

The Magaluf Girl: Public sex, shame and the digital class relations of social contagion

Introduction

In July 2014 a media scandal was triggered by a posting on YouTube which propelled a young woman, who became known as 'The Magaluf Girl,' into infamy. From discussion on social media sites her story also quickly hit the national tabloid headlines, the broadsheet press as well as broadcast television. This is an example of an emerging familiar model of transmedia shaming facilitated by the everyday use of the camera phone and the traditional media's parasitic recycling of social media feeds. But this case study's particular construction is *also* revealing of the way in which class relations are part of the contemporary world of online misogyny, especially as it is fuelled by tabloid commercial culture. The initial posting was a video of the young woman apparently performing oral sex on twenty four men at a bar in Magaluf as part of a party game where she had been told that she could win a 'holiday' - that 'holiday' turned out to be only a cocktail drink.

There is more than one object of disgust here depending on your point of view – the girl, the men taking part, and the organisers of such events (the events company 'Carnage'), the DJ goading the scene, or the hedonistic party scene of 'Brits abroad' - but what followed in the mediated (online and offline) reactions to this holiday act was the targeting of 'the girl'. She became the object for others' reactions that fed online media streams and provided commercial fodder to tabloid 'soft' news. Her actions spurred a viral meme, 'mammading', which is a Spanish neologism used to refer to performing sex acts in public. In the process she, perhaps with good reason, hides from spotlight whilst the story about her escalates, moves across sites, and includes online postings of hate. This article is an attempt to trace how the story of the Magaluf girl spread from social to traditional media, discussing how affective and historical class relations help give the story its tempo and *intensify* rather than transform the class relations of disgust. It shows how the boundary-drawing of social hierarchies which stem from the nineteenth century establishment of bourgeois civilised society that typically drew on psychic formations, the body and space (Stallybrass and White, 1986), are *also* re-drawn and made spectacular within the symbolic forms of connection of the contemporary digital landscape. Important though, as the young woman's subjectivity is erased she is *replaced* by the disgust at the centre of the media escalation, therefore her

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particular framing as the central protagonist becomes more like an absent spectre, one which cannot be extracted from the current and historical formations of class.

Slut-shaming, sexualisation and class

The case study that this article draws on therefore stands at the intersection of a series of debates: about young women and their sexualities, about the shaming practices of contemporary media culture, *and* about the persistence of older ideologies of class relations in a digital society. The internet has accelerated practices of slut-shaming that have a longer history (Tanenbaum, 2011) where girls are navigating difficult terrain:

The new affordances of digital technologies mean images of bodies are exchangeable, differentially valued commodities that circulate via an economy of posting, tagging, sharing and ‘looking’ on social networks (Ringrose and Harvey, 2015:214).

Research has shown that girls are subject to requests from their male peers to share provocative images, whilst they also engage in various agentic tactics to control their images and their bodies (Ringrose et al 2013). There is now an established body of research attempting to understand the relationships of exchanging of sexualised images in the digital world of the western teenager. (e.g. Karaia 2012; Ringrose 2011; Renold and Ringrose 2011; Salter 2016).

Girls’ deliberate engaging in the posting of sexual content online has also become one of the features of the growing fears around the hypersexualisation of children and girls in general, and we can understand the panic around the ‘Magaluf Girl’ as existing within this climate. Succumbing to the sexualisation of culture has been deemed to be psychologically disturbing for young girls whose aggressive sexuality will only be rewarded with ‘poor self-esteem, depression and eating disorders’, according to policy reviews.¹ Many feminist academics however, are pointing to the problems of using the sexualisation debates to police and survey young women’s behaviour which can result in blaming girls for any abuse, whilst simultaneously denying them any sexual agency. (Albury, K and Crawford, K, 2012). The practice of ‘sexting’ for example has resulted in high-profile panics, the use of child pornography laws against young people, and a series of interventional models in online safety which concentrate on young women having to protecting themselves. As such therefore, Amy Hasinoff (2015:97) rightly calls for the undoing the link between sexualisation and sexting

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since it is 'a major roadblock to developing nuanced understanding of youth, gender, and sexuality online and to creating privacy protections that work in the context of digital media.' A point to which I will return towards the conclusion of this article.

Important for this discussion is the way in which mainstream approaches to the sexualisation debates have already tended to draw on well-established classed discourses. Danielle Egan (2013) in her critique of those debates and the media attention they have drawn, outlines their relationship to a longer history of middle-class fears of contagion by the working-class as can be heard in Opplinger's title (2008) *Girls Gone Skank*. In those debates for example poor taste in 'skanky' clothing works metonymically as a symbol of sexual depravity which reflects, 'longstanding middle-class anxieties that are part and parcel of dominant Anglophone cultural fantasies, projections and ideological formations about the eroticism, bodily comportment, and taste of the poor and working class.' (Egan, 2013:81)

As Egan points out these narratives work so easily because of the terrain of social hierarchy already laid down in the production of the middle-class social order of the nineteenth centuryⁱⁱ. According to Stallybrass and White (1986) bourgeois society established its own morally superior identity through the idea of its antitheses - the 'grotesque' bodily figures of the slum - where dirt and disease were seen to threaten the health and purity of the bourgeois individual. They chart a series of metonymic slippages between psychic, social and bodily realms where the prospect of contagion of physical disease becomes equated with the prospect of moral corruption. Here the working class are transcoding by these metaphors until they quite literally *become* dirt and disease. In these ways the Lumpenproletariat whilst marginal to production, were central to the symbolic Imaginary as simultaneously objects of disgust and fascination.

There is thus a recurring symbolic formation whereby the working class are positioned as threat and as carriers of disease particularly at times of social and political crises. When taking in the British tabloid invective associated with unmarried single working-class girls such as the figure of the 'Chav mum' identified by Imogen Tyler (2008) or the despair and outrage as the press discovered that footballer Wayne Rooney's prostitute was actually middle class (Egan, 2013), we can see Magaluf Girl operating as a familiar signifier of middle-class fears of social contagion. Here media attention helps to invite participation in calling the terms of abjection, marking the distance between 'this girl' and the moral citizen that exists within the broader field of 'social abjection' that can be found in neo-liberal

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societies. (Tyler, 2013). This article then intends to address the ways in which such already-embedded discourses lend themselves so successfully to the digital landscape.

Connectivity and symbolic intensification

Feminist work in this journal is calling us to challenge the intensification of misogyny found in online abuse and trolling (Jane, 2014) and yet some of the theoretical abstractions to explain connectivity tend to belie their political nature. Technology's up-scaled connectivity has itself led to the use of metaphors of disease and contagion to theorise the scale and force of affective intensities that are enabled through networked, digital or 'spreadable' media (Jenkins et al 2013). Drawing upon the terms like virality and contagion asks us to undo distinctions between the biological and the cultural and has found fertile ground in explaining the affective properties of media forms. This work makes use of the work of Gabriel Tarde's ideas about social contagion:

'how small, unpredictable events can be nudged into becoming big monstrous contagions *without a guiding hand*' (Sampson 2012:6 my emphasis)

Tarde's work discusses 'social somnambulism', a kind of sleeping-walking where imitative momentum is built as a kind of innate force. Like the contours of contagion used to delineate the production of 'proper' culture in the nineteenth century, such metaphors can serve to obscure particular actors who might serve to benefit from the metaphors themselves. Of course we know that there is a political and moral economy at work in affective forces (Ahmed, 2004) which must also support online misogyny. Therefore we must also attend to the ways in which certain kinds of connections are *incentivised* and this can be economic and political. Nigel Thrift (2008) attempts what he calls a 'political economy of propensity' which draws more on,

'the work of aiding and abetting certain aspects of continual transformation, strategically bending process so that it 'ripens' in certain directions rather than others' (Jullien, F cited in Thrift, 2008).

In this case study the 'propensity' is visible in its relationship to tabloid and promotional culture which is infused with the classed histories outlined above. Indeed the tendencies for salaciousness (fear and fascination) which have a longer socio-technological history in tabloid culture, become part of the architecture which gives this story and this misogyny its force. According to Nahon and Hemsley (2013) virality's relationship to the social has both a

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‘transformative’ potential *and* the ability to ‘reproduce’ the social. Here, I want to suggest another process, which is virality’s ability *intensify* the symbolic mechanisms for drawing the boundary lines of distinction which have lived effects. This process is made more powerful by the relationship between online media and the symbolic power to frame national moral discourses of traditional media. Here in this case study, despite the numerous actors and potential connections to be made, there is a singular recipient of all of this misogyny. The repetition and the intensity always directs back to ‘The Magaluf Girl’ whose online affective singularity – her ‘spectre’ - gets more intense, whilst her subjectivity is erased.

Spreading the story and the process of transcoding

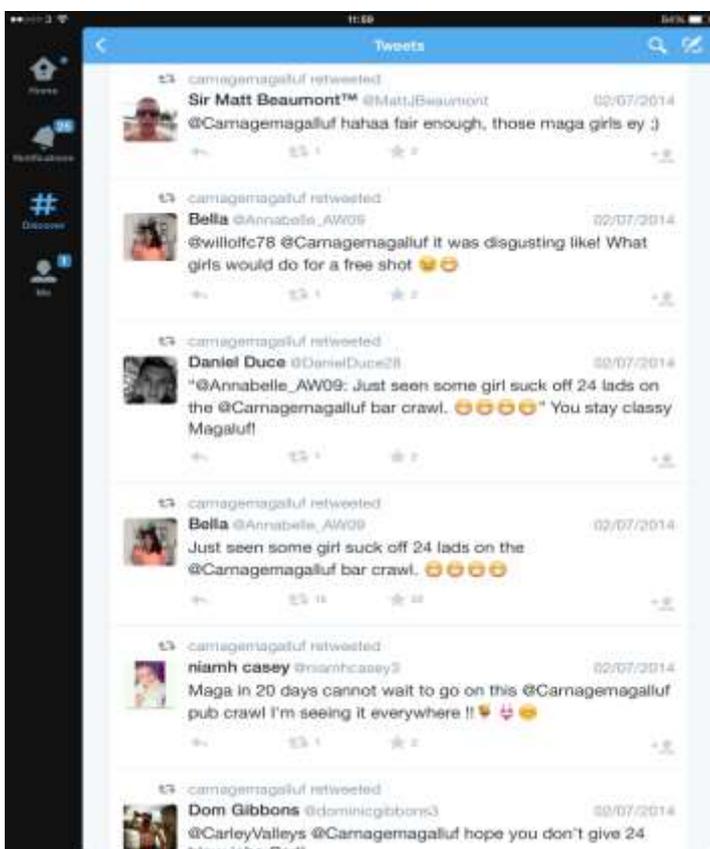
This scandal can be interpreted as an example of a ‘digital pillory’ of the kind described by Hess and Waller (2014) whereby the relationship between old media and new media gives a renewed energy to the mainstream media’s ability to discipline and shame. Mobile phone footage that can be shared across social media invites ordinary citizens into the process of surveillance and shaming, but it is given more powerful framing by the selective recycling by the mainstream media. Therefore, ‘traditional news media continue to play a particularly powerful role in shaming because of their symbolic power to contextualize information generated in social and new media circles and their privileged position to other fields of power’ (Hess and Waller, 2013:101) Whilst Hess and Waller describe this as a process whereby increasingly ‘ordinary’ people are shamed for minor criminal offenses (they use the example of an Australian woman filmed urinating in football stadium) this article draws attention to the particular classed framing of shame. Interestingly in Hess and Waller’s example too, the woman in question is attacked as a ‘feral bogan’ which similarly draws on classed boundaries of synonyms of animality versus civility which are resonant of the classed histories discussed above.

This case study began at a drinking party held by the promotions company ‘Carnage’ who work in British towns and in holiday resorts such as Magaluf that are well-known as havens for hedonism amongst students and working-class British youth. Carnage sell tickets for events which usually include copious amounts of alcohol consumption, party games and appearances from reality stars, soap stars and other lower grade celebrities. Carnage is part of a broader concern around excessive out of control working-class Brits abroad.ⁱⁱⁱ Phil Hubbard’s (2013) analysis of the press coverage of Carnage’s impact upon British towns, draws upon Bakhtin’s ideas of ‘carnival’ to outline how the moral concerns over young

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people's behaviour were framed around the fear of potential corruption of middle-class students. The media story had everything tuned to a tabloid scandal: the biological sexual and material smutty image of the sex act; an excessive number of blow jobs; and of course the cruel joke – the reward for the game was only a drink.

The story broke on Twitter on 2 July 2014 and already of course Carnage's Twitter account is promoting itself through retweeting reference to the act which suggests an immediate commercial motivation:



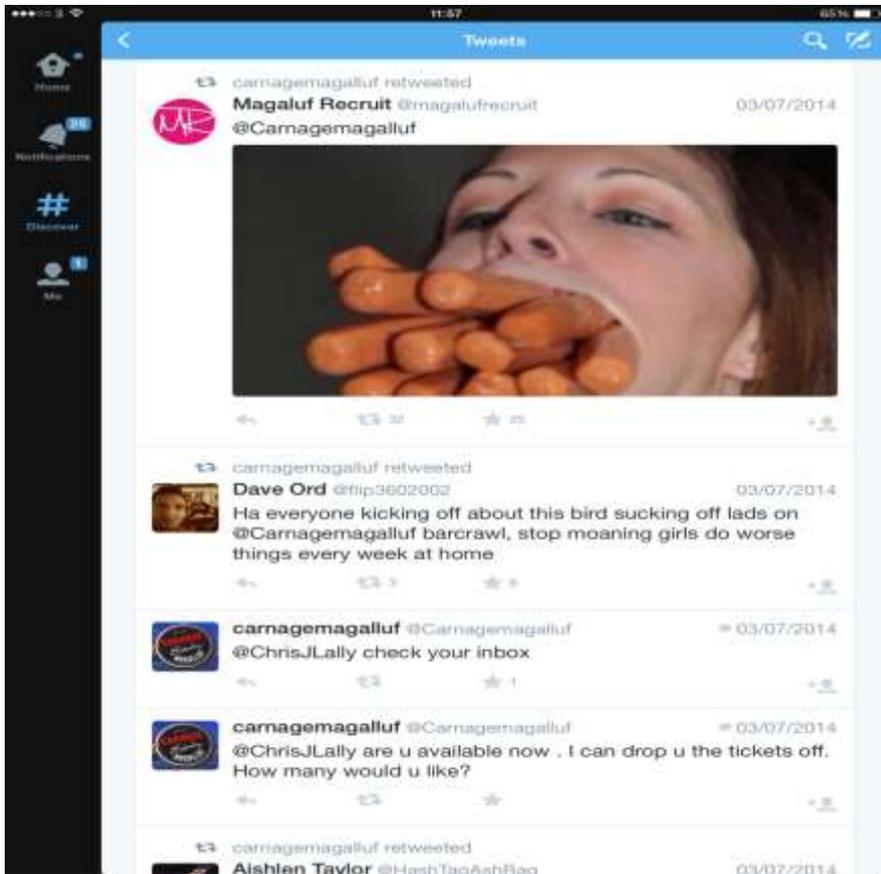
Straight away masked emoticons come into play in the comments indicating the need for protection from disease. This emoticon's use here is perfect aligned to a history where working-class women have long been associated with signifiers of dirt and contagion (Walkerdine, 1998). The Contagious Diseases Acts of the nineteenth century produced an

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elision of medico-legal discourses which attempted to control the spread of contagious diseases such as syphilis by giving police legal powers to submit any suspected prostitutes to internal examination and then to potential incarceration. (Walkowitz, 1980) Whilst fears were mainly around the effects that the diseases were having upon men in the armed forces, it was the women who were policed as debaucherous, whilst men were called to operate self-control in the face of sexual advances. Kimeya Baker (2012) argues that such discourses still permeate ideas and laws around prostitution. In this case study, despite the fact that the young women was considerably outnumbered by the males involved in the sexual act, the connotation of her agency in the spread of disease was all too easily symbolically made through the intensifier of the emoticon.

Later on the same day, the video footage taken by someone 'there' – perhaps a Carnage representative considering how close the camera is - was posted on 'Live-Leak'. This is a news website which claims to be 'redefining the media' placing this story next to stories about global politics and Syria. By the 3rd July the promotions companies and 'Carnage' were using the event as further promotion and a recruitment strategy, inviting further responses to this event. It poked fun at the act by circulating an image of a woman with her mouth stuffed with sausages which re-registered and reinforced the excessiveness of the act. Of course this was not the actual girl, but someone standing in to repeat the act, but also to reframe it as hilarious and grotesque. In Stallybrass and White's (1986) discussion of the bourgeois fascination with carnival they discuss the way in which the 'grotesque' body is framed as the antithesis to the classical body. They emphasize how the transgressive grotesque body is grounded in excess, dirt and orifices: 'grotesque costumes and masks emphasize the gaping mouth, the protuberant belly and buttocks, the feet and the genitals' (p22) They suggest that whilst the classical body keeps its distance, the grotesque body is subject to its surroundings and contexts. Here the stuffed mouth full of sausages represents excess and fat to symbolically register this debaucherous transgression. It is at once repulsive as the same time presented as fascinating, and the responses here are closely followed by ticket sales to more Carnage events.

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The actual video footage was uploaded to YouTube on the same day by '9GAGWorldcup hits' (who mostly otherwise posts sports footage) as well as to UniLad (Unilad is a website promoting lad culture aimed at male university students). YouTube's 'Community Guidelines' state that, 'Sexually explicit content like pornography is not allowed' ... but that... 'A video that contains nudity or other sexual content may be allowed **if the primary purpose is educational, documentary, scientific, or artistic, and it isn't gratuitously graphic.**' It says about harmful content, 'While it might not seem fair to say you can't show something because of what viewers might do in response, we draw the line at content that intends to incite violence or encourage dangerous or illegal activities that have an inherent risk of serious physical harm or death.' In Hess and Waller's (2013) example of the urinating

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woman, YouTube removed the post the next day, but this did not happen here. There is nothing in YouTube's guidelines which prevent this material being uploaded. The only issue is that you cannot gain sponsorship of the material if the person in the video does not give permission, but this did not prevent its uploading or prevent traditional media further trading on the images in more indirect ways.

YouTube's imperative is therefore ultimately all about the importance of 'joining in' (which of course lends itself perfectly well to cyber-bullying) as it says to its users:

'Join in and have fun'

Remember that this is your community. Each and every person on YouTube makes the site what it is, so don't be afraid to dig in and get involved.'^{iv}

And so people did join in: YouTube vlogger 'The true Geordie' watched it and commented on the same day (3rd July) about his concern about the spread of disease, worrying for the men who might fall victim of her contagion, repeating exactly the same discourse which marks the women and not the men as carriers of disease. This is despite the known evidence that female to male contraction of sexual diseases is much less effective than vice versa. (Kandel, 1997 cited in Baker, 2012).

I have watched the video, which was mostly a grainy set of images of the girl grabbing at crotches to the goading of the crowd and the DJ in the drunken party game. There was nothing especially erotic or pornographic about the footage, other than visible male appendages, but they mostly looked flaccid and powerless. Perhaps this was the greatest transgression in this carnivalesque scene because the young woman seemed more agentive than the twenty four men, and perhaps that is why this offended so much on the masculinised YouTube. Wotanis and Macmillan (2014) have pointed out that females are mostly underrepresented on YouTube and that when they do engage with the platform it offers a mostly misogynistic and hostile environment.

As people continued to contribute to the flow of disgust, comments posted YouTube in reaction to the video mostly reinforced and intensified the affective invectives related to disgust, shame and disease:

'that's just nasty people need to learn to respect themselves' Pink 90 Cess

'That's nasty we should lock her up so she doesn't spread her disease' Joanna

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Joanna's comment about locking her up even repeated the notion of criminalising women during the Contagious Diseases Act when any women found with a disease would be subject to spending time in a 'lock-up' until she was clear. (Walkowitz, 1980). The young woman here however had not committed an actual crime, neither could anyone presume that she carried an infection, but the narrative of disease is very powerful in the process of transcoding the young women into a powerful signifier.

This was so easily achieved in the contemporary climate because there are other precedents in which figures of working-class women become bearers of socio-political middle-class anxiety. For instance, the figure of the 'single mother' (Lawler, 2005) or 'chav scum' who are framed as bringing shame on the nation. In drawing the lines of moral distance through abjection (Tyler, 2013) there was a good deal of discussion of Britishness and national shame. Valerie Walkerdine (2011) argued that the classed history of shame has positioned working-class women as the primary targets and participants of shame-based reality television. Reality television itself is of course a contemporary cultural signifier of low culture and bad taste and therefore it comes as no surprise that the connections between the TV genre and the young woman get made. As is familiar to the now established 'spectacularisation' of the working class across reality television, the young woman became framed as the abject object, a figure of disgust and as the constitutive limit to national propriety (Skeggs, 2004, Wood and Skeggs, 2008; Skeggs and Wood, 2012, Jensen, 2014):

Rett butler posts 'Disgusting creature that really shames our country. A sad indictment of the British culture fuelled by reality tv'

Danii: 'the product of stuff like big brother, Geordie shore, inbetweeners and all that commercial bullshit'

This was another easy slippage of the kind that gets made when boundary markers are being drawn but it had an impact upon the young woman's positioning as having any rights in the public realm. There was a reality television star at the event, but the event was not filmed for reality television. Holiday public sex acts precede reality television, especially with the 1980s rise of the package holiday. Such a phenomenon of tabloid fascination was later captured by reality television in the programmes such as *Ibiza Uncovered* (Channel 4 1998 LWT) shortly followed by *Holiday Reps* (BBC 1997) and there are more recent permutations such as *Sun, Sea and Suspicious Parents* (2011- BBC) - all factual shows about working-class young people on holiday or working in holiday resorts, drawing on a carnivalesque fascination with

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the hedonism of working-class youth. This act took place in the holiday resort commonly known as ‘Shagaluf’ and the connection that was made with reality television perhaps related to the grainy quality of the image and the implication that this was potentially deliberate and semi-scripted as part of the same genre and occupying the same symbolic space. The disgust that was expressed here in these comments was also about the event’s filming and its publicness for which the young woman was also blamed. We assume that she did not give consent to the event being filmed, or for its subsequent publication online. This interest in the act of ‘publicness’ placed the debate with the classed fears about the sexualisation of culture. On the one hand there is acknowledgement that sexuality is increasingly performed, captured and shared for social media whilst on the other hand doing so can easily invite the label of ‘slut’ for young women (Ringrose and Harvey, 2015). Here derision was also attached to her apparent consent to a publicness which does not involve a conscious cue to the camera but was drawn from another representation entirely. This was captured footage, made all the more salacious and appealing because she did *not* appear to know that the filming was happening. Instead by drawing on the terrain of reality television, where the boundaries of public/private are already eroded, the image was easily assimilated with reality television. Here any of the girl’s own rights to privacy have been surrendered because she has been replaced with ‘the girl’ of reality TV – the hyper-sexed and out-of-control girl of *Geordie Shore* or *Jersey Shore* fame (Wood, 2016).

There were also a few posts defending her and the nature of her crime such as ‘*who cares it’s up to her she never killed anyone – ps go back to drama school*’ (You Tube) which clearly indexed the class sensitivities at work. Mostly however, Twitter feeds and Facebook comments were calling her a ‘repulsive slag’, ‘actual vermin’ and ‘scum of the earth’ of the kind that we are so familiar across online misogynistic trolling (Jane, 2014) and which also repeated the classed metonymic associations of dirt, sewers and rats. But the intensification of these feelings landed upon one singular actor in the event, onto the young woman and away from the organisers, onlookers or participants, who also played a role in goading a drunk young girl into performing sex acts. In this article, I am not making any judgement about what kind of agency the young woman had in this party game, but the resulting discourses it has produced are reminiscent of so many of the discourses of rape culture in which blame is reapportioned to the victim.^v Such affective intensive rhetoric is part of a field in which young girls cannot be protected when they have already been classified as disease and dirt. What occurred here online was a series of intensifications made through repetition in

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which 'the Magaluf Girl' as an object of disgust is amplified, whilst her own subjectivity (deliberate or not) was erased. This was just one particularly aggressive image which circulated around the social media sites.

Image 3



Here any image of the girl was replaced by the close-up of an aggressive young man's anger, whilst she only appears in the crystallisation of what the scandal has made her. Her erasure and her simultaneous codification is complete: Just as in the nineteenth century where the poor are replaced with metaphors of the sewer, here, via emoticons, posts and gifs, she *becomes* DIRT.

The mainstream press: the recycling of 'distance' and the 'lasting mark of shame'.

The notoriety that the scandal was gathering over social media was soon picked up by the tabloid press as the internet feeds cheap news production in the interest of sales and chasing dwindling audiences:

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Just three days after the event, on 5th July 2014, drawing their news from their social media research which has become a staple model of digital publishing industry, the tabloid press had the story and released the girl's real name. Just as in Hess and Waller's (2013) case study it is the national press who name in the 'digital pillory'. Her Irish Christian family were quoted as 'supporting her' whilst she remained silent.

Commentary began to come in from the broadsheets too as they picked up on the Newzack of the day as this episode becomes framed as a motif of Cameron's Broken Britain. Feminist journalists come to the girl's defence and on the same day commentator Barbara Ellen told *Guardian* readers that in the age of user-generated-content girls (not boys) just can't get away with what they used to and the tragedy is that this girl is just not going to be allowed to forget. Ex *Apprentice* reality television star Luissa Zissman in the Huffington Post on 5th July also offered a defence of her, whilst Caitlin Moran in *The Times Magazine* (19th July) much later also expressed empathy – all worrying over the way in which this casts and inevitably policed female sexuality.

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But the tabloid and broadcast media became more interested in reasserting the *moral* dilemma around the sexualisation of culture. Various commentators used the story to draw their distance from the act and the young woman as in any fear of contagion. The known person who was within touchable reach of the event was the MTV reality star Jay Gardner. On the 8th July he went on ITV's *This Morning* daytime television sofa with an undercover *Mirror* reporter who went to experience Carnage.^{vi} The conversation did attempt a broader discussion about who was to blame (the organisers, the men, the girl's friends) well as trying to outline a holiday culture of liberal sex. Host Holly Willoughby did at one point use the phrase 'the exploitation of young vulnerable girls' but ultimately the segment was used by Jay to ensure that he distanced himself suitably from the act: 'Its worrying, I made it clear, I don't want to be part of it'. The tabloid reporter showed no concern over their role in the generation of publicity around the event, whilst simultaneously discussing the clear unevenness in the attention placed on the young woman.

By the 10th July Carnage's club owner Paul Smith appeared on Channel 5 news and he pointed the finger squarely at the young woman. Asked about the video, Mr Smith said:

"I was disgusted by it – disgusted by the young lady doing it. I can't say that my reps encouraged that because that's not what happened... She should be spoken to by her parents. Is it something to do with upbringing?"

He denied the fact that the DJ and the reps could be clearly heard in the video goading and encouraging the girl not to stop. Any apportion of blame to him in the British press though was shortlived, whilst he was subject to police investigation in Spain. As the story was repeated across various online and offline media outlets, the spectre of 'The Magaluf Girl' became used as object for others, including celebrities, to draw their own moral value, purity and distance. This is a practice that is undertaken by both genders as can be seen in the comments cited above, it also includes celebrities like the former Pussycat Doll Nicole Sherzinger (whose best known single was 'Don't ya wish your girlfriend was hot like me') suggesting 'she needs to disinfect her mouth' in the *Daily Star* on July 14th.

As Hess and Waller (2013) describe the 'digital pillory's effects leave a larger and lasting 'mark of shame'. Here, the online story was not allowed to die as it might have if yesterday's papers were old news, but traditional media, under commercial pressure to extend their own imprint in the digital landscape recycle and breathe fresh life into the story. In September 2014 various online gossip and magazine outlets traded on the story as they looked to fill

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space. *Heatworld* as late as the 17th September and magazine sites like *Cosmopolitan Online* featured items like voting on who is to blame the girl or the bar owner. Ultimately, *The Mirror*'s online site looks back at 'Magaluf's Summer of Shame' and re-embeds and re-circulates the original YouTube clip that has been deemed too rude for broadcast television but perfectly acceptable in this viral tabloid landscape, no consent required. Reference to the event and the video was still easy to find as I conducted the final edit of this article^{vii}.

A classed scandal

This type of misogyny offered a perfect tabloid viral scandal: it had excess; it had a sex act, and it had a meme 'mammading'. It was also part of a salacious promotional culture which surrounds tabloid news as well as reality television. (One version of the YouTube clip for a time automatically linked to a trailer for the reality programme *Sun Sea and Suspicious Parents* BBC 2011-.) But how does this compare to what we have come to understand of scandal in contemporary culture? According to Laura Kipnis (2010) 'scandal is the pre-eminent delivery system for knowledge about the moral and political contradictions of our times... In other words the only way to understand this cultural moment is to be addicted to scandal' xiv

In many ways it was a classic scandal through which the protagonist seemed to be at odds with mainstream morality, transgressing the codes of proper behaviour, and was ritually punished for social order to be restored. But if scandals 'mock our insecurities' (Kipnis, 2010), then what did *this* scandal poke at? Could it be the new ambivalences of post-feminist sexualities where girls should be 'up for it' but where young women's sexualities are increasingly policed? Working-class women's sexuality treads a different line to that of the middle-class postfeminist whose ability to defend against attack with other forms of cultural capital releases her from the disgust assigned to other women, (Skeggs, 2004) 'The Magaluf Girl' is definitely not the single sexy aspirational girl despite her apparently phallic sexuality – think of the uncomfortable cheap bribe of the drink. What about the jib this took at our increasing investment in coupledness or 'love'? There were twenty-four men involved after all and they looked flaccid and weak, which potentially offered the greatest of transgressions.

Unlike Kipnis' scandals the 'protaganist' had no actual 'secret' or 'crime' and did not exist in a position of power - since the act was already public and not illegal. It was not a scandal oriented around bringing down the powerful through the exposure of their hypocritical morality. Unlike other scandals the protagonist did not then court the publicity to 'tell her

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story' to repent and to show the journey to 'self-knowledge' that in the language of confessional culture and neo-liberal self-knowledge, Oprah would at least applaud. In Jon Ronson's (2015) journalistic commentary he discusses a range of recent public shamings that have been supported by the public joining in across social media. He puzzles over why an unknown PR agent who makes a bad and ambivalent racist joke is ruined whilst Sir Max Moseley, former head of Formula One, and son of well-known fascist politician rides out the revelations of his secret sex parties which involve German military uniforms. At first, Ronson and Moseley think it is because he himself refuses to be shamed and takes the newspaper on, but later he comes to the revelation that as a man with white privilege involved in a consensual sex shaming 'there had been no shaming [...] Max was the target of no-one, not liberals like me, not the online misogynists who tear apart women who step out of line...' (2015: 177)

The Magaluf Girl was already inscribed as a target. She had no economic or political power to challenge the tabloid media, who still care about sex scandals. In terms of the viral explosion of shaming and in the face of any sense of democratic 'citizen justice', Ronson admits that:

'... there is a far more interesting story about the limits of influence coinciding with the boundaries between groups, about class and power...*Something contagion hides rather than elucidates*. Even the most violent crowds are never simply an inchoate explosion. There are always patterns, and those patterns always reflect wider belief systems.' (2015:100) (my emphasis)

In this case study it was the scale and circulation of the apparently 'user-generated' filming that produced and cultivated the media scandal. The young woman disappears whilst the figure of her as 'the Magaluf girl' is made visible only for the moral and economic value she enables for others. She is shamed by a sexist and exploitative set of connected promotional, social and traditional media - the patterning of which should not be obscured by virality but *explained* by its historical connection to classed hierarchies.

'This Girl Can't' – boundary lines and disconnections

At around the same time that this story broke, the EU courts and the broadsheet press were discussing 'the right to be forgotten'. It has arisen from ideas about the rights of individuals to 'determine the development of their life in an autonomous way, without being perpetually

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or periodically stigmatized as a consequence of a specific action performed in the past.’ (Montelaro, 2013:231) In May 2014 the EU court ruled that ‘personal data should be removed from search results on a person’s name when outdated, inaccurate, inadequate, irrelevant, or devoid of purpose, and when there is no public interest.’^{viii} I want to reference one more date - Tuesday 26th August 2014. On this date in the same summer of ‘The Magaluf Girl’ Lord Neuberger makes an appeal that in this context we need to re-write the privacy laws to keep up with new technology in keeping with the EHR convention on ‘rights to privacy’. The news pieces on this cited celebrities who have had their private affairs, usually sexual liaisons publicised, or revealing images or films made public. These include Ryan Giggs, Kate Middleton, Prince Harry and Max Moseley. Despite all of the available connections and close proximity between this discussion and the Magaluf Girl scandal, the connections between this announcement and *this* media shaming do not get made. Why not? Because the Magaluf Girl repeats a long historical tradition, also seen in the cases of sexual abuse across the country, whereby the working-class girl has already been framed as dirt and therefore not deserving of protection.

There is an over-riding issue in the sexualisation of culture debates in the era of digital sharing which means that all girls are subjected to ‘pedagogies of shame and regret’ (Albury, 2017). Things can be different, as Kath Albury (2017) describes in the Ashley Madison case where the public details of the adult members of an elite hook up’ agency which comprised of mostly married people were made public. The moral discourse that ensued was less of censure but of an appeal to the public to adopt an ‘ethical bystander’ status to refuse to check if our colleagues or families names were listed. She uses this example to show how young people are not afforded the same moral position of a right to privacy.

I want to suggest that the working-class girl is doubly afflicted by her youth and the histories of shame and codification which affect her rights to privacy in this landscape. Anita Harris (2004) describes the ideological boundary drawn between two kinds of girl that are at the centre of the social and economic futures of western societies – ‘the Can-Do girl’ versus the ‘at risk girl’. The future-projected ambitious girl of western culture who can reflexively harness her girlpower through new educational and employment opportunities should always be reminded of the ‘at risk girl’ who makes dangerous and risky choices and is personally to blame for her own irresponsible downfall.

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In contemporary media culture, the ‘future girl’ as described by Harris, responds to the invitation into public visibility to exteriorise her subjectivity through a confessional culture which has been accelerated by reality celebrity and the webcam. But for the ‘Magaluf Girl’ the visibility worked in a different way. Clickbait intensified the *figure* of her at the very expense of her. She became *hypervisible*, existing only as a signifier with commercial value which gave others’ voice. The working-class girl does not figure in the landscape of the ‘global’ future girl and is often rendered invisible (Skourtes, 2015). Here the very lack of future of the ‘Magaluf Girl’ and lack of public space, exacerbates the symbolic distance between the ‘at risk girl’ and the ‘future girl’. In returning to Hasinoff’s (2015) important call for a more robust ‘consent model’ for the sharing of images in the digital landscape, class and its relationship to commerce need to be taken into account.^{ix}

Conclusions

This article has therefore attempted to trace a case study of the incentives for the passing on of sexualised images in the digital landscape, as also rooted in longer history of classed discourses of shame. It has demonstrated how the interrelationship between old and new media can enable the acceleration of moral censure. As well as opening out the world into unpredictable utopian arenas, digital contagion can also lazily repeat, intensify and thus ultimately close down other frames for knowing. We must be therefore be wary of using metaphors of contagion should they occlude the patterning of those processes and always look out for the politics of the *intensification* of symbolic codes.

The young woman in this story became an object of classed disgust and hate through a rapid series of transcodings where her subjectivity was annihilated whilst her symbolic value soared. The sex act itself was perhaps a cultural amplifier, tapping into some ripe conditions of cultural anxiety about the working classes as out of control, but we also need to pay attention to the commercial opportunities such shaming affords. The digital landscape provides newer sets of challenges to shaming and the contexts of class and commerce need to come into play in our ongoing conversations about young people’s identities and their rights to privacy. Whilst there can be an intricate web of relations they can also all point back to one emblematic figure – and it is important that we do not forget her as the point where all these relations, *representations* and affective responses actually land, on a living young woman, whilst the ‘carnage’ goes on...

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ⁱ Linda Papadopoulos (2010) Sexualisation of Young People Review: 35.

ⁱⁱ See also Bourdieu 1987, McLintock, 1995 and Walkerdine, 1998

ⁱⁱⁱ http://www.dailymail.co.uk/travel/travel_news/article-3524632/Why-Brits-behave-badly-holiday-Kerry-Katona-raises-eyebrows-vacation-antics-etiquette-examines-going-wrong.html;
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^{iv} <https://support.google.com/youtube/answer/2801964>

^v The scandal appears around the same time as a series of sex ring scandals which concentrated on the extensive exploitation of young working class girls around the UK, details of which are still coming to light, from the first prosecutions in 2010.

^{vi} <http://www.itv.com/thismorning/hot-topics/magaluf-exposed-jay-gardner> (date accessed 30/5/17) This link is still available.

^{vii} This is possibly one of the reasons why I have struggled with the tense of this article because it still has a life.

^{viii} Julia Powels, Enrique Chaparro (18th February, 2015) 'How Google determined our Right to be Forgotten' *The Guardian*.

^{ix} Hasinoff (2015) uses the example of the Girls Gone Wild company who were found guilty of circulating images of underage girls engaging in sex acts but were not heavily punished or associated with any social stigma