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Title of thesis Being and Doing Gender: Using Drawing as a Method to Relate to the Self, Environment and Others

Department Art & Media

Degree programme Nordic Visual Studies and Art Education

Year 2022

Number of pages 75

Language English

Abstract

The research explores drawing as a method to understand the ways through which we absorb power structures that define our mannerisms in public spaces. Drawing in different public spaces of the cities of Lahore and Helsinki, my interest is in observing and documenting the interactions I have with passers-by. I seek to uncover the ways in which drawing can make visible the relations of power between sexes.

The habit of drawing began as a way to take up space as a female gender in the predominantly male oriented public spaces of Lahore. I use drawing as a tool to capture fleeting moments when we pass each other by and power balance shifts from one to the other. The process slows down these moments and highlights the intricate web of power and vulnerability.

Our bodies are shaped by our interactions with others and our environment. Drawing creates a dialogue between the self, environment and others in public spaces. The multisensory experience of being in public spaces is investigated through the process of drawing where my physical appearance creates interactions with people from different walks of life. And if experiences within these spaces can come to shape our bodies, then the act of drawing is that bodily experience that can lead to different ways of relating to the self, environment and others.

Keywords public spaces, body, movement, gender, drawing

Being & Doing Gender

**Using the Act of Drawing to Relate to the Self,
Environment and Others**

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

As hectic and frustrating as it was starting my master's during the pandemic, I have cherished this time too. The thesis could not have happened without the continuous support and advice I received from my teachers, friends, family and colleagues.

First and foremost, I'd like to express my gratitude to my supervisor, Juuso Tervo. From writing letters to help with my student permit for Finland to making sure our group gets the most out of the programme, you have been nothing but wonderful through and through. I am deeply grateful for your guidance and your support specially during the writing process.

I'd like to thank my advisor, Tiina Pusa, for your encouragement and patience with my frazzled state of mind. I learned a lot from our sessions and they really helped me make important connections with my research.

I consider myself very lucky to have had the chance to study with the amazing NoVA crew. Each of you has been a source of inspiration. I have loved our time together specially on our memorable study trip.

My friends from back home thank you for your faith in me and for your support throughout the journey. I'm grateful to my boyfriend for keeping me calm and collected through the last leg of the thesis. Gratitude for my parents who have really come through for me during this time. My father was the first person in my life who encouraged me to explore public spaces and for that I will always be thankful.

Lastly, I'd like to remember Michail Galanakis who I had the good fortune of knowing through one his inspiring classes, Right to the City. It was an absolute joy to be in your class. I will always remember your kindness and your compassion. Rest in power.

INTRODUCTION

This research explores drawing as a method to explore and understand the ways in which we come to relate to ourselves, our environment, and others we pass by in public spaces. Drawing in different sites of the cities I have lived in, namely Lahore and Helsinki; my interest lies in the ways in which different bodies occupy their environment. The way people act out their gender is shaped by the culture they are in and others they interact with. Although drawing is an individual activity, yet I see it as a collective experience. The interactions instigated by the method of drawing lead to the understanding of how human beings exist and function individually and collectively in their shared environment.

I conceptualised drawing as a method of research during my master's programme, Nordic Visual Studies and Art Education. The programme encouraged me to connect my practice as an art educator with my artistic practice. This led to rethinking the process of drawing. The theories I read, colleagues, teachers, and friends I interacted with led me to frame drawing as a research method. Therefore, the thesis in part is a reflection on a habit of drawing in public spaces that I first developed over the years in Lahore, Pakistan. Through drawing I tried to make space as a female gender in a deeply patriarchal social system. Rather than the method leading to findings; reflecting, and articulating the findings led to the discovery of the method. My research questions are:

What was the process that led to the formation of the act of drawing as a method of understanding power relations? Secondly, to what extent can this act be used as a method for knowledge production?

Knowledge here refers to what becomes accepted as a common ideology on how people occupy and behave in their shared environments. Knowledge of the everyday ways of

functioning is constructed through the social and political institutions such as the government, religion, and media. Individuals share this knowledge as a collective consciousness. Consciousness is formed when the mind absorbs the power relations that play out between people and places. Groups or individuals of lesser power statuses must exist within the same consciousness whilst that consciousness does not make space for them.

To answer my research questions, I begin the thesis by exploring the feminist standpoint theory as my Theoretical Framework. The theory challenges the hierarchy of social knowledge and lays emphasis on those individuals or groups that possess a lower social status under the widely accepted knowledge claims. The core belief of the feminist standpoint theory is that knowledge is socially situated (Haraway, 1988). By studying social situations where subjugated groups feel overpowered, new knowledge of power relations can be observed. This then lays out a way to understand the power structures that lead to unpleasant encounters such groups may face in public spaces. Using the theory, I propose the act of drawing as my socially situated experience. Moving in public spaces of Lahore was not always a comfortable experience. If drawing was my socially situated experience, then I was learning and relearning my relationship to my environment by exercising taking up space as a female. I look back to the drawings I did when I was in Lahore and rethink them through the feminist standpoint theory.

I use the concept of being and doing gender as part of my methodology. It is part of the feminist methods of inquiry, a way to understand gender realities (Wickramasinghe, 2009). In any space one walks into their being or existence is notified by one's body and the gender it carries. Instead of the individual informing the space (public or private) of their gender and body, an individual is informed of the way in which their gender and body should step into that space and act out that gender. The ontology of gender illustrates this state of flux between being informed and informing. This back and forth further brings into focus the power relations

between sexes. In the hopes of social and political changes feminists turn to gender as an influential ontology. When I reflect on my drawing practice in Lahore and later when I arrived in Helsinki, I put myself in a position where I am seen drawing by people going by. My gender is the first aspect of myself that is observed. Drawing allows me to spend more time in public spaces that I might not ordinarily spend a significant amount of time in. Reflecting on these moments I claim I was establishing my gender's right to public spaces. By framing my standpoint perspective, I can then claim the drawing interventions as executing the method of being and doing gender. Being and doing gender is an individual as well as a collective experience. It prompts me to look at the incidents or even passing moments that caused discomfort or uneasiness in my body. Even if such experiences are solitary they happen in a collective context. I share memories to show individual and collective scope of drawing.

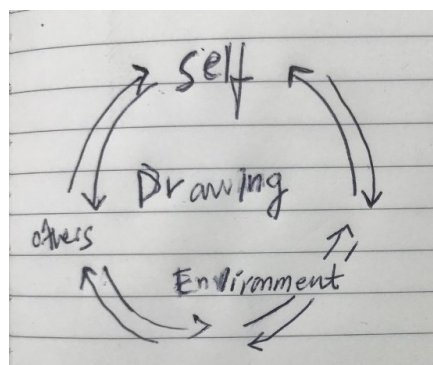
Before I discuss the research findings of the drawing interventions, I explore my methodology to first illustrate the way it is instilled in women how their gender should behave. Memory work is a big part of feminist research (Ahmed, 2007). Through recalling and analysing two memories I demonstrate how our bodies absorb dominant knowledge claims and act accordingly. Women's worldview greatly changes when they are met with instances of harassment or other less violent discomforts in the public or private spheres. Their movement in public spaces become measured, more cautious. These experiences lead them to take up space accordingly. Growing up as a female in Pakistan, the world unfolds first and foremost, as a set of restrictions. We understand the city through the "could-nots...I could not step outside unsupervised or without a *dupatta*¹. And I certainly could not linger on the streets too long" (Khatri, 2020, para.3). Furthermore, I discuss the way in which drawing becomes a safe space. It brings about moments of calm through which dominant narratives can be challenged.

¹ A long piece of fabric like a scarf worn by women in Pakistan. At times it is used to cover the head or other times carried around the shoulders.

After the chapter on memories, I discuss first my drawings and the drawing experiences in Lahore and later in Helsinki. Drawing brings a new way of reflecting, establishing, and reforming the relations between the self, environment, and others. “The Greek “Polis” derives from the ancient verb "pallomai", which means to move and live. The notion of public is not only spatial, but presupposes the notion of encounter, dialogue, and city’s assembly” (Galanakis, 2004, p.743). Drawing brings out a conversation between the self, environment, and others. Each of these three is politically and socially charged. Our encounter with others leads to us redefining our relationship with ourselves and our environment. At the same time our relationship to our environment leads to us redefining our relationship with others and ourselves. The cycle continues. The definitions of self, environment and others are entangled. Thus, the relationship between the three is in a state of flux (Rambo, 2007). They are always informing and being informed by one another. I visualise the relationship between the three as a movement that vibrates and continues to change. Through my artistic practice I show the ways in which drawing slows down this movement. The act of drawing creates a shift in this cycle. The three start orbiting around the drawer and the drawing that unfolds. By slowing it down I create a space where my body can then create or recreate experiences where I expand, unlearn, and learn my relationship to myself, others, and my environment on my own account.

Figure 1.

Sketch to show role of drawing



Drawn by author, 2022

The theoretical framework and methodological concepts blend into one another as they essentially point to the self as integral to research. This is perhaps the case because I look back to my artistic practice and then try to frame it as a method. The findings were already there, I use the relevant concepts to articulate those findings. This means looking at the way I had carried out research and then trying to think of how that research happened. However, it is not just a matter of using theory and concepts to understand findings, it is a back-and-forth process wherein, reading theory led to analysing previous data and then further practice in the field led to working further with the theory. Placing the two together even if they overlap as two separate parts of the thesis, strengthens my claims of using drawing to tie down the relationships between the self, environment and others.

I emphasis the ‘act’ of drawing rather than just the drawing as an outcome in my research questions as the act involves a physicality. The physical presence of my body is essential to the research process. It is important for me to explore roots of the concept of the female body as I see it in the Pakistani culture. The Urdu word for body is jism (جسم). It is not gendered, yet the word carries an underlying idea of a sexualised female body. It comes to imbibe this meaning over years of use particularly stemming from mainstream Indian and Pakistani cinema. I bring up jism because it represents an ideology. To understand this ideology, I will give the example of mainstream Urdu and especially Hindi films. Watching them is a common pastime activity for a vast majority of the population in Pakistan. As a child I remember my father was against me watching these films. He did not want me to be influenced by them. The films project a different picture of the culture they are meant to be situated in. In real life, majority of the women do not wear dresses or clothes that reveal too much skin. Nor is it considered moral behavior to show romance or a public display of affection. This situation causes a dual mentality. In this duality, the female jism is a central element. The societal and religious

pressure to uphold the female body's modesty conflicts with desiring the female body like in the movies.

The female body is central to the plot of the Bollywood films. The mainstream cinema used to take up discrete or suggestive ways to show romance (Kinetz, 2012). One of the films that decided to break away from these traditionally romantic ways of the cinema, was a Bollywood production titled *Jism*, released in 2003. Titling it *Jism* made it even harder for traditional audiences to see it as just another mainstream film. Figure 2. is a poster of the film in a part of New Delhi. It was taken down in protest. Even if the director defended her choice of the title, the poster begs to differ. The word *jism* is still centering on the female body's sexuality as her image is the most prominent in the poster. It then feeds back into the way people hold on the meaning of the word. Understanding visuals like these or the ones I make is integral to being and doing gender because they are an example of how the environment affects the understanding of genders and how genders in turn define the environment. Even though I do not address all the visuals I use in my thesis, I see them as a visual accompaniment to the concepts I am talking about. The drawings and pictures that go along with the writing are meant to also show this connection between the self, environment, and others.

Figure 2.

Poster of Jism 2 in a part of New Delhi, India



Note. From Jism 2: 5 Controversies [photograph], 2012,
(<https://www.ndtv.com/entertainment/jism-2-5-controversies-626995>)

Drawing practice was either consciously or unconsciously influenced by other activities, events or interactions. Any one feminist action does not happen in isolation, it is born out of other actions that happen parallel to it or happen before it. Even if a person does not realise it in the moment, a feminist action comes with a history. A feminist consciousness is stirred by continuous happenings of individual and collective nature. One of the key social events that I refer to time and again in my thesis is the *Aurat* (Women's) March. This a fourth wave feminist movement in Pakistan (Saigol, 2020, as cited in Azmet, 2022, para. 5).

I discuss the process of framing drawing as a method, which came about from my drawing excursions, collective activities, interactions with friends, students, colleagues and teachers. It involved recalling memories, past experiences, reconnecting with friends by writing and bringing all this information through theory. My thesis structure is such where my personal narratives stem from collective experiences and vice versa. I take the position of the drawer to connect with my environment, to take up space as I see my gender. Drawing disrupts to a small

degree the normative patterns of movement in public spaces. By adapting drawing as an ongoing act, I choose to make my own repetition of behavior.

Figure 3.

Aurat March, Lahore



Figures 3 & 4 are photographs by a friend, Natasha Malik, 2018

Figure 4.

Aurat March, Lahore



Slogan reads: We Have Tolerated You Long Enough

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

I explore my thesis questions through the lens of the feminist standpoint theory. The standpoint theory relates to epistemology, a part of philosophy that examines the roots of knowledge making and claims that knowledge is socially situated (Haraway, 1988). When societies are divided by class, gender, or race, it is important to consider a person or group's social position that is less influential than others. Thus, the theory offers three key objectives: firstly, it recognises and values the social and political positions of groups or individuals who are repressed, secondly, the theory brings into discussion the concept of situated knowledges which encourages groups to understand power relations through their lived experiences and to create their own knowledge claims and thirdly, it challenges the notion of objectivity in research.

To understand the first objective of feminist standpoint theory, the researcher must turn to the history of power struggles between genders that led to it. The theory formed as a counter to the male dominated world of scientific inquiry (Gurung, 2021). In the 1970's sociologists such as Dorothy Smith and Nancy Hartstock, worked off Marxist ideas of inequalities between classes that influence knowledge production (Cockburn, 2015). Marx maintained that the capitalist order in society works from the standpoint of the proletariat which forms the consciousness of the people. However, Marxist perspectives overlook women's labour in the capitalist order. Even the nouns and pronouns used for the upper classes as well as the labour classes are all male. The existence of female workers or female family members is not acknowledged. Smith recognised this exclusion. There was no space for women to reflect on their personal experiences and question the power structures. (Cockburn, 2015)

Cockburn (2015) claims standpoint theories like Hartstock looked to the status of women in their environment. She says Hartstock emphasised differences of everyday labour of men and women. She explained men were responsible only to produce goods, whereas women

were responsible for goods and for human beings. The latter responsibility did not only curtail giving birth and the care attached to this act but also the duty of caring for others. A woman's existence was mostly attached to the home and so the activities within the home became a viable source that fed the feminist standpoint theory. Later feminist researchers like Patricia Hills Collins (1990) expanded on women as stronger contenders for feminist standpoint research than men. A lot of men are socialized differently in terms of autonomy, as compared to other genders. They are taught to build connections outside the home in the formal setting of work. This reflects why genders make sense of ideas and social experiences, differently. It then becomes imperative to look to the standpoint of women or that of the less dominant groups to articulate the functioning of different power structures. Through the standpoint theory I reflect on my years of drawing as a female in the male dominated public spaces of Lahore. Thinking through my standpoint meant articulating the way my female body was perceived when it took up space in the public areas of my home city. Therefore, my inquiry to the first part of my research question which is related to the process that led to drawing as a method, began by thinking through my standpoint.

The second objective of the feminist standpoint theory is the concept of 'situated knowledges' which was coined by Haraway (1988). Here knowledge is positional, and forms of truth come out of positional perspectives. This perspective on knowledge shifts the power balance between knowledge claims. Instead of depending on institutional knowledge standpoint theory gives a sense of control to the researcher. The researcher can then look to their social position and those of others like them to dissect power relations that influenced their social standing. Standpoint offers an epistemic edge as it provides a 'double vision' (Gurung 2021). The genders that are suppressed provide valuable insights into power structures they face. They have a dual perspective as on the one hand they have the experience of being oppressed, on the other, they are familiar with the social contexts in which the

oppression happens. Collins in *Black Feminist Thought* (1990) highlights the relevance of the Black female standpoint. She lays emphasis on studying the different spheres of life that Black women are a part of. Since Western knowledge production has historically laid with White men of authority, Black women's experiences are excluded from what signifies as knowledge. Standpoints produce knowledge by shifting the power balance. Therefore, standpoint acknowledges the lived experience of exclusion that women embodied as essential to research. However, this is not to imply that standpoints are defined only as a study of power workings through the different social perspectives. Instead, standpoints are drawn from critical thinking of dominant structures through which arise social contexts and consequently, the effects on knowledge production (Gurung, 2021).

The third objective of the feminist standpoint theory is how objectivity is perceived. Since I use my standpoint perspective to analyse my research process, I question the objectivity of the data being produced. Donna Haraway and later theorists like Sandra Harding, challenged the notion of objectivity in scientific inquiries. Objectivity claims an absolute truth. The idea of objective knowledge is a function of power relations. She and later Harding replaced the objectivity in research with the concept of situated knowledge. The concept of situated knowledge allows me to be responsible for what I observe out in the world and how I come to understand it. It is a means to self-evaluate my position in society. This is an important element which allows the standpoint theorist or researcher to be aware of others who are not from the same background of class, religion, gender, or culture. The research subject's perspectives are valued rather than the subject being studied by researchers who hold a dominant position in the same milieu.

By its very nature standpoint theory lends itself as a platform that can be used to combine several voices. If patriarchal systems of power isolate the voices of less dominant genders, then standpoint is a call to gather those voices. Standpoint theorists develop their

respective ideas from the same core belief of the importance of situated knowledge. Moreover, much like the definition of standpoint, the term feminism also carries the core principle of equality yet embodies many definitions. No one definition can explain its entirety. Both these concepts can thus be adapted and molded to different groups of ethnicities and cultures. Harding (1986) feared the singularity of the feminist standpoint. Feminists have branched out and created their own understandings of it. Harding recognised this branching off into “hyphenized feminisms” such as “Socialist-Feminism, Radical-Feminism, Lesbian-Feminism, Black- Marxist-Feminism, Black-Lesbian-Socialist-Feminism, Radical-Women-of-Color” (Cockburn, 2015, p.8). Harding felt excited to see the differences in women’s perceptions about who they are together and apart and the way they navigate the politics of everyday social relations.

Standpoint theory’s wide scope helped me to bring different feministic concepts together which led me to better articulate my research process. I reference feminist writers such as bell hooks, Sara Ahmed, Patricia Hills Collins, and a few others, throughout my writing rather than only choosing theoretical concepts of one or two. Such writers connect their lived experiences with theoretical grounding to understand the different power relations. I use different conceptual frameworks to understand what it means to embody the dominant knowledge. *Black Feminist Thought* starts off by Collins (1990) explicitly rejecting basing her research into any one theoretical framework. Collins intentionally chooses to present her ideas to make them more reachable. When writing is situated heavily in theory that itself makes it conform to dominant ways of knowledge sharing. It is accessible for only those who are well versed in academic texts. Collins chooses to write in a way that the reader becomes part of the stories that are shared. Even if the reader cannot directly relate to the experiences that are shared, the writing becomes an invitation to reflect on the similarities or differences to other standpoints.

Feminist standpoint theory emphasises the responsibility the researcher owes to the research process, the people involved in the process and the ones being studied. Being in a position of responsibility further opens channels that lead to the understanding of how we function individually and together. Therefore, thinking through standpoint perspective led me to question my position of the drawer in public spaces of Lahore and Helsinki. Adopting the feminist standpoint theory means recognising the different perspectives of the same position the researcher can hold. If through one perspective my female gender has experienced discomfort in public places, from another perspective my gender gives me an advantage too. In my writing I recognise that my class or gender that may have privilege over others in some respect. The understanding of this aspect of responsibility is integral to answering my research question regarding the process that led to the formation of drawing as a method.

When I begin to investigate the multiplicity of the drawer's perspectives then I must begin with myself. The multiplicity of perspectives highlights a path through which I can address my second research question which is to explore the extent to which drawing can lead to new ways of knowledge making. The three main objectives of the theory aid first and foremost, to the understanding of my own social position as a female. By drawing in the environment that poses a challenge for my gender, I am creating a new way of being in that environment. The understanding of the self invites the understanding of what we face together in our shared environment. To make space for others, we must heal or attempt to understand the consequences of the injustices that our own bodies are subjected to. Hills wrote *Black Feminist Thought* to reflect on a part of her journey to find her voice. She explains over time she tried to form her own view of herself and reject the definitions that were given by external authoritative voices. The theory helped to frame and elaborate on drawing as a method of research. Even if I am looking through my standpoint yet I maintain throughout my thesis that this standpoint does not 'stand' alone.

METHODOLOGY

It is possible to see my research through a multidisciplinary approach involving aspects of different methodological concepts. Auto-ethnography, arts-based and empirical research are apt contenders for the way I choose to gather my information. Such methods of research are appropriate for framing drawing as a qualitative method of research. It is an activity that connects me to my environment and others and leads to the understanding of the larger social context. In this respect it fits neatly into the category of auto-ethnographic research. However, rather than diving into one or all these methods, I begin this chapter by considering gender as a methodology (Wickramasinghe, 2009). As I reflect on my drawing practice over the years, I think about an integral part of why that habit came to be. It simply came out of a need to draw in public spaces. When this was met with restriction because of my gender, the gender then became the integral component of the practice.

Being and Doing Gender

I discuss the methodology of gender because my research stems from my body and its movement in public spaces. “Gender identity is a performative accomplishment compelled by social sanction and taboo” (Butler, 1998, p.520). Butler defines gender as a continuous performance of the everyday acts of different bodies. Rather than seeing gender as a beginning state, the acts in fact inform the gender. These bodily acts are repeated and through this repetition comes the construction of gender. The act of the social role of an individual is born out of societal expectations and feeling obliged to meet societal validation. The performance depends on the cultural setting and so Butler maintains there is no universal definition of gender.

To expand on this performativity and to understand gender as an ontology, I discuss the writing of Maithree Wickramasinghe (2009). She conceptualises gender methodology rooted

in the ‘being’ of the self in the context of the larger society. To visualise this performativity element of gender, it is important to look to the act of being and doing gender as a methodology of gender. The study of gender as a method gives the researcher the platform to observe and practice agency of autonomy of their gender. This agency can be explored by situating the self at the center of research. And so, the concept of being and doing gender gives the researcher the platform to explore these acts from their standpoint. “Not only is gender conceptualized as a particular form or aspect of existence, but each aspect of reality can also be conceptualised as gendered” (Wickramasinghe, 2009, p.98). Building the methodological framework for being and doing gender then leads to the question of the ways in which this can be accomplished.

Feminist researchers such as Donna Haraway have questioned if there is a particular feminist methodology. When selecting a methodology, it comes down to asking oneself what it is that needs to be accomplished. The central concepts of any methodological approach boil down to, first, how can social phenomena be understood and second, how can knowledge be shown. Most feminist research starts with the experience of the individual in their societal context. The process involves an internal consciousness of the self and others and external definition that is imposed on that self. (Wickramasinghe 2009). In one sense the methodology comes out of the position of the researcher. It is not the researcher that adapts a methodology that feeds their societal wanderings. It is the very being of the researcher that becomes a methodology. This aspect of reversing the traditional role of which part of research follows the other is important as thesis in part reflects on my artistic practice over the years. Reflecting on my theoretical perspective of feminist standpoint theory it is befitting for me to approach my research topic through the ontology of gender. I cannot talk from my standpoint or reflect on drawing as a method of research unless I perform my gender. Thus, the body or the acts that the body performs is at the center of research.

The Act of Drawing

Drawing in public places is like setting up a stage of performativity. Marika Tervahartiala visualises the sketchbook as a “stage-like space” (2019, p.105). For me it is not the sketchbook but the space around me that is the stage. In one sense, I am the stage, and I am the actor on that stage. I use this metaphor to better understand doing and being gender through the process of drawing. I maintain myself as a stage because women in Pakistan are given little private space while walking in public spaces. Dominant bodies, majority of whom are men, stretch out to show the ease of movement they envelope. It is often women who must avoid bumping into men in crowded marketplaces. To set myself up as a stage, is creating a private space for myself. Doing drawing translates into the body doing a job or a task. There is a professionalism or a task-like quality that accompanies the process of drawing. And in this role people interact differently with me. They might stop and watch but now they are not only watching my female body, they are watching the drawing also as it unfolds. In this way it takes away some burden that my female body carries of always being under scrutiny.

Drawing helps me to slow down. When I am in the performer’s role, I can then feel more comfortable to relax my body and ground my being. In this role I am not the gendered female, I am an actor playing the part of the drawer who is female. This role gives me the tool to be and do gender as an act. It is an ‘act’ because I am trying to embody my gender in my own way, to separate the how the world sees a female body from the way a female would see her own body. This is not clearly defined to me when I move myself to public places to draw and so the drawing process reinvents the meaning. Every time I draw and leave the space with a slightly different understanding of the individual and collective sense of gender. I may not always be completely aware of the changes that take place within me or that are taking place around my contours. But I do feel a sense of accomplishment, ownership and a thrill that keeps

me going back. Drawing outdoors is a continuous practice. The repetition of this act is integral to the process of research. Although I do not always draw in the same place, this act is a repetition. This repetition grows my sense of being and doing gender. I theorize this repetition in the context of what Butler says about habits repeating and forming gender that I mentioned earlier in this chapter. Thus, my internal being slowly builds a relationship with the streets I am meant to fear. In the same context I bring up again Ahmed's concept of habits of bodies shaping spaces. She analyses that if habits are repetitious acts that bodies perform, then habits "might also shape what bodies *can do*" (Ahmed, 2007, p.156) By performing my action of drawing repeatedly, I not only internalise this new way of being in the shared spaces, but the action draws others near in certain capacities.

Figure 5.

Drawing intervention, Metro Station, Central Railway Station, Helsinki



Still from video executed by Kai Nikolai Nordfors, 2022

The act of drawing opens a different channel of experiencing and understanding the ways in which different bodies pass each other by in public spheres. Drawing is a language, one that can trace out various manifestations of power. The visual of my gender and body taking up

space influences the public spaces that has a set programme of how it constructs actions every day. The drawing is a disruption. When the stage is set for the drawer and the drawing, the movement of the passersby shifts. They may look, stand, glance or simply avoid and walk away.

“As I draw, the auto ethnography, my processes, the drawing sketches me into being” (Tervahartiala, 2019, p.100). Tervahartiala makes drawing an active agent in her process of research. She uses Drawing as a noun wherein the Drawing itself is a “co-researcher.” This got me to think about my position on the drawing that is brought to life during my process. I draw the bodies that pass me by out in public spaces. I capture the different ways bodies behave, stand and move. The drawings later become a space where stories of movement are captured, and I do turn to reflect through them later. However, I use the drawing as a verb. On the stage of the drawer, the drawing and drawer are both activated. I claim drawing as a method of being and doing gender because this involves a process. Rather than the drawing that takes shape during the process, it is the process itself that is an integral part of research.

“As a research method, drawing is a true post-disciplinary nomad, finding its home wherever the line is drawn (pun intended)” (Tervahartiala, 2019, p.101). This is a quality of drawing that Tervahartiala describes very endearingly. Indeed, drawing becomes a precious activity for the drawer. It extends from me, and it is internally part of my being. Moreover, the drawing process or the act of drawing can easily adapt to different situations and contexts for research. When reading about research other artists like Tervahartiala have done through drawing, it is fascinating to see how many ways drawing can be taken on to carry out respective research.

ACTIVATING MEMORY

In this chapter I try to illustrate the back-and-forth dialogue between the mind and body based on the internalisation of power dynamics. This connection is important to help identify drawing a methodology of being and doing gender. “To share a memory is to put a body into words” (Ahmed, 2018, p.23). Ahmed questions how the body changes when we encounter unpleasant moments. She recalls her experience of harassment and notes that the body may appear the same, but something inside changes. To channel gender as a methodology, I begin with analysing memories. I felt the need to begin with memories because memories are integral to understanding the relationships between the self, environment, and others. In *Living a Feminist Life* (2017), Ahmed states memory work as an integral aspect of feminism. A memory that is related primarily to uncomfortable bodily sensations may be a painful or a stressful experience, yet it is also an agent of learning.

I recall two memories: one from childhood in Pakistan, and the other one from a recent experience that took place in the past year in Finland. “It is my deep belief that in talking about the past, in understanding the things that have happened to us we can heal and go forward.... By confronting the past without shame, we are free of its hold on us” (hooks, 2013, p.119). To speak from one’s standpoint starts with the understanding of that standpoint. When we grow up with the unwanted attention that Ahmed (2018) speaks of, our standpoint perspective is defined for us. We mold our bodies accordingly. Both memories I have experienced with friends and while writing about them, I reshared them. In this manner, the standpoint perspective continues to shift and grow.

First Memory

One day, at the beginning of the school year, new fifth graders curiously looked around at each other as all our science books were suddenly asked to be handed in to our science

teacher. No bored doodles, or eager scribbles of notes marked them yet. A day later they were handed back to us. They looked the same until someone went through their copy of the textbook. This was followed by an eruption of excitement that soon reverberated throughout our co-ed classroom. We discovered two pages glued together in every book. Fifth graders forgot about everything else in that moment. And without any further ado, books were held up high, with the glued pages angled against the ceiling lights. We caught outlines and glimpses of a woman with a baby visible inside her womb and another small image of a baby being breastfed. These accompanied a noticeably short chapter on reproduction. Clearly it was never meant to be part of our syllabus.

The pages were forced apart by us. Several of us giggled as we triumphantly gawked at the torn-up images. Shame mingled with a raging curiosity. The girls' reactions were more subdued whilst the boys were more vocal about the discovery. One of my female friends, Annie, turned to a particularly jubilant group of boys, annoyed, telling them to get over it. She was the only one of us to say aloud what was obvious, that these were mere depictions of the human reproduction system. Shame is more centered towards the female body giving the male body, an elevated bodily hierarchy. Girls knew that these images related to their bodies, thus, learnt shame had resurfaced. Boys perhaps enjoyed some sense of power as a reaction to this subdued behavior. Our genders are sorted early in life into two gender binaries. In this memory we see the standpoint of girls shaping as a second to that of the boys. We separate an 'us' from a 'them' and we internalize that "he does not include she" (Ahmed, 2007, p. 4). The girls already knew their position is meant to be less vocal. The knowledge that we all shared as group pertained to shame of the bare female body. Shame is learnt early. Already as fifth graders we knew that bodily matters are not modest topics of discussion. Our reactions were indicative of this knowledge of modesty. The female body carries the weight of shame as it is deemed secondary to the male gender. This starts as soon as we are born. The female gender is

given its assignment while in the womb, from the absence or presence of the penis, making the penis “as the decider of the future” (Ahmed, 2007, p. 25). This future is not merely about the roles she will be expected to perform as her gender assignment, but her gender is from the earliest memory, defined by the male gender.

The fifth-grade memory was not per se an unpleasant one, but it does indicate the internal structure through which certain bodies could feel the right to violate others. Some bodies feel more responsibility for their gender as compared to others. Annie and I talked about the fifth-grade incident when I shared with her that this memory made its way into my thesis. We talked about the silliness of this moment, especially because our teacher made the effort to glue those pages together, book by book. I wonder if she felt more of a responsibility as a female body to censor the images. This act of censoring those drawings is indicative of the effort that goes into being and doing a female gender. A lot of the times the female mind is never only in one moment, it transcends time. The mind keeps the past close and aims to foresee future consequences. The female mind is always in a mode of protection of the body. Our science teacher carried out the censorship because we were in a co-ed classroom. She might not have if it were all girls. The presence of the male then means that the female must make herself as somehow less significant. This incident reestablished the structure of *jism* and fed the fifth graders the *jism* ideology that operates by limiting the female body of its reach. Recalling this memory at will is an act of pushing against the boundary of this structure.

In most private and public schools alike, in Pakistan, education is segregated after middle school or sometimes even sooner. We are taught worldly concepts of right and wrong by using the body as an active agent yet neglecting that body as itself, a mode of seeking knowledge. Our bodies absorb these rules and perform accordingly. By using shame, we try to douse the fire of curiosity. Yet the fifth graders showed that curiosity continues to surface because curiosity is the body’s most natural channel for learning. It always remains a part of

us as we move through life. However, because of its suppression, it changes its form and comes out in more violent ways. A female body carries a burden of this suppressed curiosity. It can take the shape of unwanted attention through a penetrating gaze or an act like, brushing up against a body in a way to make the non-male body feel that responsibility for this curiosity. Thereby, also justifying the invading, uneasy actions. Shame created around the body leads to us disconnecting with our core learning medium. Denying the right to be curious about bodily matters is denying one of learning and knowing of the world through the body. It also denies us the freedom to think beyond the binaries of gender. When this connection with the body is severed, we cannot relate to others because we become incapable of relating to ourselves. The initial process of disconnecting one gender from the other, later continues to disconnect us with other groups who may not be like us.

The fifth-grade event led to the unnecessary politicising of the female body. A politicised body is one that is controlled (Brown & Gershon, 2017). The body's natural system of reproduction became politically charged by first, the censorship and secondly, by going against this censorship via tearing the glued pages apart. The drawings too then became politicised. The memory did not directly shape drawing as my research method. However, it does add to the understanding of the visual of the female body as a loaded one. By drawing in public spaces of Lahore, my female body was always carrying the weight of the visibility of the female body. "We are taught over and over again that the only way to remain safe is to stay within fixed boundaries...it is the body that is the first site of limitation (hooks, 1995, p.133). Thus, the female physicality of the drawing act is a way to confront this limitation.

Second Memory

During my masters, a lot of us spent time in a common workspace shared by students of the Art department. Our 'homebase' as it is referred to, is used for several purposes: meetings

both offline and online, studio related activities, lunch, or nap breaks, studying or reading. During a break session I was sharing a laughable moment with my friend, Anna. Homebase was bustling with people and their various activities. Suddenly we heard a male voice call out from behind us. “Can you keep it down?” When we turned around, we could not see him. He was sitting behind the student lockers. Years of practiced apologizing, had me prepped and ready: “oh! Sorry!” Anna, on the other hand, walked over to him and told him that homebase is not a quiet space like the library. He told her that he had no problem with conversations taking place around him, but we were louder than others and it was disturbing him. Students near us stopped mid activity to look over towards this interaction.

We were taken aback. Something did not sit right with us. This point of a tingling feeling of discomfort is an important moment of observation. Our bodies are learning and molding silently through other bodies around us. To understand this complex process of learning Travis et al (2017) bring into discussion the term, *fleshpoints*. A fleshpoint is a moment that erupts during our everyday living when the body is confronted with a violation which triggers a past encounter. This phenomenon is felt by our very flesh. It holds one in a state of shock or disruption where time seems suspended. These moments are not solitary experiences but “embodied qualities of experience” (Travis et al, 2017, p.10). It’s a seesaw of interactions where power play between bodies occurs. It is crucial to study these experiences of the flesh to understand cultural, social and political injustices that circulate around us.

Adding to the concept of fleshpoints, I bring in what Ahmed (2007) highlights as the sensations that are left behind once we encounter moments in which our bodies feel uneasy. “A sensation is felt by the skin” (Ahmed, 2007, p. 22). For her feminism begins with the sensation of something that is felt by the body as something that is not right. Before we can find words for these moments or even recognise them intellectually, the body is sensitive to them. The body is alert that it was wronged. Even interactions like that of fifth grade put the

female body on alert. Forcefully, hiding the visual of female body left the sensation that female body is meant to be hidden. According to Ahmed we remember experiences of violation not only as occasions but as sensory experiences. The instant a memory of injustice is triggered, the sensations or fleshpoints felt at the time of occurrence, make an appearance again in the present moment. The feelings of violation nag us under our skin, pulling our nerves. “You feel it on a cellular level” (Hasanen, personal communication, 2022). When we experience the world repeatedly “as a sensory intrusion” then over time our body alters itself to always expect this intrusion. And the way we relate to our body changes. A fleshpoint moment holds one in a state of shock or disruption where time seems suspended. This further explains the female body’s need to be conscious of her physical presence.

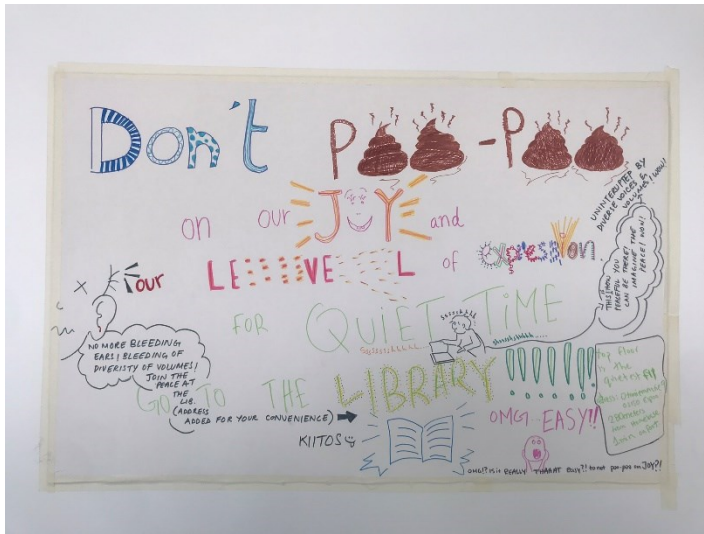
A fleshpoint moment had occurred. My friend and I sat back together after the interaction with the stranger, put off. I felt ashamed I had not come through for us like my friend had. I had not confronted him. It was his manner of confronting us, without coming over, just expecting his voice to order us, that sparked a “sensation”. We no longer felt the need to continue the chat we were enjoying before this interaction. Our bodies were struck because they had been struck similarly before time and time again. We started talking about this behavior and soon we grabbed some coloured markers and a sheet of paper. We shared a need to deal with the authoritative behavior of this stranger and how it was making us feel. We thought we could put together a poster to show that the home base is not a silent space. Through this process of drawing out the poster something significant took place. “People make meaning through making” (Garber et al, 2018). We were able to process this incident through the process of creative making. Once we started drawing, we started sharing other past incidents that had also silenced us in some way. It got me thinking about how quick I was to apologize. We recalled together how we have tried to unlearn not to be quiet, to speak up when an unjust behavior comes our way. One thinks one has unlearned the past but quite suddenly, one falls into

the same pattern of behavior. Unlearning is a process, and it does have fall backs. This fall back shows that the authoritative way of being is not our female body's main way of functioning. If it was it would be as natural as the way in which the male body addressed us, without feeling the need to come over? Instead, my friend went over to confront him. Women often must go to countless reaffirmations of holding on to their standpoints. One assumes that the older one gets and the more experience one has of facing such or worse instances, the more one is equipped to meet them head on. A part of this is true yet we continue to face moments of fleshpoints. Is defending our standpoint then an always ever after kind of story?

Our caption was: "Don't Poo-Poo on Our Joy & Our Level of Expression." Around the title we drew delightful doodles with quirky one-liners mostly advising the library as a much better option for silent studying time. Once we were done, we taped this poster on the wall. We went over what we had created and amused ourselves. When hearing our comments and laughter, that same voice addressed us again, in the manner of an adult who catches children in midst of childish acts of misbehavior: "You wasted hours making this when you could have come talked to me?" His feet were up on the desk he was working on, his hand resting on the arm of the chair supporting his head. The posture was one that gave off a sense of superiority. We walked over and explained that his behavior was rude in the way he had addressed us when he called us out. Both in terms of body language and the words he used. He apologized but now he wanted to stir the direction towards our poster making action. That original interaction was irrelevant for him now. It was important to critique *us*. We argued for a while, standing there in front of him, again as if we were the childish adults in this scenario. Clearly the apology was not an apology. The apology also came after we had acted on the situation. This acting upon is also a weight that we carried. His manner of talking and his body language appeared as if he felt we were *less* than him. Women are no strangers to this strategy of having a confrontational conversation turned around on them.

Figure 6.

Poster by Anna and I



*Don't Poo-Poo on Our Joy & Our Level of Expression, Lioliou, A
and Asgher, Z, 2022*

Admittedly perhaps we assumed too much about his character in this instance. But this incident shows we are not only seen in a certain way by others but we too are part of the same system and so we also see others in a certain way. Something about his perception of us led to him addressing us that way but in turn we also then saw him in a certain light. In retrospect, this incident is not meant to be about who he is as a person. It never was. This encounter does not define his personality. The poster was also not about getting back at him. The memory is meant to show how quickly we snap back into our assigned gendered roles. How quickly the female gender can become apologetic and recede. And the importance of the act of drawing as a method of undoing by connecting and understanding the gendered roles. Sometimes we cannot work through here and now situations. The flashpoints occur and they stop us from trying to resolve the current situation. We accumulate these memories over time since if we cannot understand them or work through them at the space and time of origin. They stick to us, and we become burdened with them as we grow up. Anna and I demonstrated how the weight of our memories pulls us down even when we speak up like my friend did. We connected our

memories through art making because “making anything with your hands is a quiet political ripple” (Levine, 2014 as cited in Garber et al, 2018). When bodies are turned political like in the first memory in this chapter, then we counter that politicised act by making. When an injustice occurs, when power is taken away, there is a need to take it back. The art making gave us this platform to take back control of our bodies. Not only did drawing out this poster connect us, but it helped us think. It created a platform where we can clear our minds. It is not always easy to make sense of current situations when the body feels it is not being treated fairly. As mentioned earlier in the chapter, a female mind thinks about the now, the past and the consequences, all together. Drawing was a method to suspend the transcending of time. Through drawing time froze different to that when a fleshpoint occurs. It can then be said it is a counter-fleshpoint occurrence. “Art reflects but also makes context. It is of the world; it responds to it, and it makes it” (Lioliou, personal communication, 2022). The act of drawing helped us connect with ourselves, each other and our past. It helped us ‘stand’ our genders experience and perspective.

Being and doing gender is an individual as well as a collective experience. This concept prompts me to look at the incidents or even passing moments that caused discomfort or uneasiness in my body. Even if such experiences are solitary they happen in a collective context. Firstly, they involve other participants who may contribute to the discomfort. And secondly, we connect on different emotional levels to others who go through similar situations. Throughout my thesis I write through an interchange of individual sense of being and doing gender to a collective way of being and doing gender. Women or other genders who form the less dominant groups may find themselves at a disadvantage in certain social situations where influential knowledge structures work against them. Thinking through the feminist standpoint theory, sharing the two memories was a way to analyse the connecting through drawing my friend and I showed how the drawing process leads to new ways of knowledge production.

Sharing memories becomes an alternate way of “producing and validating knowledge” (Collin, 1990, p. 252). The memories communicated with my research question related to the process through which drawing became a method of research. Moreover, memory recalling ascertains the way women can internalise how others and environment perceive the female gender, and this defines their behavior. This internal process is integral to further explore drawing as a method that can shift normative ways of existing.

DRAWING AS A SAFE SPACE

This chapter is representative of the in-between stage of drawing as an integral practice for the self and then moving towards forming it as a method of research. It is an answer to the first part of my research question: What was the process that led to the formation of drawing as a method of understanding power relations and building new knowledge within those relations? I reflect on my drawing practice in Lahore. Through examples and interactions with my environment, myself and others, I explain how drawing is a highly adaptable tool to connect these three spheres. Tervahartiala (2019) credits drawing as an active agent on its own. I identify it as the active agent that brings into the existence the complex relationship between the three. Therefore, drawing “is a nonlinear writing format or medium, which can serve as a practice site for representing interactionist ideas” (Rambo, 2007, p.541). Building the habit of drawing outdoors was not a linear process. By this I mean it is a back-and-forth process involving drawing, observing, interactions, reading, writing and eventually back to drawing. It was a journey that I took on with friends and colleagues, through different activities both artistic and otherwise, which led me to this method.

To illustrate how I came to the act of drawing as a research method, I begin by bringing into discussion the process of walking on the streets. Drawing came from walking and in turn, drawing led to walking more in public spaces. To establish a relationship with one’s city, it is important to experience it on foot. By walking we establish a sense of belonging, a closer bond with our environment. In her book *Wanderlust- A History of Walking* Rebecca Solnit notes, “when you give yourself to places, they give you yourself back, the more one comes to know them, the more one seeds them with the invisible crop of memories and associations, thoughts, new opportunities” (2014, pp. 13). Identifying with the environments we occupy helps us find ourselves.

Even though we use the term ‘public spaces’ not all spaces render themselves accessible to certain genders or groups of people. The designs that inform city planning play a large part in creating or limiting accessibility. These designs, both physical and psychological, are set in motion by different institutions that claim authority for decision making. “One’s participation in the world, and thus one’s knowledge of the world, is always influenced by dynamic, overlapping, and adaptive systems of power that inhabit and inform the body and bodily senses in preconscious ways” (Alcoff, 2006, as cited in Travis et al, 2018). We absorb the voices of these institutions as common knowledge. They become part of our psyche and resultantly we play them out in the streets through our body language.

The lack of walking accessibility I felt in Pakistan, forced me to reevaluate the places we occupy. Walking becomes a set of actions that disrupts the formal design of the city. (de Certeau, 1984). Walking, being almost an unnatural activity in my home city, turned me into a stranger to it. Because of this restriction on movement, just the everyday, banal act of walking becomes a form of challenging existing power structures within society. Walking, stopping and drawing, drawing, stopping and then walking churns the wheel of creating a new system knowledge making.

Building a Standpoint

Although I maintain that my research comes from a theoretical understanding of my standpoint, the building up of that standpoint came from my interactions with society and others within that society. Feminist standpoint theory countered the individual isolation that comes to be the state of living in a capitalist system. The very formation of the standpoint theory came as a commentary on the collective voices that were underrepresented in the means of knowledge production. As a result, feminist consciousness comes into shape. This consciousness can start with our gut feeling that something did not interact rightly with our

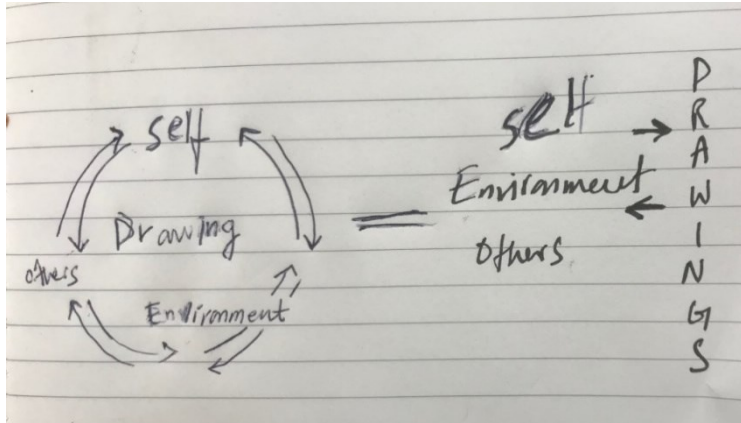
bodies. “A gut has its own intelligence” (Ahmed, 2017. P.27). An unpleasant experience of cruelty or injustice first stirs something in our guts. Therefore, a “feminist gut” will know if something is not right. Much like a fleshpoint denotes something is going wrong around us, through our interaction with other people in our immediate environment. Staying with the gut feeling, trying to decipher it can be an uncomfortable experience and it is easier to put these feelings behind to exist in the normal of everyday. Staying with the feeling leads us into a conversation with ourselves that brings into play the role of the environment we are in and the people we interact with in that environment. Staying with the discomfort leads to a consciousness that then connects with us others like us. This connection further develops with practices which adds to the chain of feminist consciousness.

The self and society are two separate entities, yet their boundaries are blurred. “Self and society are constantly in flux” (Rambo, 2007, p.538). Rambo states that when cultural contexts change, the individual forms their own way of interpreting the changes. This change is also informed by other participants intervening. New relationships are then formed with our environment, others and then us with ourselves. Therefore, I make sense of drawing as a tool that goes in-between the environment, self and others. Thus, drawing too is in a state of flux. In another scenario or moment of flux, the interaction with others through the act of drawing leads to reformulating the relationship to the environment. At the center of all these connections sits the act of drawing.

Before drawing took its seat at the center of these relationships, these relationships gave birth to drawing as a practice. I did not realise it at the time but relationships with friends, students, practices, collaborations, and certain events all had some part or the other to play in the earlier stages of making drawing into a practice before it became a method.

Figure. 7

Drawing connection with environment, self and others



Drawing by author

Figure. 8

Drawing on site



Photograph of author by a friend,
Sahyr Sayed, 2021

Figure. 9

Drawing on site



Hamza Bajwa (right), co-founder of the
Lahore Sketch Group and I in a Public
Park, 2021

It is hard to find your place in your country when that country upholds values of a

“dominator culture” (hooks, 2009). In Pakistan this culture disguises as an epitome of Muslim values, spreading them through fear. Since 2018 Pakistan has witnessed a self-organised effort to carry out *Aurat* (Women’s) March every year on International Women’s Day. I reflect on what the march was performing in my solitary movement through the streets. The march connected several voices from several bodies throughout the country. This movement started a momentum of women and other genders redefining their standpoint perspectives together and on an individual level. It is a significant event that has vastly countered the dominant knowledge structure of the country. The movement has been vital in pushing for feminist consciousness. As discussed earlier in Methodology, the first time the March was held, it was met with great anger. The slogans on placards people held were highly criticised as being shameful to our culture. The one slogan that is to date criticised was *Mera Jism, Meri Marzi* (My Body, My Choice).

The word *jism* caused a moment of fleshpoint where those who objected did not stop and think about what the march was about. The immediate reaction to the word showed how deeply it is rooted. Usually when we talk of fleshpoints we think about those moments when the body freezes and does not immediately know what to do. In this case, because I refer to the fleshpoints of those who objected coming perhaps a more dominant position as most were men, their fleshpoint ignited anger. There was no moment of freezing over, it was more about letting it spill out. This shows which bodies have the ease of expressing anger and which bodies turn to internalise it.

The simple act of marching together created unwanted attention and feelings of unease, hindering the process of engaging with one’s surroundings. The first march was a small group of people that walked for a short time from one point of the city to the other. The streets, after being occupied over time by regular crowds of one gender, have now come to be defined as more open and comfortable for that gender alone. Beebeejaun (2016) explains how fighting

over spaces reveals certain hierarchies that are keen on keeping a certain version of places in the city active and the very idea of the public itself is dependent on excluding certain groups of people. The march was a challenge to the existent power relations in the country. By walking we break and reestablish our balance with our surroundings, states O'Rourke (2013). O'Rourke gives various examples of how artists, dancers and performers have used this simple act of body movement to create their artwork. Often this art invites others to participate with them. Walking blurs the distinction between artists and the audience making this activity a movement of one organism. The women's march brought this similar energy forward where the group became one force.

The act of walking is a visual one (Solnit, 2001). Not only is the walker moving through different sites, but that walker is also a sight. The physical presence as in the case of the march becomes an equally relevant visual as the experience of the walker. How bizarre, that a march that only happened once in a year, unsettled so many. The role of the senses in ethnography beyond the vision "as we use not only our eyes, but also our minds, bodies, genders, personalities and histories" (Scarles, 2010, p.907). Nonetheless, the sense of vision plays an important role in the act of drawing because it creates a duality of connection. First, is what I see and who I see to draw, and the second visual aspect is when I am being seen as I draw. The being and doing gender aspect of research is integral here. My female presence comes to be confronted.

Different genders relate differently to their bodies. In *Space Invaders* (2004) Nirmal Puwar theorises the men and women's connection to their bodies. Women and other genders occupy public spaces much differently than men in Pakistan. A large part of the population believes in segregated social structures that state the private sphere is where her place is. Whereas the public is for the man. This worldview through the strict gender binaries also ends up isolating other genders. As explored by feminist standpoint theorists like Patricia Hills Collins, men

grow up to relate to the outside whereas women grow up to stay connected to the home. Puwar takes these realities further and maintains that women are tied down to the physicality of their bodies whereas men feel they can overcome the limits of the body. Men reject the body, and instead existence is centered on rationality and logic. Hence, “women are their bodies, but men are not, and women are therefore destined to inferiority in all spheres requiring rationality” (Puwar, 2004, p.16). Puwar makes this connection to the public sphere where the connectivity of the female to her body is then seen with a distrust and the body becomes “a site of unruly passions and appetite that might disrupt the pursuit of truth and knowledge” (2004, p.16). In my theoretical framework chapter, I discuss why Collins refers to women as stronger contenders for the standpoint theories. If the knowledge of women’s existence cannot be separated from their bodies, then it is vital to change this narrative by using the body as a site of knowledge making.

Building a standpoint of one’s own is not far from building a standpoint as a group and thus building a feminist consciousness. We come back to the relationship between the self, environment and others. When drawings start a cycle between these three entities, then drawing is a feminist method of generating a feministic consciousness. It is a feministic method because it is trying to counter the notion of how to be in my gender. Furthermore, drawing is an experience of situated knowledge production wherein the visual of my female body

Public Spaces of Lahore

Initial drawing locations were public spaces like the Lahore Zoo and mostly public parks. Such spaces were comparatively easier spaces to start to intervene in as they are already places of leisure. With and through the act of drawing, I started reflecting on walking in public parks. Public spaces in Pakistan are highly stratified by class and are sometimes segregated by gender (Joshi, 2019). Almost all places including those for leisure become divided depending on the

monetary consumption people can indulge in. Public parks, however, are still to a certain extent those spaces where different people from different backgrounds come to occupy together. Although the level of interaction is possibly less from the upper-middle and upper classes. Nonetheless, evening walks around parks are cherished by many. Despite being family-oriented places for leisurely activities even then there are restrictions on women occupying space in parks. They are rarely seen running, sitting or exercising by themselves or even in smaller groups for that matter without male companions or children to chaperon. “Women's demeanor in public is almost always full of a sense of purpose, one rarely sees them sitting in a park, standing at a street corner smoking or simply watching the world go by as men might” (Phadke et al., 2011, p.189). Women are seen moving about in marketplaces, crossing streets, waiting for public transport but their bodies are always in transit. They are outside by some necessity or the other. It is seldom one will see a woman by herself, sitting in a park, reading, lying down or doing nothing but “watching the world go by.” The exclusion of women in public spaces shows how the “‘rights’ are gendered”, Beebeejaun (2017, p. 323). Beebeejaun points out that even though there is so much violence against women, yet the city planning does not take this into account and try to make places safer for them than they are. In Pakistan for years and years, we have only ever thought to control women and their movement and not focus on how mobility can be made easier for them. To make every day ‘safer’ for them, certain places are segregated like smaller parks in different localities. In shared parks, some spaces like outdoor gyms are segregated. Other spaces within parks where women do not have to be conscious of movement, are the prayer areas. Although many women feel more comfortable in segregated spaces, yet this separation is counterproductive in the long run. It promotes the concept of control, allowing them certain designated spaces only and those also are few.

I did not start going to the park by myself until I was in my 20's and that too during a certain time of the day when the walking track receives more visitors. More people gave the

reassurance of some safety. Public parks are easier to sit in whether on the grass or other sitting spots built within them. Drawing became a self-appointed “purpose” (Phadke. et al, 2009). It became my reason to stop and distract myself from any other thought related to safety. The connection between the sketchbook and the object of observation helps me ground myself. Drawing gave me calmness of mind, where I could focus on the connection between myself and my environment. Solnit expands in *Wanderlust* (2001) about the act of walking, being closely knitted with the process of thinking. The drawing of lines is like entangling my inner structure, redrawing through actual act of drawing. Erasing and redrawing or drawing over lines are actions that are practically taking shape and metaphorically serving as an understanding of the act of drawing causing a shift within oneself.

The beginning of drawing in Lahore was not meant as interaction with commuters. The long history of interactions with the male gender which ended up as an uncomfortable experience, made me always wary of interactions. My body already sees it coming and I shut down any interaction if it were to unfold. It was important to block interactions because I did not mean to connect to others, I meant to connect with myself and my city. It was a personal interaction, a personal dialogue. To adopt a standpoint is to adopt a dialogue. Even though I begin the research through the lens of my standpoint, the thesis is a result of a series of dialogues. The ideas and the artistic practice developed from a dialogue with other theorists as well as other people; friends, colleagues, students, who I engage with through my every day or artistic activities. The act of drawing is a dialogue with spaces and those who pass by in those spaces. However, even if I closed myself off to interactions, some forms of interactions were still taking place. Even observing and drawing were interactions.

There is a seriousness of the drawer’s position. With my materials, it seems like my gender is performing a serious task or a job. Having the sketchbook in hand created a distance from the surrounding yet rooted me in that surrounding. It created a safe space for me, a private

space. On the streets women's bodies are cautious of movement because they are made to feel that once they are outside, they do not have the right to a personal sense of space. Here drawing was maintaining my private space. I noticed that even though some men wanted to interact, yet their interactions were limited. They were also distracted because the drawing was catching the attention instead. The presence of the female body is made more accepted by the drawing that unfolds. I draw from observation. It is important for me that the drawings are lifelike or academic. It attracts others and makes my interactions different than to how they might be if I were in public spaces by myself.

Figure. 10

Drawing at a public park



Drawing by author, Lahore, 2021

Figure. 11

Drawing at a public park



Drawing by author, public park, Lahore, 2016

One interaction I had was when I was drawing in a crowded boutique on the first few days of seasonal sale. It was intensely crowded, people rushing to grab the best discounts they could get their hands on. I was drawing the women in the shop who were circled around a sales assistant when another sales assistant came up to me asked me if I could stop the drawing. I asked why. He responded to imply that drawing the women was not a decent act. His colleague

then pulled him away saying that he should just let it be. It may appear like an odd interaction, but it was not that surprising either. Some people believe that drawing or painting people or bodies is not part of the Muslim faith. It could also be that he felt it was not decent to draw women's *jism*. If he asked me to stop drawing for these reasons, did his learnt masculinity feel the need to 'protect' the women's bodies I was drawing? This is the same sense of protection that women are told is needed for them if they are to go outside. If women feel they need to be protected, then men are the protectors.

Figure. 12



Drawing by author, public park, Lahore, 2016

Figure. 13



Drawing by author, Railway Station, Lahore, 2018

Drawings that I make are of people around me. In most cases I do not feel the need to make facial features as I am more concerned about the way bodies sit or move rather than who they are. Moreover, bodies are usually in movement, therefore, I usually trace the figure with one or few continuous lines with a pen or a pencil. Facial features require more detail and more time. Drawings like figure.11 are observations into the ways in which bodies occupy spaces. The men can unwind their body far more than women, stretch it as much as they want without anyone caring. For women, the body can be stretched only to a certain extent. Even a relaxed posture is limited. The sitting posture mostly remains intact even if feet can stretch out.

Yet other drawings like figure. 10 are detailed sketches. These longer drawing moments hold me to my environment. The duration is longer and if I am sitting on the grass, I need to keep adjusting my posture. I need to stretch my legs out or stretch my arms. Drawing lets me take up space. The art or the art methods that form from being in the city “help to think in terms of bodies that are not fixed but who practice emplacement, inhabitation, construction and thereby make sense in movement and in relation to other bodies” (Trafi-Prats & Castro-Varela, 2022, p.4). The movements of the drawer stretching, moving the drawing material, the drawing unfolding, people looking and moving away are all interactions that ever so slightly bend or change from the normal movements take place.

I was asked by a professor how I can distance myself from the drawing and see the act through a different perspective to better understand the findings. This meant to distance the self from the act. I maintain that distancing will create a disconnect. The position I maintain is what leads to the findings. For me this activity creates a distance. It separates me from the environment whilst maintaining the connection to the environment. The act of drawing is a way that I not only experience my reality “but also witness other realities” (Gurung, 2021, p. 109).

Drawing in public spaces in Pakistan even if they are leisurely spaces like parks is not always a comfortable experience. This discomfort is not only relevant to my experience of drawing in Pakistan. I experienced this discomfort when I drew in the metro station in Helsinki too. It can sometimes be a physical discomfort because the place where one is sitting may not always have seating or the ideal weather conditions. When I draw in places that are not meant to be stopped in, only transitioned through like the metro station, then I become a spectacle. There is discomfort of people watching me as they go by. Tervahartiala (2019) notes another form of discomfort that could be the sudden feeling of not wanting to draw or hesitation of putting pencil to paper. For me it is a great disappointment when a drawing is not coming out in the likeness of what I am drawing. Here, Tervahartiala (2019) echoes the common advice amongst auto ethnographers of staying with the discomfort. These forms of discomfort are part of the process. In my case, the discomfort is important because it helps me to realise more substantially why my body and gender behave the way they do. Drawing “is a conscious effort to stand with instability, to represent the ineffable” (Rambo, 2007, p.541). Staying with the discomfort builds a language which goes on to understand the subtle ways in which power relations function between bodies.

Reflections on my drawing practice in Lahore explores the process that led to drawing as a research method. Although I embark on drawing outdoors as a solitary activity, admittedly an important and integral to the self, I contest that it is an artistic practice that explores the collective experiences of the city. “Collective life in the city could be creatively reinvented through an art practice that opens up and grapples with questions such as, how space is made, maintained and sensed in the city?” (Trafi-Prats, L., & Castro-Varela, A., 2022, p.2). Drawing is a feminist practice. This is because it is a method that stirs a feminist consciousness (Hills, 1990). This feminist consciousness counters the collective conscious brought about by influential institutions of knowledge production.

ESTABLISHING DRAWING AS A METHOD

I focus on two main drawing interventions in this chapter. Both were carried out after I had started framing my practice into the context of drawing as a method of being and doing gender. One took place in Lahore and the other in Helsinki. Although the one in Lahore took place before the Helsinki one, I choose to discuss it later because I want to start with a solitary experience and move on to one that took shape of a group. This is a way to present the capacity of the method, from individual to a collective platform. After understanding and contextualizing drawing as a method of being and doing gender, I wanted to test it out and understand to the extent to which it could be used.

Finland was a very different culture from mine. Being away from home I realised how I had internalised certain aspects of being and how they played out in my new environment. When I arrived in Finland, I was excited to explore public spaces with far less restriction on movement. Yet even here in the beginning, I found it strangely difficult to aimlessly wander, without a proper destination in mind. There were several hiking pathways close to where I initially found housing and glorious nature all around accompanied by ideal weather conditions of long summer nights. The idea of completely being without an indication or recognition of a destination in mind was an unfamiliar way to travel on foot. In a way I was getting used to the safety of public spaces. Here I connected with what Phadke et al. (2009) meant when they referred to women always having a purpose to be outside. My body was so trained to have this purpose or a proper destination.

Slowly I became conscious of the ways in which my body moved through my new environment. I became interested in the metro stations after an intervention my colleagues and I prepared for as a final assignment for the course Art, Activism and Civil Engagement in November 2021. We dressed in drag and took the “show on the road.” While we danced and

played music inside the metro, we observed the ways in which passengers interacted with us. Soon after we boarded, metro security tracked us down and escorted us out of one of the metro stations. Even though we were taking up a lot of space in the metro, we were not interfering with any commuter but keeping to ourselves. This interaction got us thinking about the policing of metros in Finland. It led me to choose a metro station as a site for performing drawing. Metro stations are designed and monitored in such a way that people only pass through them and do not pause. From my previous drawing excursions in Lahore, I am conscious of the act of pausing in space that does not encourage it. This collective knowledge gained aided my drawing practice. Furthermore, one comes across several different types of groups in the metro. I have always seen other passengers including myself retract from the drunk individuals. There is a common understanding that we avoid their gazes and just keep to ourselves. Some observations during metro commutes highlighted the ways in which one is singled out in the environments we come to occupy.

Drawing in the Metro Station

I chose Helsinki Central Railway Station's metro station as a site to draw in. This is a busy metro station because of its location. Helsinki Central Railway Station connects different modes of transport like trains, trams, buses, metro and taxis. In March 2022 I did my first drawing intervention. I sat and drew on a weekday for three hours from 16:30 to 19:30. I selected this time slot as it is usually rush hour and so more chances of interacting with different groups of people. The first time I drew in this metro, I took up my place on a sheet on the floor, resting my back against the wall. I was facing the escalators and I was in sight of anyone going up and down. Apart from consciously selecting the place and my position in the metro station, I stepped into this performance without thinking of the results I wanted to see. This was a very different culture compared to Lahore, so I did not wish to impose any of my expectations on the results.

Figure. 14

Drawing at the metro station, Central Railway Station, Helsinki



Taken by a friend, Kacii. I ran into while drawing in the metro station, 2021

In the metro I started on a blank sheet of A2 size paper, using a pencil to sketch out the basic map of the part of the metro that was in my view. The first experience led to a few interesting interactions that inspired me to continue with a second drawing performance. One of the interactions I had was with a Finnish artist. He expressed he was pleased to see someone drawing in public spaces. He said we as artists don't do enough drawing outside in public spaces. I got to see some watercolour paintings in the sketchbook he was carrying. While we were chatting, a drunk person came towards me and commented on my soul being in trouble. I'm hardly a puritan but this was clearly drunken gibberish. He briefly went away, seemed like he boarded the metro but then he came back. This time repeating what he had said but a little more forcefully. My immediate reaction was to look for security. The artist who was still there asked the drunk person in Finnish to leave. The drunk person, however, was determined to get his message across, he came closer, his finger pointing at me, and he stepped over my sketch book. This was quite literally stepping out of the boundary. I almost moved from my place

when he came that close, but I remained in my position. At this point the artist/metro friend threatened the drunk person, that he would call the security. The drunk person put up his hands as if in surrender and said, 'I'm going, I'm going!' I breathed a sigh of relief. I didn't see him again.

This was a significant encounter. It demonstrated what Butler (1997) explores about power and how it makes its place in the mind in *The Psychic Life of Power*. The bodies that interfere with the smooth running of the metro are clearly excluded in some ways. When power is snatched away, human beings turn to ways in which they can extract that power back. We all need to feel in control, it is our right as people. The drunk person saw his chance to feel in control with me because I wasn't moving, and because I didn't look like I am from Finland or perhaps even because of my gender. Internalised power norms were externalising in this instance of interaction. This person knew he was not welcome in that space. If he sat on the floor like I did the chances of security coming by to talk to him would be much higher than in my case. At one point during the intervention the security personnel passed me by, they simply smirked at me sitting on the cold floor of the metro and walked away. Perhaps they thought I was doing something silly. The silliness helps the intervention. It is not a cause for alarm. It is sneaky but it does not do what the drawing is trying to do.

The abstract shapes that power takes are exposed when drawing intervenes. Drawing grounded me in a place that was uncomfortable to be in as the only person not moving. It captured moments when and how power works and it becomes the tool to stay with these moments. Slowing down through practice highlights the intricate web of power and vulnerability. We occupy public spaces in hierarchal positions. This relationship of one to the environment and then one to others is built and maintained in repetition of behavior. To understand everyday power dynamics, we first need to define power. Here Butler helps by dissecting different theories on power and the way power is produced, builds a relationship and

the ways in which it is maintained. Butler claims the subject becomes dependent on the very system that creates him. One must attach themselves to the system to exist. “A subject is not only formed in subordination, but that this subordination provides the subject’s continuing condition of possibility” (Butler, 1997, p.8) She terms this as a “passionate attachment.” The drunk person too displays his “passionate attachment” when he uses similar tools as those in power have used to take his share of the power back. Those for whom power is forcefully taken away will at some point seek out other vulnerable subjects to take back that same power they have lost. Butler addresses this process that comes to play out in our minds when power is taken away, in another sense, how does a subject become a subject? Can we have order without excluding certain people or is control necessary for the civil running of a country?

When we talk of power, we assume two bodies in a hierarchal relationship. Butler (1997) notes Hegel positioning these bodies as the lord and the bondsman. The bondsman’s labour is what fuels the lord’s existence. The bondsman’s labor produces an object which once it is created, gets the mark of ownership from the lord, hence, the object is never really in the possession of the bondsman. Thus, the labour of the bondsman is the reflection of its subordination. The bondsman becomes the lord’s body and in this condition the lord disconnects from the memory of creating the bondsman. This clever interaction where the bondsman’s body is “othered,” the connection between the lord and the bondsman is rejected. When this happens, power seems to come from some undefined source, but it is now part of the subject’s identity. To understand this complex relationship, we must think about the bondsman’s autonomy and whether it comes to recognise and exercise it. The bondsman comes to recognise his individuality through feeling of fear which comes to be because of threat to autonomy. As the subject seeks its own existence and being, it turns “against itself.” Butler theorises that this process leads to an unsatisfied mourning which can lead to rage. This means that when one’s autonomy is forcefully taken away then that phenomenon will cause some

level of emotions. Could it then be that the drunk individual's actions were not just a matter of drunkenness but something akin to anger had stirred?

Figure. 15

Drawing intervention, Helsinki



Figures. 15, 16 & 17 are tills from a video made in the Central Railway Station Metro, Helsinki, 2022
Film credits: Kai Nikolai Nordfors

Figure. 16



Figure. 17



Figure. 18

Intervening in public spaces, Lahore



Stills from a collaborative video titled *Aik Nerala Shehr, Shehr Ke Anadar Nehr, Nehr Ke Beech Mein Aag*, Anushka Rustomji & Zara Asgher, 2017, Film credits: Hammas Wali

In 2017 my friend, Anushka Rustomji and I, collaborated on a video work titled *Aik Nerala Shehr, Shehr Ke Anadar Nehr, Nehr Ke Beech Mein Aag*. We made the video in two different locations in Lahore. One a pedestrian pathway next to a busy street and the other a public park. In figure. 18 we can be seen sitting on the side street. When I thought about executing the metro intervention, I followed a similar pattern to this video. By this I meant to only interact with the space by being in it and not to create interactions at will. From our film I also learnt more about the filming process. Kai, my videographer kept moving while filming, trying to be one of the other commuters. I also mention Anushka and my video to emphasis on the collective nature of solitary actions. An action follows another action and it is important to be conscious of these to whatever degree it is possible, because through them we stir our own consciousness, one that is different to what the normative knowledge institutions portray.

In the second intervention I went to the same metro station and sat for two hours finishing the same drawing. I changed my sitting location. I sat more in the center rather than the corner of the area where the escalators are located. When I was drawing, I realised that the way the metro station is designed, people move in a line-oriented kind of fashion; moving back and forth from the metro to the escalators along the walls of the station. Of course, there are moments when people pause, wait, occupy different positions or look around but these are actions that have a purpose. Once I positioned myself in the center this design shifted a bit. People saw me on the floor (the only person in that station who was not moving) and came near to see what I was drawing. The curiosity of the drawing also catches the eye of the passersby and interactions are triggered. Some bodies broke from the designed way of commuting and formed a different path.

One of the first interactions I had during my second drawing session was with two teenagers carrying skateboards. They commented that they enjoyed the drawing, and they asked immediately if “they” had a problem with me being here. ‘They’ referred to the metro security. Then one claimed, “I guess you are not doing anything wrong.” They shared that they had lost their friend who had got into a spot of trouble with the security. There is no skateboarding allowed inside the metro stations and he decided to bend the rules. They did not know where he had gone. Their comments were interesting. Again, I was reminded of drawing on the floor of the metro was a silly activity that did not elicit any response from the authorities.

During another interaction, a person came up to me. He did not seem drunk, but his behavior was a little odd. He saw me drawing and mumbled something I could not understand pointing to the part of the metro I was drawing. He did not seem threatening in any way, unlike the drunk person during the first drawing intervention. He bent over my drawing, looking carefully at what had been captured. Then he asked for a colour pencil and then a second one. He drew features on the back of a person’s head where I had not rendered the hair yet. It was

quite comical that he saw a face there.

Figure. 19

Detail of metro drawing



Figure. 20

Metro drawing

Detail of drawing by author, made during the intervention into the metro station, 2022



Drawing by author, made during the intervention into the metro station, 2022

Other interactions I have had with commuters were mostly polite smiles or

compliments. It was interesting to see who chose to step out of their established line of commute and interact with me. I met quick greetings from a few familiar faces too. But most of the people I interacted with are not those I ordinarily meet in my everyday life in Helsinki. Thus, the drawing process opens possibilities to interact with people that are not like oneself. Those from various other backgrounds and cultures. Moreover, the drawing itself became a conversation as it became the places where several stories were captured. Moments that I have not shared but were still being drawn.

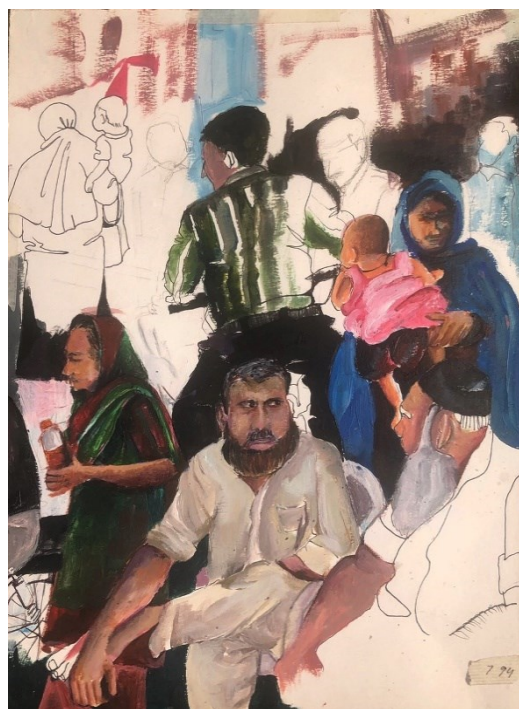
Anarkali Project

In 2020 I was invited to participate in a project focused on artistic intervention, *Anarkali is Alive*. It was funded by the Worlds Monument Fund. It was an addition to a larger, ongoing project to record the history and map out this part of the city. Anarkali Bazaar is a popular site for students at nearby colleges. It is through Anarkali that students, particularly girls, become comfortable with walking around in nearby public spaces. It was during my time as an art student, after countless trips to *Anarkali* and neighboring sites, when I first realised how important it is to experience the city by walking through it. Women are prime consumers in *Anarkali*, yet they don't truly occupy that space. Their movements are planned, their visits to the marketplaces are structured. The marketplace is a prime location for shopping for any festival, or weddings. It is crowded with shops selling fabric, shoes, jewelry and other accessories. Around shops corners are small shops selling snacks and sometime seating to take breaks from the shopping day. These breaks too are, however, scheduled in a way. Women stop there to get a rest, but it is monitored by time. It is time to get back to the shop for more exploring or it is time to get back home, or it is time to go elsewhere. Time is of the essence. They are not sitting foregoing the concept of time as men might. Men also go about their business and their daily chores but when a male body is seen at ease, it is more at ease and less

constrained with time.

The initial drawings and photographs were meant to show the comfort postures of the bodies in the marketplace. Being in public spaces engages all senses and makes one more aware of one's own body and how it absorbs experiences of movement. My intervention was a mural painting. I originally meant to carry out the mural painting with two of my freshly graduated Cambridge International A levels' Art & Design students. I had worked with Alisha and Sandaleen, amongst their other peers in a wall painting in their school and so I knew well their work habits. The working days clashed with my travel dates to Finland, so I arranged for the two of them to carry it out on their own.

Figure. 21



Drawing by author, *Anarkali Bazaar*, Lahore, 2021

As they were female my first concern was for their safety. I knew they were confident and passionate young artists, yet I wanted to ensure they were not alone when they worked on the streets of *Anarkali*. The spot for the painting was also not the common place where women

shopped, it was a location where hardware and various mechanical parts were sold. It was occupied more with men. The knowledge of occupation of public spaces is inherited (Ahmed, 2007). The memories of my experience of a female body made me more cautious for the students who were going to work in that space. This inheritance does not only come through the spaces we occupy but through memories we share about these spaces. Being and doing gender is also inherited.

Sehr Jalil, the curator of the project, arranged to check up on them during their work process. We selected the morning time slot on the weekend. The work started on Saturday morning and finished the day before noon. Even on the weekend Anarkali is a busy site. Sometimes certain shops are open on Sundays too although they may open later in the day. Luckily, one student's mother volunteered to be with them throughout the two days they painted. They were also requested to wear traditional clothing. Safety was thought about by different minds together. All these considerations are typical if a female body is to occupy a public space. "Becoming a girl is here about how you experience your body in relation to space" (Ahmed, 2017, p.25). The older women involved in this project knew from past experiences what it takes to maintain the safety. Sandaleen shared she was glad her mother was there to oversee them working. It was equally reassuring for me, and I am grateful her mother took the time to be there. She also mentioned her mother kept pulling their shirts down from behind or fixing their *dupattas*. This chain of securing the workspace in public is also a chain of feminist consciousness.

During Sehr's visit to the site of drawing, she was asked by a stranger to straighten up her shirt from behind. Such forms unsolicited advice is common amongst people in Pakistan when it comes to women and their clothing. I wanted some clarity on this interaction, so I contacted Sehr. She said she did not fully recall but the stranger was probably a woman. In an instant she was able to recall other instances where women had felt the need to police other

women about clothing. Sehr mentioned a memory of being asked by woman in public transport why she was not wearing a *dupatta*.

Such words of advice flowing from complete strangers shows the commonly shared knowledge about how to behave like women. Throughout the planning of the work and its execution it was different female bodies whether strangers or other relations that were alert. These interactions show how the female gender takes up space in public places in Pakistan. The interactions display the bodily habits of gender that we do and be every day. “Public spaces take shape through the habitual actions of bodies, such that the contours of space could be described as habitual” (Ahmed, 2007, p.156). Ahmed talks of spaces here not to explore how bodies take on their shape but how spaces are shaped by the bodies that “inhabit” them. It becomes habitual that certain bodies will feel more comfortable moving through public spaces than others. Moreover, dominant bodies do not feel the need to think about the consequences of their movement to the same extent. In contrast, female and other bodies who do not fall into this category, are always aware of their movement and the movement of other similar genders too. Ahmed goes on to make the claim if habits of bodily movements shape spaces, then those bodily movements can be changed to change the nature of spaces. Anarkali drawing intervention displays this shift in the normative ways of taking up space. The girls were not passing by in this space, they were occupying it. Their movement was different when they occupied the area.

We exchanged notes once the mural was done. Alisha and Sandaleen, were quite satisfied with the result. They related that they enjoyed the experience of working on it. Sehr who had stopped by a couple of times during the project, mentioned she was pleased to see how the girls had indulged in the work “with so much passion.” Indeed, I saw that in the pictures that were taken during the process. It was not only about the drawing that was there after the painting but the act of making art was equally important. The normative movement

changed when the girls extended themselves into the public space, stretched to reach the higher area of the wall, climbed on stools, spread their materials everywhere and hence, took up space. Even if it was a matter of two days, the visual in some sense is absorbed by those who passed by. In some small way, art making shifted the cyclic relations of self, environment and others. This was true for all those who encountered art making, not just the artists.

Figure. 22

Drawing in Anarkali



Figure. 23

Drawing in Anarkali



Figures. 22 & 23- Alisha (left) and Sandaleen (right) working on the mural, Anarkali Bazaar, Lahore, 2021

Photographs by Alisha and Sandaleen

Figure. 24

Anarkali Mural



Completed mural, Photograph by a friend, Sahyr Sayed, *Anarkali Bazaar*, Lahore, 2021,

The drawing I had designed was simply women sitting as if in a street side snack shop. I wanted to make them look carefree, having time on their side. The sign in Urdu read: An Invitation to Women to Come and Gather Here for a Few Minutes. Gather because it is your Right, Gather Because You Can. I was told later by Sandaleen, that a lot of passersby stopped to see when the artwork was underway and asked about it. During the intervention there was a man who came up to them and demanded to know who had authorized this painting. He declared that the authority of the college nearby does not approve of this process. The wall was part of the college. However, the area the girls were drawing in was isolated from the main college entrance It towards one side where several street sellers used it to display their merchandise. Sehr was called and talked to this man on the phone. She told him to let the authorities of the college know about her. He left and was not heard from again. Sandaleen claimed, "The guy was so aggressive for no reason." It could be speculated that the reason

could simply be that the man was not used to seeing girls taking up space as they wished. They were not there for shopping or any other activity that women carry out in Anarkali. For me this is a similar interaction to the salesman discussed in the earlier chapter, who had asked me not to draw inside the clothing shop. These interactions are coming from an assumed superior position. This encounter brings up the question who gets be aggressive in public spaces?

Figure. 25

Completed Mural



Anarkali Bazaar, Lahore, 2021. Photograph by Alisha & Sandaleen

Figure 26

Anarkali Bazaar



Figure 27

Anarkali Bazaar



Figures 26 & 27 are photographs taken by the authors inside the *Anarkali Bazaar*, 2021

The man who objected to the painting perhaps had the same need to take back power

like the drunk man in the metro. It is interesting to note that even in different cultures, power comes to work in similar ways. In both cases the aggressive behavior displayed was by men. Even though we all absorb the power dynamics, the way we come to display them depending on our gender orientation is quite different. When Sehr was confronted by the woman who asked her to straighten up her shirt, it is an example of the female gender's acting out of learnt power relations. The female gender may feel unable to physically or verbally take back power. She may experience the lack of space to take control. When patriarchal values are internalised women end by policing women. A lot of women can relate to what Sehr experienced by the stranger.

The drawing intervention relates to my second research question which concerns the extent of drawing as a method of knowledge production. Through this process the girls took up space in a different manner than they ordinarily do in public spaces. Drawing was activating a connection between them and their environment and others who were by standers, passerby or guardians like Sandaleen's mother or Sehr who checked up on them. Intervention in the public space never happens without risk "of contestation and reactions can then reveal the values attached to the artistic production" (Girel, 2015, p.4). The visuals of the drawers in both interventions are the artwork too. Through the act of drawing the drawers question the spaces and how they are used. Drawing in the public spaces showed how different genders absorb power relations. The act of drawing explores to what extent each gender can express these power relations, how and against whom?

During my drawing sessions I come across several people who interacted with me and the girls when they were drawing. Sometimes just to look, sometimes to compliment, and yet others who I even have conversations with. I might never see them again, but those moments of interaction define for me a sense of community. These are not fixed communities, meaning they do not exist and remain one unit. Here communities are defined as pockets or clusters of

people coming together, sharing, learning, and dispersing to form their own clusters. bell hooks (2003) comments that we often think about working with those from our community. We need to think about extending ourselves to others not like us. This means we are conscious that we do not end up promoting the same values that may suit our group not others.

Drawing as Resistance

The act of drawing disrupts the normative ways in which people interact with each other, which means the act of drawing is also an act of resistance. To think of drawing as resistance the meaning of violence needs to be considered. Through drawing I resisted the gender hierarchies that exist within public spaces of Lahore and Helsinki and as shown through the interactions sometimes it was met with a form of aggression. Moreover, I already had preconceived notions of violence before I intervened through drawing. These preexisting ideas made me cautious when my students had to draw in the public space. The connection between the self, body and environment is enveloped by our feelings. We feel a certain way towards our environment. We might fear our environment and others in our environment and so that feeling changes our connection to ourselves as well. On the other hand, if we relate the feeling of pleasure with our environment and pleasant encounters with others, then that leads to a different way of relating to ourselves. The way fear exists and the way it comes to be in our minds, are two separate realities intertwined. The combination of fear and autonomy comes to define violence and leisure. I investigate the core cyclic way of being which is formed by the interaction of self, environment and others. On the outer layer of this exists fear and violence and opposing outer side exists, autonomy and leisure.

Figure 28

Anarkali Bazaar

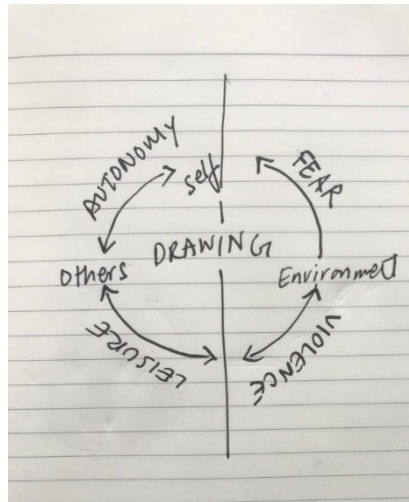


Diagram sketched by author, 2022

Phadke et al. (2009) in their book *Why Loiter*, express that pleasure is not considered as something to be fought for. They speak from the standpoint of well educated, employed, middle-class women. When such women ask for the right to the city as a place of comfort and enjoyment, it is assumed by many people that such women are asking for “too much”. They already have access to a better life in a country where violence against women is carried out daily.

Whether leisure is violently controlled or comes to be controlled because of the existence of violence, it becomes important to try to define violence and also non-violence. Judith Butler’s *The Force of Non-Violence* (2020) delves into how these terms play out in our everyday. Violence at first seems something that we all may oppose, with the same understanding of what it is. The difference between non-violence and violence should appear clear but the two become blurred when the definition of violence is manipulated to suit the pursuits of the powerful few. Authorities may maintain non-violence unless it is necessary to use violence

Non-violence is not necessarily an absence of aggression but a practice of bending that aggression in the direction of holding up values of equality and freedom. Aggression may have a negative reputation, but it is, in fact, vital for practices of equality. As Butler claims non-violence “Can be understood as a practice that not only stops a violent act, or a violent process, but requires a form of sustained action, sometimes aggressively pursued” (Butler, 2020, p.17). Similarly, the act of drawing is a practice that invites further practice from a solitary platform to collective ways of art making. The drawing needs to keep happening.

The fight for Public Space: When Personal is Political (Nogaideli, 2016) is a publication of articles that were compiled after the 5th International Gender Workshop organized by the South Caucasus Regional Office of the Heinrich Boell Foundation in Tbilisi, Georgia. One of the questions posed by the publication is “How can we fight for public space without waging war? Irem Yilmaz (2016) introduces some actions that were taken by feminists in Turkey that relate to women’s space out in the streets. One of these was called the Purple Needle where a group of women came to together to walk around areas that are primarily male dominated. They would hold placards, calling out sexual harassment on the streets, talked loudly about harassment and offered a purple needle to women to defend themselves. Purple Needle started a change that eventually also led to changes in the legal and institutional structures. It also gave basis for future NGO’s that helped women who were survivors of male violence. If we think of Butler here, would we term this form of action as violent or non-violent? Certainly, the needle symbol makes it violent, but I would also say it was not leading to actual violence but at the same time threatening to go there if their voices are not heard. In some cultures, the only way to be heard is to force oneself to be heard, to be non-violently aggressive.

One way would be to look at practices that appear ‘innocent’ enough not to meet with violence and the second would be to keep such practices going. I mention the word ‘silly’ to

describe certain moments in the thesis. Or the way the metro security personnel looked at me was perhaps suggesting what I was doing was a harmless, ‘silly’ activity. It is important to keep the silliness alive because it keeps alive the power of leisure. “Here is the thing: something starts unravelling when women start to enjoy themselves in public spaces...something twists and turns in our ideas of what is normal and what is possible” (Khatri, 2016, para.23). When an activity like drawing in public spaces or the *Anarkali* project takes place, we know that we did it once, and we can do it again. Leisure is fought against or thought of as irrelevant in the face of violence, but leisure is a power of its own. In the face of dominant power structures, letting yourself indulge in a leisure activity is political. *Aurat* march is a political movement, but it is one of leisure too. Before the march people gather to make posters and banners, there is excitement to take to the streets together. First and foremost, drawing is a leisure activity for me. My students enjoyed painting the mural. Their presence did not deter no matter who interacted with them. This determination is a feature of aggression that Butler talks of.

Dominant collective knowledge is far too layered a structure to unpack completely on a larger scale. Aiming to shift the political and/or social dynamics of power can be met with resistance from those who hold the seats of power. Hence, “subordinate groups have long had to use alternative ways to create independent self-definitions and self-valuations” (Collins, 1990 p. 252). The drawing actions that are discussed shift from pleasure to fear and from fear to pleasure. The fear for the self or for others does not abate but by occupying the spaces with leisure we can take control of how we process fear.

CONCLUSION

The act of drawing is a social engagement in that it does not force or demand any participation. It is a gentler manner of interacting with relations of power. It is a method of resisting normative ways of public functioning, but it does not come across as resistance. In this respect it is a disguise for an artistic activity that appears to be for the drawer. “Away from all attempts at manipulation, the artists’ aim is that of creating a different and nondiscriminatory form of interaction, a more casual relationship to art...The interest is not that of gathering audiences otherwise kept apart, but that of interacting with the bystanders and of accommodating...arts such as leisure, entertainment and gathering (in all of its forms, including simply being there)” (Girel, 2015, p.9). Drawing invites but does not force an invitation. Whenever two parties are in a conversation or interaction of sorts, like the drawer and the audience, power relations shift and there is an element of responsibility that is at play. It is also a matter of privilege who happens to intervene in public spaces in Pakistan and Finland. If it is a matter of privilege, then part of recognising this means it is a responsibility. It is a responsibility because I and others I know we can, what many other women cannot. I feel a feminist action is a responsibility, therefore, drawing is also a responsibility. In this conversation I, the drawer, try and take the responsibility. These new relationships and connections help me answer the question: to what extent can this act be used as a method for knowledge production? I also realised the ‘extent’ can be pushed. Drawing is adaptable. It adapted to Helsinki even if it started in Lahore. It makes me curious which other cultures can it be adapted to and what will it uncover?

Understanding movement of less dominant bodies is an active part of being and doing gender. Movement as the female body in Pakistan is restricted in public spaces. We learn how to avoid some areas over others. In other instances, our female body is required to make the

effort of movement. The move to confront an injustice because otherwise it may not be acknowledged (when my friend and I were called out for being too loud). Ahmed (2017) claims feminism means a movement in many senses of the word. A feminist consciousness “is what does not stand still but creates and is created by movement” (Ahmed, 2017, p.3). Feminism is a collective movement as well as an individual one. Even if we are not aware our individual movements influence each other. I contest drawing as a feminist tool which causes small “ripples in water, a small wave, possibly created by agitation from weather; here, there, each movement making another possible, another ripple, outward, reaching” (Ahmed, 2017, p.3). When the act of drawing unfolds and triggers interactions, a ripple is caused. The relations between the self, environment, and others, start orbiting around drawing and the drawer. In this situation, it is the activity of drawing that is changing the movement. In a way it is a response to the effort of movement a female body may need to make to call out an injustice.

The lifelikeness of the drawing unfolding draws (pun intended) in people. As was seen in the metro intervention, being in the middle of the station changed the flow of traffic to some extent. Passersby came for a closer look even if most of them did not stay long. Movement is thus being controlled by the drawing. When the male gaze such as that I experienced while growing up in Lahore is uncomfortable then this is that method through which the gaze is controlled in some respect. The position of the drawer allows me to exact my autonomy. I will be looked at if I am in the public spaces of Lahore. Through drawing I am looked at in my own terms as I am making myself a spectacle.

When I was outside on the streets to draw both in Lahore and Helsinki, I wondered about my position as the researcher, artist, and an educator. My gender and my artistic license, both allow me to pause and contemplate through making even though that same gender is subject to unpleasant interactions as well. If a different gender who is more discriminated against carries out the same activity, would they have a more difficult experience? In

understanding our limitations to spaces, we must also keep in mind our privilege. I acknowledge that my class and educational background might put me in a position where I have the privilege of occupying spaces in a particular manner. This recognition is important to hold the self-accountable for the space it is trying to take up. One must be conscious to not take space away from other genders while taking back theirs. The female gender is generally understood as less troublesome, and it could be why the metro security was not bothered to remove me. Had it been a drunk person occupying the floor, the consequences could be different. This also comes down to movement. The artistic license gives me a certain kind of right to be in this space. When the security personnel smiled and walked away, that smile was not one of warmth or friendliness, it was a smile that showed how I am indulging in an activity which is of no harm.

I mentioned earlier the discomfort of walking in public spaces because of limitations on movement. I try to make the connection of what led me to drawing but certain aspects are not completely definable or perhaps yet not defined. Some aspects are related to chance or luck. I happened to draw too. I happened to stay with the discomfort. But this leads me to wonder, with the presence of limitations, how much of a risk are we willing to take to connect with our environment? It also took effort to not hold on to unpleasant instances in the past of some of the same places, to create a delicate balance between being cautious yet carefree while moving around.

Drawing as a method of research creates interactions between people who might not ordinarily meet each other. Even if those interactions are not always pleasant, they influence both the drawer and the viewer. In this respect people from different backgrounds come together through the drawing process. However, in a place like Pakistan where violence is very real too, it comes down to which areas are safer to intervene in. The public spaces that I choose to expand and contract in have the capacity to expand like public parks or other areas of the

city. Depending on the area of the city I want to draw in, I still need to take account of what I am wearing. Even after years of drawing in public spaces, sometimes the discomfort can weigh down. The practice of drawing in public spaces made me more aware of myself and the position of the artist. I persisted in going out time and again because my role as the artist also allowed me to. Or rather art made that space for me. There is also a luxury here of not being outside if I do not want to. For many people it may not be a matter of choice.

In the Theoretical Framework chapter, I wrote about knowledge coming from positional perspectives. Haraway's (1988) concept of situated knowledge allows us to be responsible for what we observe out in the world and how we come to understand it. Through my writing I realise the collective standpoint that I maintain with others; friends, colleagues, family, and students, is a standpoint of women from a certain class. This thesis does not look deeply into the component of class which is important to dissect as well. The future drawing endeavors hope to be more focused on the class of the drawer and how can the method then be molded?

Standpoint is a means to self-evaluate our position in society. To further expand into class, I first needed to make sense of my own restrictions and privilege. They may be class oriented but they are real. Once we are conscious about our position and heal from our own experiences then only can we expand into areas which are not our direct experience. This consciousness is an integral element which allows the standpoint theorist or researcher to be aware of their standing alongside others.

As a drawer I may be vulnerable, but I am also in power. This personal relationship corresponds to the society perspective of the tie between power and vulnerability. I know I can easily vacate my drawing spot and be safe. Butler (2011) questions who are these bodies that can come together. Everybody has the right to occupy the streets, but does everybody get to occupy the streets? Even when we look back to the first Women's March that took place in

Lahore, Pakistan, women of a certain section of society had come together and that too was a small number. Over the years the effort has been made to include people from different walks of life but there are still those who are left out and how then do we make sense of their absence at the gathering? They exist but they remain outside the circle, and we need to again think who gets to exercise their right to the streets? However, just because they are not seen doesn't mean that they are not politically charged either. Butler (2011) maintains assemblies don't only stand up for the individuals who are present, but their presence makes space for others, with time and persistence, that circle grows. Butler brings up the question why certain bodies are "...excluded from the realm of the political" (Butler, 2011, p.6). What keeps the passive body from becoming active, what powers are at work when the former is prevented from spilling into the latter? From the collection of the interactions from both these interventions, the act of drawing has a scope of extending from the personal activity to the collective.

During my thesis I have focused primarily on the process of drawing or the act of drawing. However, the outcome of visuals also produces knowledge and understanding of the process. When moving through public spaces it is not always possible to finish the drawings. I add in details or render in images in my own time. This is also an important aspect of understanding the experience of drawing outdoors. Because it can be overwhelming to move, draw, experience and articulate, working on the drawings afterwards is a way of reflecting on the experience. It is a way of staying with what the body felt while I was outdoors. Showing and relating the stories I captured in the metro and other areas to friends, professors and acquaintances, helped me to understand drawing as a method. Images are part of answering the research question as I use them to show that what led to drawing was a personal as well as collective process.

Because the thesis comes from the interaction of the self, environment, and others, it is hard to take away the researcher's presence from the process. In a more traditional setting, the

researcher's role is singular. Being and doing gender "is both an external and internal operation". (Wickramasinghe, 2009, p.96). Gender ontology is internal as it is a way of being self-reflective and self-aware of one's identity. And externally it means our connections and relationships to the outside world. This personal ontology can become a murky condition as it is an unconscious and conscious process. "The subjectivity of the researcher can be engaged through the practice of reflexivity, the method of consciously including and constructing the role of the researcher in the research and writing up process" (Wickramasinghe, 2009, p.55) The individual may not always be clear on how to make sense of such an ontology. However, including the element of reflexivity pertains to the researcher as critically conscious of their presence in their research as well as being able to reflect on the consequences of the action during the research process. In this case I propose drawing as a physical act that creates a situation where the self becomes alert of oneself, others, and the societal conditions of being. Drawing is a practical tool to act on this reflexivity.

Reflecting on my position as the drawer also led me to think about the responsibility or the ethics around the making of images. As I mentioned earlier in *Drawing as a Safe Space*, I hardly ever make people's facial features. This was partly because moving with a sketchbook or capturing people moving makes it difficult to bring in all the details. However, I also acknowledge that people become too conscious if they feel like they are being drawn. Consent becomes tricky to handle. I maintain that I try to make myself the focus of the intervention, even during the video performance, it was my body that was constant and unmoving yet others I am interacting are part of the film too. Even if I cannot resolve the matter of ethics of images, that practicing reflexivity leads to safer future practices.

The study of power relations is important because it shapes the ideologies that decide who is to be believed in social situations. "We need a deposit system to show the scale of sexism" (Ahmed, 2017, p. 30). We construct this "deposit system" when we link our

experiences and memories to those of others. These links form the chain of feminist consciousness. This is a consciousness that is formed as a challenge to the dominant systems of knowledge production. Collins (1990) notes that even the Black women scholars who are well versed in scientific research methodologies, still turn to their lived experiences as well as those of others like them. She compares knowledge with wisdom. Knowledge denotes academic learning, what the formal institutions have taught us. Drawing is a tool that adds to the understanding of such knowledge structures. It opens a new way of interacting with the self, environment and others and adds to the feminist consciousness.

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