (2014: 4). Maureen and her friend Leslie no longer work at the Women's shelter and instead sell smuggled cigarettes in Paddy's Market, a popular area closed

by Glasgow City Council in 2009. Now Maureen uses their shared van to drive around the city, although she also continues walking in order to have more freedom of movement. For her, walking implies a process of thinking "and talking to herself without feeling self-conscious" (2014: 48); rather than a bohemian flâneuse, she becomes an urban feminist activist. Her emotions have changed and, although she has not recovered from her trauma and is still an alcoholic, she feels more empowered, to the extent that she can walk to her sister's house to spy on her father. Also, and more importantly, she walks to Michael's apartment, which is empty, and towards the end of the novel to Gartnavel Royal Psychiatric Hospital, where he has been admitted, lost in his dementia. In this story Maureen sees herself as the hero, trying to save her baby niece, who has been called after her in order to further deny the abuse, and whom Maureen sees as an offering to Michael. At this stage, she is planning to kill her father, an idea instigated by an ominous character in the trilogy, Mark Doyle, whose involvement in the recurrent rape of his own sister, Pauline, one of Maureen's friends, remains unclear until the end of this book. When approaching Michael at the hospital, Maureen feels her "skin burning where [his arm] touched her (…). She felt Michael seeping in through her skin" (2014: 354), acting out the aggressions once more. Her traumatic memory is contaminated by contradictory emotions: anger, the hope of being capable of changing the future for her niece, but also empathy, "steering herself against humanizing pity" (2014: 357). Instead of killing her father, Maureen improvises an alternative tactic when she realises that Mark Doyle has set a trap to videotape her committing the attack, at the instruction of Angus Farrell. In an unpremeditated movement, she kills Doyle and manipulates the crime scene in order to incriminate Michael, taking revenge upon both the perpetrator of her abuse and that of her friend's. Consequently, her final act of revenge is both individual and collective, as well as the only means she finds to do justice in an environment that is configured as incapable of protecting women. This rupture in the action is also in line with the death of the villain, Angus, who, after being released from prison, attacks a now empowered Siobhain, who incidentally kills him in self-defence.

At the end of the trilogy, Maureen has restored safety into her life and into the lives of other women in the city, due to her subversive urban functionings. She has even managed to find an alternative —probably very provisional— care solution for her relatives and close friends, who now relate to one another in a "strangely natural" manner (2014: 370), unlike the normative example represented by Angus's family at the trial, "the monsters who had turned him into a sexual predator" (2014: 372). Still exhausted and feverish after the final incidents at the Gartnavel hospital, Maureen fantasises she is in an "idealized afterlife, where all was love and peace and everyone she cares about was looked after" (2014: 32). Such an unrealistic dream once again hints at the lack of urban capabilities denounced in the trilogy, where drug-dealers, like Liam, become protective figures, and where a woman diagnosed with a mental illness becomes the only seeker of justice in her ambivalent role of hero and killer. In this context, the solidarity of the castaways turns out to be the only instrument available to develop alternative functionings in the city. As Sassen contends, "today's political practices (…) have less to do with the protection of private property than with the production of presence by the powerless who claim rights to the city" (2012: 90). And these rights, in the case of Maureen, are also highly dependent on her transition from alienation to agency, on becoming a subject capable of transforming the space she inhabits; in sum, on her transition from only a resilient person into one who can develop positive urban capabilities.

5. *Embodied Spaces of Resilience*

The most significant spatial transformation in the novels is associated with the interconnected portrayal of Maureen's psychological state and the homes she embodies; chiefly her family's and her small apartment in Garnethill. These are uncanny spaces, where her repressed fear emerges, but also spaces intruded into by the police, criminals and her lovers. In fact, there is a close connection between these domestic spaces and her body in terms of lack of agency, the threat of external aggression and the deployment of damaging affective practices, all of which hint at the impossibility of her developing basic capabilities, both urban and within the home. As already

contended, Maureen's process of healing and starting to feel safe is directly related to her exploration of public spaces and the investigation of the crimes; also to the development of her changing functionings in domestic spaces, which impacts on her capacity to claim the space and interrogate the institution of the home.[12]

Elizabeth Grosz explains that "the body and its environment (…) produce each other as forms of the hyperreal, as modes of simulation which have overtaken and transformed whatever reality each may have had into the image of the other" (1992: 241). The environment with the strongest influence on Maureen is represented by her family home, where the abuse takes place and where she is consistently blamed for the trouble she causes her relatives, and even for Michael's departure after his last attack. Her dysfunctional family articulate their feelings in a chain of passive-aggressive practices that leave Maureen with scarce resources to overcome her ordeal, making her "hate herself on a whole new level" (2011: 14). Nussbaum contends that when we look at the family, we should examine whose capabilities are developed, since "it is not enough to ask whether the family promotes a diffuse and general kind of affection and solidarity. We must ask in detail what it does for the capabilities of each of its members in the area of love and care, and also with regard to other capabilities" (2000: 246). For Maureen, such affective support is only provided by her brother Liam, and it is only at the end of the trilogy that she will be able to return to her home and family, once Michael is no longer a threat, and after she has developed her capabilities beyond their influence.

The most important space in this home is a cupboard under the stairs, where Maureen was found at the age of ten, inarticulate after a brutal aggression. The incident, which "was never mentioned again" (2014: 21), becomes the family's secret, hidden as Maureen's body was hidden by her father in the cupboard: "The panic when he saw the blood dribbling down her skinny legs. He'd slapped her on the side of the head and, lifting her by her upper arm, put her into the cupboard, locking it and taking the key with him. She could smell the blood as she sat in the dark cupboard and she knew what it was" (2014: 72). This episode is "acted out" by Maureen in adulthood, leading to a serious breakdown when she hides in the hall cupboard in her Garnethill apartment for two days, until she is rescued by Liam and admitted to the Northern Psychiatric Hospital, the place where Angus perpetrated his abuse. The secrecy and lies surrounding the cause for Maureen's state are revealed by only one member of the family, her sister's husband Alistair, who is never forgiven for this betrayal. Thus Maureen's individual capabilities are sacrificed for the dubious sake of her family's, leaving her in a void of credibility and with no other means to survive than developing strong resilient strategies.

However, the hall cupboard becomes an uncanny, interstitial space in the story, given the subsequent associations it takes on for Maureen as she works through her PTSD. Above all, it represents her trauma, a fact Angus knows well and uses to mortify her in his symbolic killing and mutilating of Douglas's body: "She shut her eyes and thought about Douglas's lovely bollocks sitting in a bloody puddle in the dark hall cupboard. And she saw herself sitting in there, in the black dark, hiding from no one, not knowing whether she was ten or twenty. The two time-frames seemed to blur together" (2014: 369). Angus's indirect intrusion into Maureen's space and emotions continues throughout the trilogy, first through his sending of threatening letters to her from the prison, and later by leaving anonymous parcels for her containing photographs of abused children. Shocked, she keeps them in the cupboard, identifying immediately with them, but also feeling ready to take action against the perpetrators of this violence. Angus goes even further and sends her a video tape showing her deceased friend Pauline being raped by her father and filmed by one of her brothers, Mark Doyle. At first, Maureen decides she must cope with the harassment in isolation, although she will only be capable of escaping the ominous cupboard and its contents

[12] In his study of "the production of the 'home'," Joshua M. Price concludes that the home is "frequently a central place of terror and danger," which is at odds with the general assumption that these spaces are the epitome of safety for women: "the assumption that the home is safe not only obscures violence. It also obscures the labor that produces the home. Indeed, the labor that produces the peaceful home is often produced under the threat of violence" (2002: 40).

with the help of her friend Leslie, and of her brother Liam, who removes the cupboard contents from Maureen's apartment, again assuming the responsibility of sanitising the space of his sister's trauma. Previously, the emotional support she has found in Vik,[13] her first experience of tenderness and care "in the hinterland of intimacy" (2014: 118), allows her to start working through her trauma and say "a soft good-night to the child in the cupboard" (2014: 117), to the child that she once was, and who was never looked after properly.

Apart from the specific space represented by the cupboard, Maureen's apartment as a whole is particularly significant in the portrayal of her affective practices and eventual recovery. Located at the top of Garnethill, it becomes a sort of watchtower for Maureen, from where she can observe the city below. Maureen buys it when her crisis begins, in order not to live with her mother anymore, "knowing it was where things would get really bad because the flashbacks were getting so much worse" (2014: 399). This space of privacy is contaminated by the murder of Douglas: the memory of his mutilated corpse, the blood stains, the constant feeling of intrusion. She refuses to have it cleaned until the end of the first book, when she closes herself in the cupboard stroking the dried blood on the floor before reclaiming the space in a ritual of purification that affects both her body and the apartment. In a similar vein, clearing the apartment becomes crucial in the third book, which shows the combined factors of moving, emotion and emptying: "She felt as if she was stripping the set, getting ready to leave with no idea of where she was moving to" (2014: 6). These three factors interact as she works through her trauma, but hint at the instability characterizing Maureen's life, in a space that still has "blood-stained floorboards" (2014: 7), and the embodied experience of fear, trauma and lack of control. Significantly, at the end of the trilogy, she decides to sell her flat, and go back to university to finish her degree, and asks Liam to rent her a room in his house. At this stage she is ready to remove the remaining blood from her apartment, helped by Leslie, knowing that "she's survived all of that and there wasn't a solitary doubt in her mind that she'd live through the aftermath of Michael" (2014: 400).

In his study of domestic violence, Price explains that homes are generally considered safe places constructed by women, and that violence in the domestic realm often signifies a form of social failure for them. He identifies three interwoven motivations implicit in the idea of constructing safe spaces, which, according to him, are "in tension with one another," namely: "a desire for a place of love and safety, an identity tied to being a homemaker, and a fear of violence" (2002: 56). Indeed, at the end of the story, Maureen feels comforted in her relationship with Vik. Most importantly, her identity does not rely on a spatial association with any particular home. She does not aim to construct a traditional home, but rather a safe space for herself. Her strong resilience and the capabilities she has acquired in the course of the story allow her to make decisions about her spatial practice, both private and public. As such, the trilogy ends with Maureen and Vik in St Petersburg, in the Hermitage, from where she can watch "the sun glinting off the gilded onion domes of the Cathedral called The Resurrection On Spilt Blood" (2014: 436). She has left her apartment and her family home, but also Glasgow, in an optimistic open ending that also raises alarms of the many unresolved issues in her life, like her alcoholism.

6. *Conclusions*:

Denise Mina's protagonist epitomises the long-term consequences of gender-based violence and sexual abuse, yet her particular case metonymically hints at structural forms of violence against women. By means of her character's embodiment of space, Mina interrogates the available capabilities in the city of Glasgow, according to differentiated gender and social conditionings. Maureen's strong resilience compensates for her lack of family and institutional support, namely, for the restricted urban capabilities within her reach. Her resilience is relational, as it depends on her empathy and solidarity with other vulnerable women and develops into an ethics of collective justice and care that reaches beyond the specificities of her life. Anger appears as an emotional

[13] For an analysis of the role played by the trilogy's black characters in "crafting normalcy," see Clanfield (2005).

instrument to achieve social justice and her controversial actions are mediated by her high mobility and relentless exploration of space. Moving leads to empowerment in the novels, a spatial exploration that is also an exploration of the self and of other women's suffering. As such, Maureen's resilience has a mobile dimension: she inscribes her presence on Glasgow in a mutual remaking between her embodied experience and the city. This is a strategy to escape her own trauma, but also a means to navigate through the "incapable spaces" that surround her, which are compensated for by the solidarity and alternative care solution she creates with her close friends and some of her relatives. Her intermittent functionings adapt to the changing circumstances of her life, precipitating a change from victim to perpetrator of violence. In itself, Maureen's controversial revenge in self-defence becomes a collective act of justice and solidarity. She claims her right to the city in her individual movements and collective actions, trying to construct safe spaces for women in hostile environments, both public and domestic. Her right to these spaces of security is only acquired after her transition from alienation to agency, once she has access to most of Nussbaum's "central human capabilities," chiefly, those concerning her bodily and emotional integrity, but also her relative control over and transformation of her environment, as represented by the apartment at the top of Glasgow's Garnethill.

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