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## **Exploring the Gendering of Space by Using Memory Work as a Reflexive Research Method**

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### **Abstract**

How can memory work be used as a pathway to reflect on the situatedness of the researcher and field of inquiry? The key aim of this article is to contribute to knowledge about the gendering of space developed by feminist geographers by using memory work as a reflexive research method. The authors present a brief review of feminist literature that covers the local and global symbolic meanings of spaces and the power relations within which space is experienced. From the literature they interpret themes of the interconnections between space, place, and time; sexualization of public space; and the bodily praxis of using space. Memories of gendered bodies and landscapes, movement and restricted space, and the disrupting of space allow the exploration of conceptualizations within the literature as active, situated, fragmented, and contextualized.

**Keywords:** gender, space, memory work, reflexivity, situatedness

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### **Introduction**

Inspired by our interest in research questions about the complexity of how spaces are shaped and reshaped by memory, lived experience, cultural representations, and materiality, we explore in this article the gendering of space by using memory work as a reflexive project. We use memory work as a method to allow us to actively recall personal contexts in which we experience the gendering of space. In this article we provide synopses of our memories to analyze and expose emotions that give meaning to relations between memory, experience, and spatial context.

Drawing on the work of feminist geographers has allowed us to engage with conceptions of how space becomes gendered across historical and political periods (Ardener, 1993; Bondi, 1993; Domosh & Seager, 2001; Grosz, 1995; Massey, 1994, 1999; McDowell, 1980, 1999; Valentine 1989, 1996). We begin with the premise that spaces are meeting places formed by embodied

social relations mediated by power, and we understand space as being open to contestation, negotiation, restriction, and resistance; furthermore, spaces are formed by the past, the present, and the future (e.g., Aromaa & Heiskanen, 2002; Corteen, 2002; Grosz, 1992, 1995; Massey, 1994; McDowell, 1999). Space is shaped by the organization of everyday life in the local. However, at the same time global movements embedded in relations of power influence the local level (Massey, 1994), affecting the way people remember, live, and imagine space. Memory work was developed by Haug (1987) to trace the socialized experience of women's bodies and the way in which women interpret societal structures through recalling and writing memories. The method of writing, discussing, and analyzing memories is a process for naming social norms that restrict women, allowing for resistance through alternative ways of conceptualizing these norms (Koutroulis, 2001). Reconceptualization in memory work becomes a strategy to empower women through the act of writing.

The key aim of this article is to contribute to the field of the gendering of space developed by feminist geographers by using memory work as a reflexive research method. We begin the paper by exploring the concept of space and the ways in which it becomes gendered. We provide a brief review of feminist literature on the local and the global, symbolic meanings of spaces, and the power relations within which space is experienced. We draw on some themes we found in the literature, like gendered bodies in landscapes, to guide the substantive issues used for memory work. Following this, we provide some examples of approaches to memory work used in social research and outline our use of this method. Thereafter our memories in different situational contexts—taxis, unfamiliar spaces, and the transgression and disruption of space by telephone—are presented and reflected on.

### **The gendering of space**

Massey (1984, 1994, 1999) has noted several approaches to space and its connections to place or locality, and time. For example, she has used transitions within modernity to conceptualize spatial boundaries that divide both the social and the cultural. She suggested that the story of globalization brings forth the notion of space and flows as hegemonic, and critiqued stories of modernity and globalization that annihilate space. In the context of gender and space, Massey (1994) referred to symbolic meanings of spaces and gendered messages associated with them. She exposed space as open to and affecting gender relations, and vice versa. She used the examples of limitations of mobility within spaces; for example, distinctions between the public and private and the gendering of those domains with their prescriptive identities for women and men (e.g., the spatial separation of work and home).

Such differentiation of gender relations across and within space have been analyzed by Grosz (1992), McDowell (1999), Massey (1994, 1999), and Scraton and Watson (1998) and in studies of gender relations in local cultures (Massey 1994). Grosz (1992, cited in McDowell, 1999) provided an example of how subjectivity, constructions of space, and gendered bodies interrelate to create city spaces as gendered:

The form, structure and norms of the city seep into and affect all the other elements that go into the constitution of corporeality and/as subjectivity. It affects the way the subject sees others (domestic architecture and the division of the home into the conjugal bedroom, separated off from other living and sleeping spaces, and the specialization of rooms as significant in this regard as smaller family size), as well as the subject's understanding of alignment with, and positioning in space. Different forms of lived spatiality (the verticality of the city, as opposed to the horizontality of the landscape—at least in the “West”)

affect the ways in which we live space, and thus our comportment and corporeal orientation and the subject's form of corporeal exertion—the kind of terrain it must negotiate. (p. 64)

Theorists like Grosz (1992, 1995) and McDowell (1980, 1999) help us understand how spaces can orient or organize family, sexual, and social relations. Moreover Grosz's work provides insight into locating spaces within time. Although time divides space and its occupation by women, men, and children, it has been invisible. Domosh and Seager (2001), in their book *Putting Women in Place*, discussed the gendering of space in different places and contexts such as the home, the city, and workplaces. They demonstrated that geographies in different ways restrict women's access to, and movements within, space. They showed how the body, through gender and other dimensions of power like status, ethnicity, and disability, is constructed in public space and how at times certain bodies are denied access to public space (e.g., lack of wheelchair access).

Swedish feminists have also explored symbolic meanings of the physical body moving through space. For example, Forsberg (2005) emphasized how the bodily praxis of using rooms promotes an understanding of the body. For Forsberg walking on a street means using the body both to move between places and, at the same time, to construct place. Examples of practices that construct gendered bodies by using space include shopping, dressing, moving, walking, and socializing. Forsberg also brought into focus how space can be regenderized during a 24-hour period. Although a particular area (e.g., a shopping mall, a café, or a park) is primarily a place for women during daytime, it can change to a place for men in the evening or at night. She also argued that not only bodily presence but also the gendering of space is activated through the gaze, that is, looking at a place and recognizing that what is seen can vary, depending on who is looking and what they value.

Friberg (2005) built on the conceptualization of body as place by focusing on movement via travel and used the concept of the closed room to draw our attention to the paradox that traveling is movement but that that often means movement in restricted spaces. The traffic room is created by architects and engineers, but the infrastructure and design of houses and areas interact with the organization of time, which, in turn, organizes the movements of gendered bodies during different hours of the day. It is a room characterized by both open spaces and closed rooms. A person can be in a closed room and still be moving between spaces. Social relations between passengers can be created in the moment of traveling and be disrupted when a passenger gets off at a station.

We have found that questions of the sexualization of public space are also a focus of the literature on gendered bodies and space (Bryant, 2006; Bryant & Hoon, 2006; Hubbard, Kitchin, Bartley, & Fuller, 2002; Hubbard & Sanders, 2003; Koskela, 1997; Mehta & Bondi, 1999; Mooney, 1997; Scraton & Watson, 1998; Tani, 2002; Young, 2000). One of the key features of this literature has been a concern with women's safety, but more so with women's fear. As Koskela (1999) argued, "Violent attacks and sexual harassment remind women every day that they are not meant to be in certain spaces" (p. 111; see also Rose, 1993; Valentine, 1992). Women as citizens have to negotiate and adopt measures to enjoy, or even move through, the same public spaces as men. Authors like Day (2001) and Valentine reminded us that women are more likely to experience sexual violence in their homes, and thus fear in public spaces does not necessarily correlate with the experience of violence in public places. The literature on gender, fear, and crime has tended to use fear as a key focus of research or as an explanation for women's experiences in public spaces. It has overwhelmingly represented women's movements as constrained and fear as "irrational" in the context of urban versus private spheres (Bondi & Rose, 2003). Koskela is one of the few feminists who have conceptualized the gendering of urban spaces, recognizing fear as one emotion brought into play in such arenas. She argued that women also show boldness when

moving through spaces that researchers have constructed as fearful. Furthermore, research on gendered fear in public space has overwhelmingly focused on women. The little research on men and fear has considered how men perceive urban spaces as problematic for women (e.g., Day, 2001; Dubinsky & Givertz, 1999). Bondi and Rose acknowledged that there is a movement away from women's emotions and experiences in urban space. However, examination of the gendering of space as men experience it remains sparse and diverse (e.g., Davidson, 2000; Day, 2001; Listerborn, 2000; Riger & Gordon, 1981; Shirlow & Pain, 2003; Watson-Franke, 2002).

Reading and interpretation of the literature suggests to us that a number of themes can be identified and explored by using memory work. These themes include the interconnections between space, place, and time, sexualization of public space, and the bodily praxis of using space (movement). From these core concepts we created themes that could be used as a starting point for memory work. The themes were gendered bodies and landscapes, movement and restricted space, and disrupting space and time. The literature provided us with but limited information about how researchers approached and engaged with their subject of research. We turned to memory work to contribute to a reflexive research method that provides a pathway for readers to follow our analyses.

### **Memory work**

A range of cross-disciplinary work on memory links to different methods, such as autobiography, ethnography, and diaries. As Stanley (1995) argued, different methods of life writing are not necessarily distinct but can comprise intersecting approaches. We focus on memory work characterized by the fragmented, the situational, and emphasize writing as an activity mapping a terrain not yet known, allowing dialogue about ambiguities, contradictions, and recognition of dominant symbolic meanings. In the 1970s Haug (1987) in particular developed memory work as a collective strategy for raising the subjects of the body and sexuality. The method was used by groups of women to understand power relations through writing and for analyzing specific situations in their recollections. The method had several steps. The first involved the group's choosing a common theme. Second, each member was required to write about her memory in detail. Haug argued that writing in the third person created a necessary distance to explore emotions and sensory aspects of memory. The third step required members to read each other's memories and analyze them for contradictions and patterns. Finally, individuals were to rewrite and develop a common and agreed text. The purpose of Haug's method was to unravel the complexity of power relations, to use this approach as a tool to empower groups of women, and to contribute to academic knowledge and the feminist project. Her work was a critique of the standard intellectual process of using dominating abstract language, which by its nature disallows the inclusion of emotions.

Since Haug's (1987) contribution to memory work, the method has been used in different cultural contexts and for different purposes (see Ingleton, 1999; Koutroulis, 2001; Morgan, 2004; Widerberg, 1995). The characteristics of the method have been to create a subject-subject relation and a space for the fragmented in analyzing both the collective (Crawford, Kippaz, Onyx, Gault, & Benton, 1992; Esseveld, 1999; Haug, 1987; Henriksson, Jansson, Thomsson, Wendt Höjer, & Åse, 2000) and individual memory (Kuhn, 2000; Livholts, 2001b; Widerberg, 1995). When used as a collective method to create empirical material, researchers often engage as a member of the group. Ingleton (n.d.) has raised a problem in the process of researcher engagement in memory work due to the "ambivalence about the nature of the researcher's authority in the collective production of data, and the robustness of the analytical process" (p. 1).

Other examples of researchers who have used memory work include Widerberg (1995), who, in *The Knowledge of Gender*, used individual memory work to show how her memories inform wider constructions of identity, experience, and socialization for women of differing educational levels. She recalled situations from her school years in which she came to understand her body as sexualized. In her book she explained her surprise at the number of times sexual harassment recurs in her memories. We learn from Widerberg that the different situations that she encounters affect her identity and therefore her actions and strategies to participate in education and, finally, academe.

In contrast, Henriksson et al. (2000) used collective memory work to explore the gendered space of academia for doctoral students and show that rooms in academe are places where the embodied self, realized through smells, emotions, and appearance, exists alongside academic conventions and power relations that require silence, respect, and rationality. Livholts (2001b) also explored academic conventions and power; however, her critique was developed particularly around different forms of writing. She used individual memory work to reflect on the ways in which women are categorized, and she did this by first turning to academic texts about gender and selecting key themes. Following this process, Livholts used these themes as tools to relate to individual memories with the aim of creating a reflexive method in the research process that leads to the development of experimental writing; that is, different endings, and intertextuality (see Livholts, 2001a).

To summarize, it is interesting to note that it is not easy to categorize memory work as a collective and/or individual method. Indeed, the way in which members of memory work groups construct reflexive critical knowledge about themselves and the world is a very interesting process. We understand that Haug's (1987) conceptualization of a collective work of memory involves exploration of body, sexuality, and subjectivity through theoretical reflexive feminist praxis that involves movement between self and other, individual, group, and society. The collective is produced in a process where a common topic is chosen and memories are first written individually, then rewritten, discussed, and gradually formed as a common or collective text. On the other hand, memory work, as it has been used by such researchers as Ingleton (n.d.), is characterized by another kind of process. In this case the researcher invites informants to make up a memory work group and provides a stimulus statement to the group as a starting point for deciding a common topic. The researcher is also actively involved in producing the collective text, which has implications for research ethics and power relations.

Finally, the example from Livholts (2001a, 2001b) emphasizes the process of the act of writing and rewriting memories in an experimental mode, which relates to creative writing and transgression of genre. In this research the social categorization "women" as well as textual representations of "academic" writing are critiqued. Even though memory work is used by one researcher, a person is asked to take on the task of being a critical and engaged reader who provides feedback on written memories. In that way, dialogue is central to verbal communication about written text, and the different steps of collective memory work referred to earlier are used. From these reflections about the complexity of the method of collective and individual memory work, we will present how we have made use of memory work as a reflexive research method.

### **Use of memory work to explore the gendering of space**

In this study we use memory work to analyze the gendering of space to move into normative and dominating structures via the fragmented subject and to confront the complexity of the lived and imagined. Our project is to show that by connecting memories and emotions, gendered space is shown to be an active process that comes into being. As mentioned earlier, a starting point for our

approach to memory work was a critical reading of literature of the gendering of space to see what had been looked at previously. As a consequence of this, we identified the importance of exploring gendered movements and traveling between spaces, and the ways in which we, as researchers, are involved in constructing meeting places.

Our use of memory work involved dialogue and writing over a period of 18 months using different communication technologies. Dialogue has been central to the construction of our research method, and, as Patterson and Brogden (2006) suggested, these conversations are not only private but are an important aspect of research practice that should be shared. Our dialogue revolved around the themes emerging in the literature of landscape, movement, fear, and agency, and differentiation of gender relations across and within spaces. This has currency for the way in which we as researchers enter fields of inquiry. Our disciplinary fields of inquiry include textual media representations of masculinities and rape, memory work, and autobiography as well as gender relations in rural landscapes, memory narrative, and autobiography. Our spatial positioning is shared as academic women in gender studies, and at the same time we are positioned within different geographic (Australia and Sweden), linguistic (English, Greek, and Swedish), and social and cultural contexts. Different ways of entering space provoke and intertwine in complex ways to provide imagery of self as a researcher and of what is being researched.

In the following three sections memories are used to explore three examples of the gendering of space. In the first example, *Gendered Bodies and Landscapes*, we focus on gendered meanings given to space in unfamiliar spaces. These memories emerge from the movement of the researcher into the unfamiliar; for example, from urban to rural or from rural to academe. In the second example, *Movement and Restricted Spaces*, we consider the notion of the body as place. For each of the authors one of the most powerful memories of movement between spaces was when traveling in taxis and airplanes. The memories recorded show movement across time in a restricted space and allow us to identify the gendered dynamics that occur in and across space when traveling in taxis and airplanes. In the third example, *Disrupting Space and Time*, disruptions due to material media like the telephone are analyzed and shown to be both lived and imagined. Memories were written individually; thereafter we read each other's memories, analyzed and discussed them, and jointly rewrote the text. The memories used in the article were the first memories formed in the minds of the authors in the context of landscape, movement, and disruption. We provide one possible interpretation of these memories, although they can be read in many ways. As mentioned earlier, the process of transforming memories to written text, as well as the continuous dialogue and writing, has been of central importance (see also Bränström Öhman & Livholts, 2003; Lugones & Spelman, 1998).

### **Gendered bodies and landscapes**

She had to go to Mudamuckla. There were no maps, and she relied on directions taken from a telephone call. She drove the government car down dirt roads where no buildings or humans were in sight. In the vastness she felt vulnerable and uncertain. Too much space. She saw a shed—could this be the landmark where she was told she must turn right? Again isolation and uncertainty. Deciding to turn right, she drove down a narrow dirt path seemingly leading nowhere. Go on or turn back? Well, she did go on and found herself in a paddock surrounded by cows. She waved her arms furiously upward, trying to catch the male farmer's attention. He smiled at her idiocy and gave her yet more directions. Arriving at her destination, the reliable government sedan seemed to be swerving—"Oh God," she thought, "I have a flat tire." Anxiety rose. She attempted to fight back

feelings of inadequacy. She must now interview a woman of a similar age to herself who works on the local council, runs a farm, and has a child. The interview proceeds, and the woman generously tells her story. In this space, the woman's home, she feels awkward but must present as knowledgeable and confident. She feels the difference in their lives, not simply difference about urban or rural lifestyle but also difference of privilege. She is paid well and lives in a home; the woman lives in a shed. One room is where the family eats and sleeps. There is no bathroom in sight. The time came to leave. How to tell the woman the tyre is flat and she can't change it? She feebly says, "I am not used to this type of car and can't change the tire." The woman hands her the screaming child. She holds it at arm's length, not knowing how to quiet it, not knowing how to hold it. The woman proceeds to change the tire and pacify the child. She feels inadequate as a woman.

The second memory about gendered bodies and landscapes also connects to the theme of unfamiliar space, but what is familiar and unfamiliar is reversed.

The soft and warm skin of the muzzle of a horse, the smell from the mixture of sawdust (sågspån), hay (hö), urine (urin), and horse droppings (hästspilling). She is sitting on the floor in the stables listening to the rhythm of crunching jaws, smells leather newly oiled, sees herself sitting on horseback, riding into the fields and the forest.

A photo of her.

Thin, blonde hair, standing beside her favorite horse. She feels strong. Every year she and her sisters work picking stones from the field before sowing; for hours they work with bended backs exposed to the dust from the dry soil and the heat from the engine of the tractor. When spring comes, they are engaged in the adventure of grass burning, and their job is to control the fire that sometimes is taken over by the wind. She is scared but can run so fast that she kills the flames that wish to move beyond the boundaries of what is allowed. Hunting capercaillie (tjäder), fox (räv), and hare (hare). Once in the darkness she was left to be a guard, with no gun but still a guard—because she was brave enough. Only men and a girl with thin blonde hair. Waterskiing on the cold water of a Swedish lake. She holds onto the rope until her hands are white from the lack of blood and coldness. To challenge her, he would slow down the speed of the boat, and she would sink into the cold black water, this dark material of coldness. She had to get up to a standing position again. Only if she was strong enough. She learned that she was. She enters academia—a society of hard work—with the self-confidence of a strong body. She welcomes the challenges of intellectual work and even administration and meetings. But the rooms of academia are not shaped by the shifting seasons and respect for bodily work. The colors are vague, as well as smells (except for coffee and expensive perfume), and bodies are camouflaged by big linen clothes and suits. No darkness, but shadows hiding battles.

The memories raise potential and varied interpretations of the body in space. We identify several meanings, that is, the gendered body in different types of landscapes and the ways in which bodies move between landscapes. The memories also raise questions: How do visual, sensual, and emotional memories create landscapes and our bodies within them? Furthermore, how are

landscapes embodied, and how do subjects carry memory of landscape? We were challenged by the way in which familiarity, or unfamiliarity, of space can alter understandings of self as gendered and alter gender relations. It is also interesting that the roles of researcher and researched reconstruct both in the memories and, at the same time, become part of the conversation between us as researchers in the moment of writing. It is possible to locate the researcher and the researched in the memories and in the research relationship of these memories. The researcher on her way to Madamuckla for an interview drives the government sedan into vast and unfamiliar space, which is a challenge to her sense of self and orientation in space. On the other hand, the woman growing up in the country with a strong sense of a working body moves into academic rooms with a sense of unfamiliarity and disorientation. The examples of city and rural backgrounds show our understanding of our bodily selves, one as strong despite physical appearance and one as a white collar worker. Each woman holds bodily perceptions of self that are controlled, at times self-controlled and at others shaped by landscape.

The relationship of the gendered self to landscapes that are unfamiliar provides an aspect or glimpses of nuanced understandings of the self. Unfamiliarity of place constructs particular spaces as fearful, intimidating, and powerful, although at the same time the self is equally constructed in specific spaces as fearful or brave, adequate or inadequate, controlling or controlled. The woman with a country background and a sense of a working body not defined by traditional gender practices has memories of farming work as openly confronting. Academic work and working bodies for her are less tangible and require negotiating the “shadows,” that is, searching for meaning in spaces that are framed within a discourse of knowledges to be obtained, those held and those sought after. Unfamiliar space is where imagination, memory, and stories construct and reconstruct both space and self. Indeed, it is not only unfamiliarity and place that are of importance in the memories recorded but also the revealing of private or emotional aspects of self in professional contexts. The urban academic who visits the countryside as a professional must reveal that although she is not a “traditional woman”; neither has she transgressed traditional gender roles. She is in the country and is not able to change a car tyre. Memories show how past, present, future, and lived and imagined worlds exist simultaneously. How the researcher is situated in the complexity of layers of time and space is often not stated and reflected on within research, and therefore academic space can appear homogenous.

In this section we have discussed bodily discomfort experienced in spaces of which one is unfamiliar. In the section below we focus on the interruption of everyday spaces as a consequence of material media like the telephone or radio. The memories illustrate how space is transgressed and how meanings about space and the body are made at certain points in time.

### **Movement and restricted space**

She opens the door and tells the taxi driver where to take her. She sits in the back. As they travel, a message comes across the taxi radio. The transmitter sits near the dashboard echoing its message. A male voice says “does anyone want to pick up a fare from Nancy’s? You know what kind of payment you will get.” The driver’s thick hand reaches toward the radio transmitter and then comes back. He squirms in his seat. She feels disgust: disgust at him, disgust at the radio message itself. So this kind of exchange happens? A body for a fare. She knows he feels her judgment, her disdain, her contempt for him. This is what causes him to falter in her presence. They are both trapped in this taxi. He does not want her there to remind him of perhaps his wife, perhaps his mother, and perhaps of all things that a woman is—not just a sexual body.



The second memory shows different meeting places where gendered bodies and meaning moves across space when traveling.

She spotted her seat near the window from a distance and the man sitting next to it. He was in his late 50s, dressed in a black suit, had a holiday tan, and wore heavy silver jewelry. As he saw her approaching, he politely got up. She took off her jacket but kept her scarf around her shoulders before she took her seat. As soon as he saw an opportunity, he tried to make contact, but she skillfully outmaneuvered every attempt. She had brought articles to read, and because of the unwanted “company” she was grateful for this. She perceived the airplane as a closed room, and when breakfast was served, she became painfully aware of the smell from his perfume. It made her lose her appetite, and she was relieved to get out of the plane. However, while she was waiting for the taxi, the same man, now accompanied by another man, showed up. They were booked in the same taxi. He asked where she was going, and when she replied, “To the university,” he appeared surprised and said “Do they have a university in this town?!” She replied, “Yes.” Nothing else. She took a seat in the back, and so did the man from the airplane, while his colleague took the seat in the front next to the taxi driver. Immediately he turned around and asked for her name, introducing himself as Kent. At this stage she recognizes that she perceives this trip as unpleasant travel and decides to pretend to sleep. The taxi has soft leather seats; a feeling of luxury comes to her, disturbed by feelings of discomfort. After a while she can hear sirens from a police car. “They are not after us are they?” says Kent and then continues by answering his own question “But perhaps the intellectual model sleeping in the back seat!” All kinds of possible ways of reacting came to her mind—“Shut up!” “That is insulting!” “Do you have a problem with academic women?”—but she said nothing. The leather seats had taken in the smell of the perfume and sweat, hers and theirs.

In what ways do spaces create gendered and sexual meeting places? Do restricted spaces change embodied relations and practices, and how are these spaces negotiated? When doing memory work on the theme of restricted space, we discussed the challenge of not wanting to portray ourselves, and more generally women, as victims in restricted spaces, but, on the other hand, like Koskela (1997, 1999) we recognize the incongruence of agency and its limitations.

For the researcher who worked with media representations of masculinities and rape, writing and reading her memory of travel evoked other memories of feeling trapped. Our dialogue about the written memories caused us to reflect on how our theoretical understanding of the sexualization of public spaces informed our experience and actions when traveling. We also acknowledge that the memories are written in the context of our theoretical knowledges. However, taking the position of an author allowed us to realize that fear can be experienced as both negative (creating imaginary spatial threats) and positive (awareness and strategies) and can thereby be a tool for agency and empowerment. We found that both the ability to quickly recall our memories of moments in restricted and sexualized space (often taxis) and the commonality of our experience provoked discussion. Unlike the previous memories, which dealt with the unfamiliar, these memories were based in everyday experience. We were compelled to find that they were an expected occurrence.

Movements take place in a sexualized public space, where representations of the female body have become an eroticized symbol (Bergman & Lynggard, 2004). In the memories, consequences of such sexualization can be traced in codes for acting and, indeed, for conversation, which are to

some extent characterized by demands of availability. At the same time, the memories show how representations of different forms of masculinities, their actual bodily presence or voice presence in a medium like the radio, affects how women make use of different strategies to resist sexualization. In addition, meeting places that occur across space—in an airplane, in a taxi—remain with the subject when she is no longer in a restricted space. Sensory space (see Seremetakis, 1996), like other forms of space, is a dimension of gendered power. Being heavily perfumed when about to embark on an airplane journey becomes a position of power or domination of sensory space.

### **Disrupting space and time**

She walked out of the meeting room to receive a phone call. She had come to the nation's capital to work. Others at home needed to do the mothering. Can they not do without her for one day? She heard her mother's voice and swallowed her irritation. "Yes," she said. "Your daughter needs to speak with you. She didn't see you leave early this morning and thinks you have died, like papou (grandfather)."

The memory below gives another context in which the mothering body is instantly called on by the signal of the telephone.

She hesitated. Should she pick up the phone? Who was at the other end? And whoever it would be, although she must admit she hesitated because of the risk it would be one of the children, the question remained: Did she really have to answer? She watched the phone on the table and realized that she was trying to figure out who was at the other end?! It was early evening. Her time. Her time with no children. Nonmothering time. Time of her own. And she had looked forward to it. The phone kept ringing. She could not figure out who was at the other end, could not make the arguments strong enough not to pick it up, could not persuade herself that it was not mothering time. Because she had imagined time as hers, because the sound of the phone reminded her of being always available to others.

An important dimension of space that refers strongly to the lived and imagined is the interruption and transgression of spaces via material objects like the telephone. Memories of the telephone provided opportunities to discuss how public and private spaces are blurred. Indeed, in both of the above memories these mothers attempt to claim space of their own. However, their social realities imply that there is no separation of space for mothering and for self. Consequently, each lives their life with a continued expectation of claiming their own space. We discussed how, in these memories, it is our meanings of time that construct space. In these situations we both use time to divide working and personal boundaries from mothering.

Emotional labor is a more obvious form of emotional space. In accounts of time and space dedicated away from children and their care, the memories portrayed in this article show how the medium of the telephone demands emotional labor. The telephone is a medium for voices to immediately enter another space. Thus, geographical space, working space and the telephone as medium for creating a new space, intersect. It is a space dominated by the presence of bodies at particular points in time. The memories depicted in this article show how the ringing of the phone and the memories associated with it also fill space with emotional charge. Literature on gender, work, time, and place has demonstrated the blurring of the public and private for women

(Nowotny, 1994; Tronto, 2003). For example, Nowotny reflected on different cultures of time create tensions when carrying out emotional labor:

The “issues” at stake here have to do with increased demands on the quality of everyday life, with the massive entry of women into working life and with the different time culture which they bring with them. But it is also a question of services which cannot be automated and realized in the same way as the production of goods; they thus demand other temporal patterns which have to do with informality, with the quality of human relationships and with caring, and are based on other exchange relations between time and money. (p. 104)

The telephone, like the taxi radio, is a disruption or transcendence of space. This is illustrated by material mediums of the voice—that is, telephone, radio, or any other transmitting device—but also by attention to moments when the boundaries of public-private are transgressed.

### **Memory work constituting reflexive space**

How is it possible to interpret meanings given to gendered bodies, memory, and time in relation to space and gender by using a reflexive research method based on dialogue and memory work? When we introduced memory work in the beginning of this article, we pointed out that it should be seen from the perspective of a broader field of cross-disciplinary work on memory. In other words, our purpose has not been to claim that memory work is better than other qualitative methodologies to promote reflexive thinking and writing in research. Indeed, we have tried to emphasize the complexity of the method and the possibilities of different use for different purposes. However, we have identified some characteristics of memory work that we think have been really helpful to us. One aspect is that memory work is developed as a critique of dominant theoretical interpretations of the world and all forms of language as abstract. In other words, academic life and everyday life are not seen as opposite ways of forming the abstract but as equally important. As Haug (1987) wrote,

Language is a slippery instrument. The language of science in particular floats far above our everyday consciousness; abstracted from the concrete, it pretends neutral objectivity. On the other hand, everyday or colloquial language is hardly our unambiguous ally. That particular events and feelings are expressed is not in and of itself an advantage. On the contrary, everyday language is packed with preconceived opinions and value judgments that act as obstacles to understanding. (p. 61)

Memory work provides a concrete agenda of different steps and techniques for addressing this complexity of language. By focusing on a topic and by producing written memories of particular situations, memory work privileges the fragmented. Co-writing and dialogue allowed us to explore the complexities of how space becomes gendered and to ground the abstract.

As previously pointed out, memory work can be applied to different topics. However, we found that it has been very useful as a reflexive research method in a project about the gendering of space. It allowed us to enter into the conceptualizations in the literature and explore them as active, fragmented, situated, and contextualized. Situating ourselves within this conceptual body of work has made it possible to cross boundaries. We found that the meanings given to gendered bodies in relation to space and gender are fragments of wider contexts captured in moments of lived experience: a telephone ringing to recall us to work or family. The lived experiences most remembered are imbued with strong emotional, imaginary and sensory perceptions—the smell of

a farm, the fear of vast open space, feeling trapped—and the journey across space and time that can influence self-identity. Although some memories, such as the one of sexualized space, did not challenge our theoretical knowledge, the other memories provided contributions to theorizing what we perceive as spaces. For example, we found that there was an interweaving of gendered bodies' creating and being created by different spaces at the same time. Hence, the memories about gendered bodies and landscapes and those that capture the disrupting of space and time show us how multiple layers of spatial contexts occur. Relations of power through the radio, voice, movement and gaze can alter the gendering of space.

In this article we have also raised issues of the complexity of memory work labeled as a collective and or individual method. We have highlighted the importance of paying attention to different ways of working. We would like to think that the way we have used memory work as a starting point for a research cooperation can provide information and inspiration to other researchers, not least those working with international projects based in different parts of the world. How researchers interpret and make use of the work of other researchers, how memories, theoretical understandings, and imaginative interpretations play a role for formulating new projects, is an important aspect of qualitative methods in social research.

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