

Wandering Intellectuals: Establishing a Research Agenda on Gender, Walking, and Thinking

Building on a study of three women who practice walking-for-thinking as a part of their intellectual work, the analysis identifies potential themes for a future research agenda on gender, walking, and thinking. A particular focus is the subtle, daily, management of gendered expectations and ways in which walking, for these women, is a contribution to such management. We name this ‘walking away from expectations’ and identify three themes: walking away from others’ gaze, walking away from restlessness and domestic responsibility, and walking away as belonging. Walking emerges as a skilful way of creating the conditions to do one’s intellectual work and manage gendered expectations. Further, the meanings of silences about gender in the context of intellectual work and walking is discussed and questions for future research agenda are suggested.

Keywords: Walking, intellectual work, gender, expectations, research agenda

Introduction

The assumption that minds could be unfettered by socio-cultural formation, places, or bodies – in effect, be disembodied - has been subject to criticism for several decades, for example in science (e.g. Haraway 1991) and cultural theory (e.g. Moraga and Anzaldúa, 1981). A number of recent studies examine the details of how research or other intellectual work is conducted as embodied activity (Myers and Dumit 2011, Richardson 1997). Further many studies identify the dangers of being inactive from a health perspective (Levine 2010; Owen, Bauman and Brown 2009; Patel et al. 2010; Veerman et al. 2011; Wilmot et al. 2012) and the role of movement within education and schooling is a key concern (Erwin, Fedewa, Beighle, and Ahn 2012; Greet, De Clercq, De Bourdeaudhuij, and Breithecker 2004; Torbeyns, Bailey, Bos, and Meeusen 2014).

Thus the ways in which intellectual work is connected to place and bodily engagement are being examined. In the present work, we specifically explore walking-

for-thinking. Many intellectuals describe how they use walking to think in their own work (Isaacson 2011; Solnit 2001; Winerman 2012). Kahnemann (2011, 39) suspects that “the mild physical arousal of a walk may spill over into greater mental awareness”. Further, recent and emerging, mostly experimental research indicates that walking enhances cognition and creativity (Aspinall et al. 2013; Atchley, Strayer, and Atchley 2012; Erickson et al. 2011; Labonté-LeMoyne 2015; Hillman et al., 2009; Jin 1992; Morita et al. 2007; Oppezzo and Schwarz, 2014; Schaefer et al. 2010; Weuve et al. 2004).

Keinänen (2016) interviewed nine academics who practiced walking-for-thinking. Three themes were identified: Walking-for-thinking as a specific form of walking; each person having an individual optimal pace of walking-for-thinking; and thinking emerged as a 'place' when walking (for more on these, see Keinänen 2016). The present work extends the analysis of these interviews to elaborate on how gender relates to walking-for-thinking, in order to generate questions for further research.

The Question of Gender

Gendered Intellectuals

Historically, intellectual work has been considered a male domain. Not only was much of literature based on the experience of men, scholars explicitly argued that females' intellect was inherently inferior. For long, women were excluded from public intellectual pursuits such as university studies. As a result, much female intellectual work was confined to private spaces such as a study at their homes (Smith 2007). Further, class interacted with whether it was advantageous (for the upper classes) or possible (for the lower classes) for women to be intellectuals (Eagleton 2005).

Simone de Beauvoir ([1949] 2000) highlighted the process of women being made ‘Other’ to men; in other words that maleness was maintained as the norm and femaleness secondary, non-normal, ‘other’. Liberation was the underlying concern of De Beauvoir, who analysed ways in which patriarchal power structures restricted women’s freedom. While De Beauvoir is at times dismissed due to her essentialism, her insights into what has become known as ‘Othering’ has had impact well beyond feminism. The philosopher Toril Moi ([1994]2008]), in her ‘intellectual biography’ of De Beauvoir, underscores De Beauvoir’s repeated insistence that women’s lack of freedom was to be understood as a product primarily of social structures (i.e. the primary problem is not one that any individual woman can choose away, freedom would require political changes). Star (1991) further explores how creating and upholding any norms (e.g. through standardisation) produces ‘Others.’ She argues that often, women’s work of fitting into these norms remains invisible and silenced. Thus gender as well as otherness are both categories that are socially and politically constructed, socially and politically contested and socially and politically changed (Mackenzie 1999).

Other scholars also argue that public female intellectuals continue to face greater obstacles than men in their professional lives and/or in combining their professional and personal lives (Harley 2003; Fothergill and Feltey 2003; Marso 2006; Probert 2005; Wilson et al. 2010). While there is a danger that gendering – i.e. attention to being either a man or a woman – hardens the category of gender, Moi insists on the continued relevance of the category ‘woman’ – though as a question, rather than an answer: *What Is a Woman?* (Moi 1999). Yet, the question of the extent to which, and ways in which, female intellectuals – such as ourselves – experience gendering is clearly unanswerable in a generic way.

Power, Mobility, and Gender

Walking as a specific form of mobility has been studied within ethnographic, urban and artistic practices (Edensor 2010; Ingold and Vergunst 2008; Lee and Ingold 2006; Matos Wunderlich 2008; Middleton 2010; Myers 2010; O'Neill and Hubbard 2010; Pink et al. 2010). The scholars in these fields discuss walking as an embodied practice affording a creative and critical relationship with space as well as a method for scholarly work. Indeed, since bodies cannot exist without minds and vice versa, it is increasingly accepted that our minds are always embodied. This focuses feminist geographers' attention to the centrality of the body to understanding gender and space relations (Longhurst 2005). Longhurst and Johnston (2014) argue that inherent in such a focus is understanding that the way in which we live out body/place relationships is related to power; either by still being too 'Other' in terms of real fleshy bodies, or by deconstructing dualities such as mind/body, sex/gender, conceptual/corporeal that in turn disrupts masculine structures of knowledge production. Pink et al. (2010) talk about the 'rise of walking' in social sciences and humanities as a convergence of interest in mobility and movement, knowing, flow and place. Central to this thinking is that walking is not just movement taking us from one place to another but a form of engagement that is subject to subtle negotiations (Lorimer and Lund 2003, Lund 2005, 2012). Ingold and Vergunst (2008) suggest that walking itself is a form of thinking. Lorimer (2011) talks about types of walkers and points out that the experience of a walk varies with the context, e.g. walking to and from work is very different from walking at work.

Hanson (2010) suggests that the literature on gender and mobility could be divided into two categories. The first is how movement shapes gender, e.g. how processes of mobility or immobility affect shifting power relations embedded in gender.

This may manifest for example as differential access to public space, and differential freedom to move (including for one's own pleasure). For example, walking in public spaces is often limited for women by their fear of violence and harassment, which assigns women back to the private sphere (Larkin 1997). Clifton and Livi (2005) and Koskela (1997) highlight how such choices are influenced by how safe the environment is felt to be. Koskela (1997) calls for improved understanding of the contexts for women's choices to move. She points out that the fear of walking in public space is partly socially constructed (e.g. amplified by retelling in media) and that this fear further deprives women of the confidence to comfortably inhabit public spaces.

The second strand of research on mobility and gender concentrates on how gender shapes movement, e.g. how gendered processes affect daily mobility. This strand of research usually measures mobility quantitatively and then compares movement patterns between men and women, using gender as a binary data matrix. The main finding from this research is that the spatial range of women's daily mobility is smaller than that of men. Their travel less often requires engines; e.g. they tend to walk more or take public transport (Carlsson-Kanyama, Linden and Thelander 1999; Hanson 2010; Miralles-Guasch, Melo and Marquet 2015). Hanson (2010) points out that not all mobility is empowering, like some women spending hours daily shuttling their children to various activities. She further argues that detailed understanding of movement patterns or reasons for movement have received relatively little attention in this strand of research.

Walking and Reflection

Studies about walking and spirituality identify silent walking as a vehicle for self-transformation and reflection (Bremborg 2013; Maddrell 2011, 2013; Slavin 2003, Smith 1991). Gemzöe (2011) discusses women's experience of pilgrimage walking in

Santiago de Compostela as an empowering response to a midlife crisis and the need to reflect on it, and the walking re-enforcing autonomy and self-worth. Bremborg (2013) argues that silent walking is an important tool for introspection as it heightens the awareness of surroundings and at the same time gives space for own reflections. Doughty (2013) talks about how guided group walks created supportive social spaces for both reflection and sociality that were experienced as restorative.

In the literature on the practice of ‘flânerie’, i.e. urban strolling while leisurely observing and being observed by the surroundings, some authors distinguish between male and female experience (Bairner 2011; Bolwby 2012; Matthews et al. 2000; Wolff 1985). By definition, women were not included in ‘flânerie’ because they were supposed to be a part of the ‘spectacle’ the flâneur is to observe, and therefore could not be the observers themselves (Bolwby 2012). Women were also excluded because of the assumed physical danger of walking the streets (Bairner 2011). As a result, the female flâneuse becomes non-existent or an unacceptable figure (Wolff 1985).

However, Bolwby (2012, 216) points out that Virginia Woolf explores women, walking and writing as if “the figure of masculine flâneur has been pushed off satirically down a cul-de-sac, as someone from whom the adventuring woman had nothing at all to fear, on the streets, or on the page.” Woolf drew a lot of inspiration from walking in the city for her writing. In her essay *Cinema*, Woolf (1926) explores the workings of her mind while walking when the eye “calls”, the brain is ready and helps (Seal 2012). In her essay *A Room of One’s Own*, Woolf (1929) devotes much space to walking outside. She notes how, walking past colleges that protect the “Fellows and Scholars” she might oppose, afforded her mind to be “at liberty to settle down upon whatever meditation was in harmony with the moment” (Woolf 1929, 3). Walking was an important intellectual inspiration for Woolf and she encourages her readers to engage

in such walking to write “all kinds of books” (as quoted in Bolwby 2012, 232).

The literature review above demonstrates the importance of further exploring gendered experiences of walking for intellectual work.

Method

To generate questions for a research agenda we conducted an initial study into gendered experiences of walking-for-thinking. For another study (cited above), the first author had conducted interviews with nine academics who practice walking-for-thinking (Keinänen 2015). In a parallel to Woolf, the nine interviewees of the initial study all reported drawing intellectual inspiration from walking. This was why they cultivated the practice regularly, even daily, and had kept up the practice for a long time, two of them for more than 30 years. They had reflected substantially on their practice and how to fine-tune the conditions for the walk to improve their thinking.

When further studying the transcripts, the first author noted that three of the informants, all the women, reported experiences of walking and thinking that somehow seemed ‘gendered’. This was particularly interesting as they did so unsolicited; gender was neither a part of the original research topic nor of the interview protocol. This highlighted the need to further explore the relevance of gender for walking-for-thinking in the form of an initial study that could generate questions for further research. Together with a colleague, she analysed the parts of the transcripts they considered gender relevant and which had not been analysed in the original study. The data did not allow us to analyse differences between men and women, but to investigate what the three female informants said about gendered experiences.

The selection criteria for the original study included that each interviewee had conducted a regular walking practice for at least a year; was in a knowledge profession and ‘thought for a living’ (Davenport 2005); and identified walking as important

method for thinking for work purposes (e.g. not leisure, fitness or general reflection). Through word-of-mouth, nine informants were found. The first author collected the empirical data through semi-structured in-depth interviews (Rossman and Rallis 1998). The interviews were conducted in English, which was the common language between the participants and the author. All were fluent in English as a foreign language. Informants signed consent forms. The names were altered according to the wishes of each informant.

Each interview lasted about 1.5 hours and was transcribed in full. The first author analysed the data using categorization analysis and contextualized analysis techniques (Maxwell 1996; Miles and Huberman 1994). The main categorization strategy was coding that reduced the data into meaningful parts that were then arranged into categories in order to facilitate the comparison of data within and between these categories (inspired by Strauss and Corbin 1998).

For the initial study reported here, the three women were all Norwegian. Two were academics and one an independent researcher and educator. Each had been walking-for-thinking for more than five years and engaged in it regularly (daily/weekly). Keinänen collected all quotes she deemed as related to gender roles in a thematic memo for each of the three informants. We then discussed and analysed the quotes by walking around a lake and by writing analytic memos as a response to the thematic memos. Thus, the walks Keinänen and Beck took around the lake, discussing the material over and over, were a key site-and-method of data analysis. Intermittently, we met in one of their offices to write together, including walking-and-writing on a treadmill-mounted computer.

Notably, during times of analytic challenge, we walked around a lake. One of us had much prior experience with walking to think, the other virtually none, yet we both

found that we made new discoveries while walking together, echoing the finding by Lee and Ingold (2006) who talk about shared walk affording shared viewpoints. We discussed how some of our findings seemed to indicate ‘harder’ (clearer, or more painful) gender dichotomizing, while others indicate less clear-cut dichotomies. A recurring challenge requiring much walking-for-thinking was how to position our claims on gendering, given that one informant did not herself bring up gender – yet, what she had to offer seemed highly salient to our own experiences as gendered intellectuals. In the end, we welcomed this as a continued challenge to our own thinking. A common theme was also found during one of the walks.

Next we present the three interviews and how the common theme manifested for each informant. We then discuss issues across all three, including a consideration of silence about gendered experiences of walking-for-thinking. We suggest potential questions for future research agenda, before briefly concluding.

Walking Away from Expectations – The Three Interviews

Walking Away from Others’ Gaze Upon her Body – Sara

Sara utilizes daily walks to think through her research. One of the reasons she walks is as follows:

I mean I don’t want to say that I think less about my body [while walking] but that is what it is. I think less about being awkward, I’m less conscious of my presence in the world. I think it has to do with being a woman, and I don’t know, these ones [indicating her breasts] attract a lot of attention, so I have always felt like I was an object for other people’s looks ever since I was young. Especially when I lived in East London, I had to learn how to dress in order to not attract a lot of attention. So this issue of being visible has been very acute for me, for my whole life.

Sara has grown used to her body attracting attention that makes her highly visible to others whether or not she wants to be. In order to focus, Sara needed to ‘forget’ about her body – or rather, a specific aspect of it.

And it wasn’t like my body wasn’t present, it obviously was, it is not like I forget my body while I am thinking, I don’t think it is right to say, but it is like this chatter and immediate attention to myself, that I could sort of take [that] away.

Walking made Sara realize that she can actually control the unwanted ‘chatter’ that was bothering her. Through sensations of the walk itself, Sara felt her body was present in a good way.

So instead I could feel good about getting into the rhythm, or feeling, my legs were being stretched and it felt good swinging my arms, that kind of attention was good in terms of thinking about my research or my relationship to other people.

Attention to the bodily sensations of the walk fostered the thinking she wanted to be concentrating on. The unwanted attention from others or her own negative thoughts around the unwanted attention, had the opposite effect.

But the other kind of attention to my body just took everything away. Then I couldn’t move on in my thought processes.

We find it quite striking that the thought of ‘the other kind of attention’, the attention she felt was directed to her body shape, distracted Sara to the point that she was unable to think. In order to avoid it, Sara consciously shifted her awareness from the negative attention to her body from others or from herself, to the specific sensation that the body walking afforded her.

I would concentrate on these kinds of things rather than, ‘ok I feel really visible right now, I feel that parts of my body are too attention seeking,’ that kind of a

thing. So, it was like moving consciousness to a different place, while still thinking. It was freeing myself from this immediate attention to myself.

When Sara focused on sensing her body internally she could forget the unwanted external attention, which freed her. She further explains:

The feeling of, not being invisible, but that I didn't really matter to other people, they didn't need to look at me or they didn't have to talk to me, was really liberating. Then that was connected with feeling comfortable and that again was connected to the rhythm, meaning, I couldn't really get into the rhythm if I was not comfortable or if I felt that I could not move that freely.

Sara felt that when walking, others did not 'need' to relate to her. While Sara learned she could manage others' unhelpful attention through walking, we find it interesting that Sara appears to place the responsibility on herself for what is, in this retelling, someone else's attention in the first place. It seems that, as Koskela (1997) points out, feelings of vulnerability or unwanted attention women receive and experience cannot be spatially divided; feelings about different spaces and places often overlap and many times these feelings are strengthened by retelling in media, literature and even research. Similarly, Sara's experiences of unwanted attention followed her and made her continually wish she was not so visible. Aware that she could not control others' attention, Sara managed her *relationship* to others' attention; walking enabled her to discover this. Like Woolf walking the streets of London, walking helped Sara experience the "liberty to settle down with whatever meditation was in harmony with the moment." (Woolf 1929, 3).

My consciousness went more into my thoughts, more to sort of thinking about what I really wanted to think about. So it was like I didn't need to think unnecessary thoughts. I can think about important things.

Walking afforded Sara to experience her body directly. The lack of concern about others' ideas about it, freed her mind to concentrate on the complex and challenging

questions she deemed ‘important’, such as issues in her research or the collaborations with her colleagues. The unimportant issues, such as self-criticism and unwanted attention, vanished in the rhythm of the walk.

Walking Away from ‘Uro’ and Domestic Responsibility – Torill

In a slightly different context, Torill, too, reported that her walks afforded freedom from the expectations that drew her attention away from what she wanted to be thinking about. She explained how she was easily distracted:

I am easily over-stimulated by impressions and I have problems concentrating if I have too much going on in my mind. In some ways that is good because I can jump from one thought to another easily, but it is also stressful for me because it means that I have like [an] inner ‘uro’ (restlessness).

Initially, she had started walking to improve her immunity against frequent infections, as advised by her physician. She found that when walking, her inner ‘uro’ – restlessness – quietened.

I started walking and I felt that my thoughts were calmer and it was easier for me to concentrate.

She explained how, when walking outdoors, she made deliberate use of the different vistas of the landscape to expand her problem solving and thinking:

I get another view, and the first word that pops into my head then when I see this view is perspective. I then try to transmit that word perspective from my visual impression of the view that I see to the work or problem that I have in my mind. So I think, ‘ok, what does perspective mean in terms of what I am thinking about right now?’ What is important right now and try to focus on that. And that makes my thoughts more focused, and pointed towards what is really important there and then.

Walking outside, getting another perspective, supported her focus on things that matter to her knowledge work as opposed to the thoughts that she was cued to think about at home:

So it is easier for me to get rid of all the small things [on my mind] like ‘how can I be more organized in my home’, ‘I need to call this person and that person’, and ‘what kind of clothes am I going to buy for my son for the winter’, and all these things. These are the things that make your thoughts rush because these are the things that you get stimulated to think at home. And then I can sort of lift my mind and focus on more important stuff.

Torill implied that her restlessness and rushing thoughts were fuelled by caregiving duties. By changing locations, going outside to think, she removed herself from the confines of her home and thereby from her domestic responsibilities. Not only did she get different ideas from the different location (as in the quote above), she also gained a sense of liberty:

So when I get out, it is a whole different space to be, I am not limited by the house, or the room, it is like I am in another world.

This need to get away parallels Virginia Woolf’s ([1929]1989, 4) influential declaration that “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction.” The statement became famous because of its much wider implications than the simple necessity of sitting somewhere to write. Woolf’s sense of establishing boundaries to protect her freedom seems to resonate with Torill. If a room exists but signals caregiving work, it may not provide sufficient space for ‘more important stuff’. Walking away from caregiving work created space for Torill to do something she wanted to do and found important. In doing so, she deprioritized domestic responsibility, which she clearly experienced as competing. At home, practical details that needed to be done kept receiving her attention. While we do not wish to devalue

domestic work, the focus here is on domestic responsibility as an obstacle for thought-work.

A second parallel between Torill and Woolf was that, as depicted by Woolf, leaving the house resulted in “removal of identity for anonymity and the shift from stability – one fixed place – to mobility” (Bolwby 2012, 220). To get out of the house and away from domestic duties, Torill walked in the mountains – to her great enjoyment:

There are a lot of paths here, and I have gotten lost so many times [laughs]. But I have a good inner GPS so I have always found my way back.

Thus getting lost did not worry Torill. However, issues of timing established boundaries around her walks.

No, I do not get stressed about getting lost. But if I have to be back at a certain time I would not do it that way. It is dependent on being free on *[sic]* also the timing element. If I knew *[sic]* I had to pick my son up from the kindergarten at a certain time, then I choose *[sic]* a route that I know. But I really like the challenge of going away from the regular routes, trying different paths and routes and not know where you are. That is a good way for me also to regulate the ‘spenningsnivå’. The excitement level. That I can kind of regulate this consciously.

Here, Torill discusses an example of gendered processes affecting her mobility. The caregiving duty of picking up her son from the kindergarten limited how far and how freely she could walk. This echoes findings in gender and mobility studies that women’s mobility is limited by domestic duties (Hansen 2010). The way that walking took Torill away from her domestic environment, from caring for ‘all the small things’, and inner restlessness suggests a more general question about ways in which domestic responsibility affects intellectual work and how it could be managed. Like the spiritual walkers in Maddrell’s study (2011), walking helped Torill to separate from the demands

of everyday life. The ultimate experience of walking for Torill – exploring new routes and unknown terrains – required a freedom from the dutiful timing of her domestic responsibilities.

Walking Away as Belonging – Ida

I don't know if this is because I am a woman, but in many situations I have to struggle to be allowed to walk.

For Ida, at times being able to walk in the first place was an issue, and potentially a gendered one. She found others ascribing purposes to her walking:

I always want to walk. And people think I want to walk because I want to exercise, like I am afraid of becoming fat or something. And it makes me angry a little, because I really like it, and walking is this very nice time out in the midst of spending time with lots of relatives. But it is a struggle because I feel a little bit like an outsider you know. 'Everybody else wants to go by car, but [Ida], she wants to walk. You know, she's a bit...'

Rather than viewing the desire to walk as simply enjoying using her legs, in Ida's view her wish to walk is interpreted by others as an instrumental fitness activity. Thus, even though she does not herself necessarily view her walking as related to being a woman, she is aware that others seem to.

And the reason also is that the women, they wear the dresses and the high heel shoes, they are not dressed to walk. It is not [considered] feminine to walk. So I feel that I want to keep this attitude, even if I am past forty, I kind of want to keep this position, being able to walk.

The gendered challenge faced by Ida, then, was not the same as Sara's need to free herself from the thought of unwanted attention to her body, or Torill's need to escape the inner restlessness or domestic duties to achieve mental space for thinking. It did,

however, resemble some of Sara's previous experiences of drawing attention to her body walking. Ida faced the expectation that a woman's reason to move would be for weight control or keeping fit, rather than enjoyment. Further, Ida implied that impractical clothing and shoes women sometimes wear contribute to walking not been seen as 'feminine'. Indeed, Ida found she needed to defend her wish to walk. She described how while she found that in family gatherings walking was a nice 'time out', she did put herself in opposition to others who did not want to walk or have such breaks.

It is not always a pleasant position, it is like a protest. The others can take the car.

Ida loved the sensation of walking. The issue was further pushed by age-related expectations, which did not match her continued enjoyment of walking, and of 'escaping'. Thus, Ida tells us how her walking needed to be triply defended; first, as her preferred means of transport; second, walking for walking's sake, not for fitness; and third, continuing walking in the face of her increasing age ('past forty').

A further dimension in Ida's walking relates to her sense of belonging. She says she has never been good at establishing a permanent residence somewhere or identifying with a place or a house.

I do not feel so much belonging in a place. For me belonging is when I move.

O'Neill and Hubbard (2010) suggest that walking is an act of place making. In their study, individuals in the diaspora were able to work through issues of being in between places, belonging, and home through walking. O'Neill and Hubbard build on Ingold's (2011) idea of habitant knowledge. According to Ingold, we inhabit spaces through active participation with and contribution to the world. Walking closes the gap between person and place, thus offering a unique opportunity to experience belonging.

Belonging through movement seems to resonate deeply for Ida. It is interesting to note that in Ida's experience, it is hard for those in her environment to accept her preference for walking. In a parallel to Young (2005), Ida's exercising of freedom to move as she pleases – an experience “lived and felt in the flesh” (2005, 7) – can be perceived as a ‘protest’ or a challenge to established norms.

Discussion

As surveyed above, historically there have been restrictions on women's walking and intellectual pursuits. While the need in Norway of today for escaping from domestic chores and others' expectations may take different forms from e.g. in London in 1920s (as analysed by Woolf) and in France in the 1940s (as analysed by De Beauvoir), we find that such issues remain relevant for the contemporary intellectual women of our initial study. The informants spoke of experiences of being bothered by others' attention to her body parts; by domestic chores; or by others' opinions about her liberty to move as she wishes. For the women in our study to do their work in a way they consider conducive to intellectual engagement, their body had to be present for them – as direct experience, not as a target of other's opinions or expectations.

While the circumstances for each of the three informants differed, some topics cut across all three interviews: Each of the three women articulated how walking-for-thinking brought a sense of *walking away from* some of the hindrances they otherwise experienced. When walking, the women experienced freedom of thought. Each was highly aware of the ways in which her intellectual creativity was supported by reducing the impact of other's gendered expectations of her. *Managing their minds then, included managing other's expectations through walking.* Our initial study did not allow an analysis of the relation between other's (actual) expectations and the informants' own

thoughts, memories, and expectations of others' expectations, nor how gendering affects others' expectations. Such processes however, do warrant further study.

The gender-related reflections of the informants seem explicable from the perspective of De Beauvoir's and Star's 'Othering' discussed above: By definition, the 'Other' is, and should remain, invisible. For two of our informants, their appearance or behaviour drew attention. It was up to Sara and Ida to change, to explain themselves, or otherwise minimize the disruption to people around them. Torill literally removed herself from spaces that signified domestic duties in order to free her mind. Their conscious creation of spaces away from such expectations can be seen as silent acts of resistance against gender-dichotomy towards more fluid senses of being. In their view, this was necessary for their intellectual work.

The first sense in which silence emerges as a topic, then, is how gendered expectations and intellectual pursuits were silently managed through walking. The second sense in which silence emerges as a topic is the question of how to interpret lacks of data (such as in our initial study: whether the male informants had gendered experience of walking-for-thinking). After all, silences can be intentional, e.g. for facilitation of introspection, or unintentional, e.g. as a result of long-term acculturation, both of which have multiple meanings (Li 2001). Commenters to this paper have asked us variously to explain why the female informants spoke about gender and the male did not, and cautioned about potential essentialism. This captures a central dilemma which gender-sensitive studies including what we propose will have to address: Whether, and if so how, to write without essentialism about 'women's' daily experiences, which often seem to receive less attention than those of men? Consistent with Star (1991) and others, any research agenda on gender would do well to keep open multiple

perspectives, such as how both articulations of gendered influences *and* silences about them can be relevant.

For the three women of this study, the liberation to be, and act, as an intellectual woman was not a question of ‘either-or’ (as one might read for example some of de Beauvoir’s passages), but ‘more-and-less’. As an example, consider the strong sense of Sara being in charge of the situation, rather than a victim. The three women’s walking was in part structured by the need to manage gendered experiences in order to create the conditions to do one’s intellectual work. As such, our findings concur with Robyn Longhurst’s (2005, 2014) call for using embodiment to deconstruct binaries such as mind/body, conceptual/corporeal and gender.

A Research Agenda

Future research should look into how walking can affect processes of moving between greater and lesser intellectual freedom of thought and how gender interacts with these processes. The interviews provide examples of how this can manifest. Torill moved herself away from the fixed geographical location of the domestic space (home) to mobile or moving space outdoors that unfolded “within and through interactions with the environment” (Doughty 2013, 141). Similarly, Sara speaks of forgetting troubling chatter and Ida speaks of ‘escape’ when walking; theirs was also a mobile space. These are three examples of how mobile space can allow for freedom of thought and freedom of gendered expectations. Future research should further explore how mobile intellectual work could affect shifting power relations steeped in gender.

Research questions suggested by the issue of mobility further include how age and gender can intersect with the legitimacy or ease of walking. For example, it would be interesting to examine various types of knowledge professions and the extent to

which they make walking-for-thinking possible (public vs. private sphere, academia vs. other knowledge professions) and further how gender relates to this (e.g. is it more acceptable for the male or female, young or old knowledge workers to walk to think; when is the walking taking place: during working hours or outside, etc.). Also, studying the meanings of silence surrounding gender and walking could open up interesting landscapes. For example, what kinds of concerns can make gender a salient issue for some in the context of walking-to-think, but not for others?

The women of our initial study were aware of the extent to which they were affected by gendered expectations, and consciously made efforts to reduce the impact of these expectations on their thinking work through walking. Thus, one's own awareness of gendered issues and competent management of them poses an interesting area for further work.

Doughty (2013, 144) further points out that “embodied physical movement focuses a sense of presence in one's own body and in the movement and can be emotionally restorative”. The informants' experiences mirror this in a subtle way, and raise the question of how a sense of presence in one's own body can facilitate intellectual work as well as manage gendered expectations and identities. This could be expanded on by asking what experiences (e.g. sensing bodily rhythms), environments (e.g. sense of perspective), or states of mind (e.g. sense of enjoyment) can facilitate sense of bodily presence while walking. And how is that these can inspire intellectual pursuit?

Walking-for-thinking may thus provide fertile grounds for further exploring conditions for intellectual work and negotiation of gendered identities. Mobility created separate space for freedom of thought. Such mobile engagement with space as part of intellectual work warrants further research. Additional dimensions are the dire health

consequences of inactivity, as mentioned in the introduction, that is often coupled with intellectual work.

Conclusion

Star (1991) argues that “People inhabit many different domains at once (...) and the negotiation of identities, within and across groups, is an extraordinarily complex and delicate task.” (90). Our initial study has pointed out some of the complexity of gendered experiences of walking-to-think and the delicacy with which this can at times be handled. This highlights the need for further research to better understand gendered aspects of the management of intellectual pursuits through bodily movement. Such studies could help us further understand the subtle workings of gender and specifically how movement through space and interact with and help structure this process. As such, these studies contribute to those parts of feminist geography, which seek to understand how gender is constituted in interaction with the environment. These studies would also add to the on going exploration of the roles of the body or of embodiment in intellectual work which are important also from the health perspective.

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