

A Critical Pedagogy of Place: Learning through the Body

Altha J. Cravey and Michael Petit

The article provides a pedagogical strategy that incorporates feminist geographic understandings of space, place, and time to advance feminist analytics of societal power. It describes an historically situated campus field trip at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill that focuses on the long-term struggle for women to gain access to the university. In doing so, it provides a template for other feminist teachers interested in an experiential approach to student learning that helps students understand the operation of systems of social control. The article argues for a critical pedagogy of place that examines familiar places on a campus in which students' lives are already situated, and it demonstrates how this approach helps students build on the knowledge they already hold to discover connections among space, knowledge, and power for themselves. The analytic lens of place, space, and time, coupled to specific historical and contemporary sociocultural conflicts, allows students to articulate their everyday life experiences to broader historical and contemporary structures of power, while at the same time developing a deeper appreciation of how spatialized power dynamics govern human bodies.

Keywords: educational access / feminist geography / pedagogy / place / power / regulation of sexuality / space

In *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire ([1970]2000) suggests that “the starting point for organizing the program content of education . . . must be the present, existential, concrete situation” (85). His comment speaks directly to the everyday importance of place, for our embodied experience of place is fundamental to each individual’s present, existential, concrete situation. All individuals are always already situated in place, and it is through our spatial and temporal experiences in places that we define, at least in part, who we are: I am here,

©2012 Feminist Formations, Vol. 24 No. 2 (Summer) pp. 100–119

not there; it is now, here in this place, not a hundred years ago or sometime in the future, although I can imaginatively place myself “there.”¹

The purpose of this article is to bring feminist geographic understandings of place, space, and time to bear on specific pedagogical strategies that take an experiential approach to student learning.² We offer a description of a place-based, historically situated campus field trip at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (UNC) as a way to create a situation in which students discover connections among space, knowledge, and power for themselves, and do so by critically examining familiar places on a campus in which their lives are already situated. We deploy what Gerald Graff (1992) has termed “teach the conflicts,” a pedagogical strategy that Jeffrey Williams (2008) suggests is “on the order of John Dewey’s early-twentieth-century imperative to base education on experiential learning rather than rote recitation” (29). The field trip offers a way to move beyond the banking model of education in which professors fill the supposedly empty heads of students, toward a problem-posing model in which students develop their power, in Freire’s words, “to perceive critically the way they exist in the world with which and in which they find themselves; they come to see the world not as a static reality, but as a reality in process, in transformation” ([1970]2000, 70–71).

Teaching through place is a powerful pedagogical tool. Places induce affect by engaging the senses and emotions. The combined analytic lens of place, space, and time, coupled to specific historical and contemporary sociocultural conflicts, allows students to articulate their everyday life experiences to broader historical and contemporary structures of power. At the same time, they can develop a deeper appreciation of how spatialized power dynamics govern human bodies. A place-based approach allows students to examine how social inequalities—gendered, sexed, raced, and classed—are produced and re-inscribed at various geographic scales, from the local to the national, and in various social and cultural settings. “Critical pedagogy,” Peter McLaren (2005) has written, “needs to move in the direction of challenging new carceral systems of social control through the development of a pedagogy of space” (93). We concur with McLaren’s political project and suggest that any pedagogy of space also requires consideration that humans operate in spaces that are experienced as places in time. We deploy the term “critical pedagogy of place,” and our emphasis is on *critical*. That is, we endeavor to make localized structures of power visible, demonstrate their connections to wider frames of domination like nationalism and imperialism, and examine the effects of power so as to denaturalize oppression and inequality. By defining *critical* in this way, we also highlight the relationality of place to its embedded contexts. Places teach, yet the things they teach can seem transparent, natural, and can therefore be taken for granted.

Michel Foucault ([1977]1995) provides a key theoretical insight into understanding the use of space as a carceral system of social control. In *Discipline and Punish*, he describes Jeremy Bentham’s 1788 design for a Panopticon as an

enclosed, segmented space, observed at every point, in which individuals are inserted in a fixed place, in which the slightest movements are supervised, in which all events are recorded, . . . in which power is exercised without division, according to a continuous hierarchical figure, in which each individual is constantly located, examined. . . . all of this constitutes a compact model of the disciplinary mechanism. (97)

As an archeologist of the visual, Foucault “aims at showing us what is distinctive about the way that a certain epoch structures the relation between the visible and the invisible, what is seen and what is said” (Shapiro 2003, 235). From the prison yard to the schoolyard, boundaries and boundary-making shape our experience of place, and the illumination of this dynamic is key to developing a critical pedagogy of place. We wish for students to forge a connection between the idea of Bentham’s carceral Panopticon and the embedded gendered power geometries of the UNC campus.

This article offers a template for what a critical pedagogy of place might look like, one that is grounded in understandings of place as a process that is open and becoming, coupled to recognition that places can be spatially organized as confining. Place, in short, manifests a way of knowing, and places are often objects of power created to further particular forms of domination based on gender, sexuality, race, age, class, and physical ability. Doreen Massey is an important feminist geographer who has recognized the multiple trajectories of actors that intersect to produce place out of space.³ Massey (2005) proposes a vision of space (and history) as open and always-becoming. In our example, we emphasize the way that exclusivity in a particular place (namely, a university campus) is created and sustained through relations that extend beyond that place. That is, the specifics of place are produced through a constellation of social relations and processes that come together in a particular time and space. This may seem intuitive, yet we suggest that actively theorizing the social construction of a place and its political potential in this way has profound effects for students. It allows them to imagine a broader world shaped by structural forces to be sure, yet one with an indeterminate, and therefore open, future. As we show below, we capture students’ attention by starting our field trip in a panoptic space designed in the 1930s to enforce social norms, including heteronormativity, while simultaneously protecting the “honor” of southern white women. In visiting this site and others nearby, we highlight the creativity of students from past eras who left their own traces on the campus landscape. In this way, place-based projects invite student creativity and engagement, and we intend our place-based approach to stimulate and appeal to youthful imaginations.

Place-based pedagogical projects call for interdisciplinary analyses that can allow students to bring together and connect to their own experiences and academic understandings of architecture, design, landscape, semiotics, textual analysis, art, history, sociology, and cultural anthropology. Examining

the materiality of the built environment also allows students to compare the experiential “now” of a given place to an earlier moment. When they imaginatively extend themselves into the past—an imaginary that is informed by a careful study of the documentary record—students open themselves to the importance of a place’s “structure of feeling,” or “the felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time: a sense of the ways in which particular activities combine into a way of thinking and living” (Williams [1961]2001, 64–65). From an institutional point of view, place-based projects are also economical. They can begin in the lecture hall or the hallway outside and extend across campus and into nearby neighborhoods reachable on foot. Place-based projects are flexible in topic and duration and require no additional institutional resources. Finally, the applicability of a place-based analytic framework encourages students to engage in their own research. As we show through the example of our field trip, supporting the development of place-based student sensibilities encourages students to analyze their embodied situatedness in other contexts—for instance, in the dormitory or at the mall or any other place where they may find themselves, familiar or new.

Field trips are particularly amenable to collaboration among faculty members from diverse fields. We bring together students from “Space, Place and Difference,” a geography course taught by one of us (Cravey) and cross-listed with women’s studies, and “Writing in the Disciplines,” an interdisciplinary writing course taught by co-author Petit. While we share pedagogical goals as professors, our different disciplinary approaches offer students insight into the conjunctions between the social sciences and humanities, and allow them to gain an appreciation for the creative potential of cross-disciplinary dialogue. The combination of geography and literary textual analysis, for example, has led to a synergistic reading of texts alongside landscapes that proves to be a compelling lens of analyses for students. Like many teachers, we have learned that students are more likely to fully engage in a course, and therefore do their best work, if they establish a personal connection to the topics about which they are reading and writing.⁴

While the field trip we describe draws on the specificity of the UNC campus, we believe that other educators can use our discussion as a template to develop projects based on their own institutional situations and locations. Our pedagogical approach illuminates the intersectionality of gender, sexuality, race, and class dynamics. It can be applied to campus monuments; classroom and building design; layouts of professional schools; the historical names of buildings; the people who are (and who are not) memorialized through art and portraiture (typically a vast sea of white men, with few women and individuals of color); the spatial organization of campus stadiums and other places devoted to sports and outdoor recreation; parking and transportation, pedestrian and traffic flow; living and studying spaces; service and functional places; trash and recycling systems; green spaces; and iconic campus locations that denote the

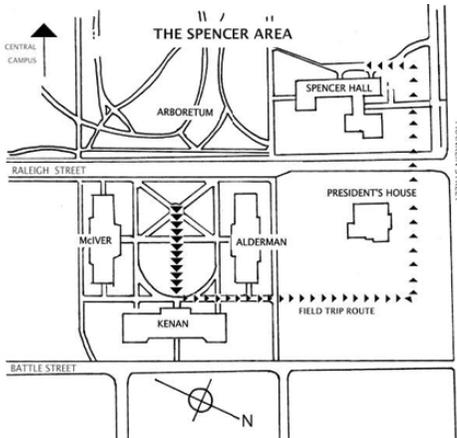


Figure 1. Spencer Area and Field Trip Route.

“branding” of the institution. Within all of these places, students can imagine and reflect on the lived experiences of all the visible and invisible actors who work in and maintain them.

The Field Trip

We begin the field trip by having students assemble in what is known as the Spencer Area, which is in a quadrangle at the center of three dormitories arranged in the shape of a “U” (fig. 1). We purposefully use the term “dormitory,” because of its historical saliency at the time of the buildings’ construction; doing so allows students to reflect on the contemporary use of “residence hall” and how changes in discourse shape our cultural understandings of specific living arrangements. The use of “residence”—the fact of residing or being a resident, being “at home”—attempts to persuade students to suture their identities more closely to that of the university, while “dormitory”—in its earliest use, a sleeping chamber with multiple beds designed for the inmates of a monastery, school, or other institution—suggests a different mindset toward the autonomy of students. After this discussion, we ask students to roam the area between the dormitories alone or in small groups to simply get a feel for the place and to imagine what it might have been like in the 1930s, when the buildings were first constructed and when the large oaks that now dominate the lawn were mere saplings.

The three-story red-brick buildings are formally attractive, Georgian-revival style, featuring large entrances and long, inviting porches (fig. 2). Alderman, Kenan, and McIver halls were built explicitly for women in 1937 and 1938, and their arrangement works to create a panoptic space that is easily visible. While gathered together in the middle of the Spencer Area and asked to imaginatively place themselves there in the 1930s when the view lines were unobstructed, students often conclude on their own that surveillance is part of the area’s



Figure 2. Alderman Hall, built 1937. Courtesy *The Carolina Story: A Virtual Museum of University History*.

design. Watching and knowing that one may be watched are interlocking disciplinary mechanisms designed into and supported by the area's physical layout. As both watchers and watchees, students circulate simultaneously as both prisoners and wardens. The enclosed grassy courtyard provides a visual focus for the entire complex.

To further catalyze discussion, we provide students with the complete title of Bentham's 1791 treatise: *Panopticon; Or, The Inspection-House: Containing The Idea of a New Principle of Construction applicable to any Sort of Establishment, in which Persons of any Description are to be kept Under Inspection; And In Particular to Penitentiary-Houses, Prisons, Houses of Industry, Work-Houses, Poor-Houses, Manufactories, Mad-Houses, Lazarettos [isolation hospitals], Hospitals, and Schools: With a Plan of Management Adapted to the Principle*. Students are initially keen, one might say predictably so, to compare the carceral attributes of schools to prisons, and with further questioning they often interrogate the nuances of "kept under inspection" and what this means for social power. Inclusion of hospitals in the idea of Bentham's panoptic space allows students to discuss issues beyond surveillance. The U-shaped geometry of the Spencer Area, they observe, also allows for watching out *for* one another; the verandas are not only a venue for surveillance and self-regulation, but can also be understood as a built form of expressing care. The spatial array is disciplinary, patriarchal, and communalizing at the same time. We discuss how the verandas would have been

used during pre-air-conditioning times as sites for social and celebratory events. Such everyday practices carry their own disciplinary force and they can allow for the positive nature of subject formation, as well as for students of the day to be more fully hailed by and interpellated into the culture of the university, including its sexist, racist, classist, and heteronormative expectations. An important idea that students take away from the field trip is that identity is not only disciplined, but also created and accepted both consciously and unconsciously.

Students' initial observational notes lay the groundwork for more sustained critical analyses in the classroom. We examine excerpts from a wide variety of documents, including postcards, diaries, published and unpublished letters, photographs, paintings, poetry, university yearbooks, official documents and university regulations, period newspaper accounts, and novels. Many of the materials are available in the special collections and rare-book room of the university's Wilson Library, as well as through a large and growing archive of materials that comprise UNC's Virtual Museum.⁵ Students are particularly excited by the easily accessible wealth of materials available online, which include historical timelines and documentation of key moments in campus life. In addition to emphasizing the historical context of the documents under study, we also analyze their rhetorical context, including what a given document suggests about the attitudes, motivations, and social status of its author. Our goal in exposing students to such a range of materials is to nurture their ability to imaginatively place themselves in the subject position of others so as to better understand and critically consider the power dynamics of that time and place, while also recognizing that one's subject position helps shape divergent lived experiences rooted in the same place.

Students' first impressions of the Spencer Area as a panoptical space is further confirmed when we move inside to the "parlors" of Alderman, Kenan, and McIver halls. Students note that these spaces are larger than the common areas of the campus's more contemporary residence halls, and that the large ground-floor windows face the quadrangle and look directly into the other buildings. We ask students to consider the reasons why this might be the case. Ensuing discussions enable students to connect the parlors' design to the heterosexist regulation and control of women's bodies: the layout, placement, and fenestration allow students to observe one another, and to be observed by each other, at all times and thus to understand that the parlors were designed to safeguard a young woman's "honor." She could be in a public area with a male visitor and even talk at length with him yet remain confident that her reputation would not be maligned, because of the potential of being watched at all times. We emphasize to students that the configuration of these dorms represents a spatial arrangement new to the time. By studying various period campus maps, students note that older buildings were aligned on a grid and did not create protected spaces of surveillance. Designers and architects of these older building assumed a universal male student body that did not require the

same policing of sexuality. Assumptions about gender and sexuality, students come to realize, are built into the physical form of UNC's campus.

Students find themselves enmeshed in a world of dating within a highly sexualized culture complicated by peer pressure and a high awareness of how sexuality is negotiated, signaled, and regulated in contemporary times. Students, therefore, already have a personal knowledge base that they can build on by connecting to the immediate and accessible visual and spatial examples of the ways that dating, desire, and sexuality were regulated in the 1930s. We are consequently able to discuss other early women's spaces and exclusionary practices with the students' full attention. We also provide them with background information on the racialized construction of southern women so that they can more fully understand the elaborate and expensive ways that the university created spaces for privileged white women in the past. The ideal southern woman, according to historian Anne Firor Scott (1970), was white, married, and submissive:

[Her] reason for being was to love, honor, and obey, and occasionally amuse her husband, to bring up his children and manage his household. Physically weak, and formed for the less laborious occupations, she depended upon male protection. To secure this protection she was endowed with the capacity to "create a magic spell" over any man in her vicinity. She was timid and modest, beautiful and graceful, the most fascinating being in creation . . . the delight and charm of every circle she moved in. (4)

The ambiguous and contradictory social role of the "Southern Lady"—submissive yet expected to charm, pious yet bewitching—was as wife, mother, and caretaker, not as an educated woman ready for the workforce. This contradictory construction was essential in distinguishing her from working-class white and African American women. Sojourner Truth's 1851 speech "Ain't I a Woman?" (Brezina 2004) provides an important context and contrast between the contradictory expectations placed on white and black women. Although some white southern women viewed college education as emblematic of class status and as a way to develop a level of refinement that made a lady worthy of protection, admiration, and chivalrous attention (Farnham 1994, 3), higher education for women remained contentious. Education, it was feared, might interfere with "natural" and "feminine intuitive nature," sexual norms, and women's supposed proper role in society; "ultimately, southerners feared anything that came between a woman and her role as a wife and mother because it could potentially make her a 'failed' Southern Lady and cause a 'downfall of the family and consequent demise of society'" (Blackstone 2003, 12).

By examining the ideology of southern ladyhood and how it informed, and was informed by, the built environment, students discover that places are defined by the intersection of both the material (namely, the physicality of bodies in place and space) and the discursive. Built environments can convey, for example,

whiteness as a form of spatial purity that is maintained and re-inscribed through discursive regimes. Places are not merely discrete, rooted phenomena; they are ever evolving outcomes of social relationships that span and link regional, national, and even global geographies. Schools in the North, for example, had decades of experience educating women in co-educational colleges (for example, Oberlin Collegiate Institute, founded in 1837) and universities (for example, University of Iowa, founded in 1855), while UNC excluded women until 1897. Many southerners found it difficult to dislodge the idea that the strain of studying “might literally make [women] sterile (by drawing blood from the reproductive organs to the brain) or drive them crazy” (Dean 1987, 3). A North Carolina woman who wanted a rigorous four-year university education had no choice but to leave the South and head north or go abroad. Ironically, the exclusion of women could continue, in part, because junior colleges and finishing schools were seen as far more appropriate places for women. Our students learn that the proliferation of these alternative places elsewhere recursively helped shape and define the place known as UNC Chapel Hill.

Places, notes Tim Cresswell (2004), are the product of connections to other places through various forms of flow, including the mobility of people, things, and ideas through transport networks and forms of communication (42). In “Place in Human Geography,” Cresswell (2006) notes that “[o]ne way of looking at place is to see places as inhabited by insiders who feel at home and have a sense of belonging. . . . [L]ong-term inhabitants of small rural villages may be wary of city dwellers. . . . In this sense, place often can be the center of regressive and reactionary politics through which all kinds of outsiders are demonized” (357). Feminist geography, in theorizing place as a process of events and a product of connections, critically examines how boundaries are created and maintained, and how mobility and movement across such boundaries, affect women’s identities and life circumstances.

To emphasize how forces of inequality are interrelated, we note that those women who first gained access to UNC in 1897 were a select group privileged by class status, wealth, and, most important in the Jim Crow South, whiteness. The history of African Americans’ integration at UNC is richly documented in the archives, which provides students the opportunity to research why black North Carolinians continued to be excluded until the 1950s, and why, when finally admitted (to the law school in 1951 following a court order, and as undergraduates in 1955 following *Brown v. Board of Education*), the privilege was extended only to *male* African Americans. Students can thereby gain insight into the intersections of sexism and racism.

By this point, the field trip has introduced students to a specific example of how the spatial organization of a place plays a role in regulating gender and sexuality.⁶ We also want students to understand the function of proximity and distance, and we therefore move from the panoptic space of Alderman–Kenan–McIver halls to the President’s House, a two-story antebellum-style structure.

Students regularly comment that the house evokes for them images of *Gone with the Wind*, and we discuss ideas of “the plantation” and how and why designers of the building may have wished to position UNC in this way. We also note the close proximity to Cornelia Philips Spencer Hall, designed in 1925 as the first UNC dormitory for women.⁷ Students observe that from the upper levels of the President’s House one would have been able to look down upon Spencer Hall; through discussion, students then frequently note how this arrangement would have facilitated both practical and symbolic surveillance of women students by UNC’s president, the highest authority on campus and its implicit patriarch. The spatial proximity also illustrates the concept *in loco parentis*, the idea that the university could serve “in place of the parents.” Students can make connections among their own status as young adults, many living away from home for the first time; their negotiations with university authorities and contemporary structures of disciplinary power; and the historical example of *in loco parentis* embodied by the President’s House and its contribution to maintaining Southern Ladyhood as a cultural norm. Although the landmark 1961 U.S. District Court case *Dixon v. Alabama State Board of Education* invalidated *in loco parentis* in U.S. higher education, students discuss its de facto existence and impact on contemporary campus life and their own relationship to the university as a “parental” authority.

We also make note of the distance between the Spencer Area and the central campus more broadly in order to help students think about spatialized and racialized delimitations, especially as these are produced through sociopolitical decisions—such as the supposed need to safeguard the honor of white southern ladies—that can create and reinforce social distinctions and boundaries. Between 1897 and 1925, when Spencer Hall was built, female students who matriculated lived with parents, boarded with faculty members, or rented space from one of the local rooming houses that would accept women. Some women might have to walk long distances to the campus for morning class, trek home for lunch, return to the campus for afternoon classes, and then return home again in the evening. This spatial arrangement kept women socially and geographically isolated not only from male students, but also from one another. Social connections required extra efforts, because there were no dining halls or meeting places for informal interactions.

Women were also regulated by numerous rules that did not apply to male students. Barred from joining campus social organizations, for example, they could only enter classrooms at appointed times. In fact, strict spatial and social control of women was enforced even if they withdrew from the university: they were allotted forty-eight hours to leave not only the campus, but also the town of Chapel Hill itself. Figure 3 illustrates something of white women students’ enforced spatial and social isolation. The situation, although improved, did not radically change after Spencer Hall was built, for it was located on the distant northeastern edge of the campus. A large, undeveloped natural area, now the



Figure 3. Cartoon, *Yackety Yack*, UNC Yearbook, 1907.

Arboretum, stood between the women's dormitory and the central campus's classrooms and buildings.

The field trip now moves to Spencer Hall itself. Here, we bring together all the elements of our pedagogical approach with respect to specific historical and contemporary sociocultural conflicts. Visiting Spencer Hall with a view toward seeing the place as an event reveals to students the ways in which place can operate by drawing together different spatio-temporal social trajectories, including their own. Students learn that the fight for women's access is connected in complex ways to the contestation of place and space, as well as that the concept of "woman" is a particular categorization constructed within an historical and racialized context, rather than being a universal category. The controversy over women's access had been heating up for at least a decade when, in 1917, UNC responded by appointing an advisor to women, Mrs. Thomas Lingle, who resigned in frustration two years later. She was replaced by Inez Koonce Stacy, who continued Lingle's appeals for the creation of women's spaces, pointing out that "the students are scattered from one end of town to the other, and lose much valuable time going back and forth . . . they have few comforts and in their social life none of the finer things which come from contact with one another" (Dean 1987, 7). University officials, she argued, were doing a disservice to UNC women by only allowing them to attend classes; she condemned this as a "policy of toleration" and argued that the university should either eliminate women students or adequately provide for their material needs.

The *Daily Tar Heel*, UNC's student-produced newspaper, mobilized a vocal opposition to the creation of a women's dormitory, in what amounted to an attempt to maintain "spatial purity" by seeking to define higher education as a male pursuit best achieved in a male-only environment. A front-page article lambasted a 1917 petition demanding a dormitory as "the most ludicrous assemblage of nonsensical and sentimental rubbish that could be found in the history of grammatical phraseology" (Dean 1987, 9). Angry, dismissive editorials opined under such titles as "Women Not Wanted Here" and "Shaves and Shines but No Rats and Rouge": "We can think of nothing more distasteful. . . . The women here would only prove a distracting influence, could do no possible good, and would turn the grand institution into a semi-effeminate college which would certainly have no attraction for us" (Dean 1987, 9–10). The *Daily Tar Heel* canvassed students, stating that "[t]his University has always been a college of, by, and for men, which largely accounts for its strengths of character" (ibid.). When the votes were tallied, 937 agreed with the *Daily Tar Heel*; only 173 supported allowing women to live on campus (ibid.).

Despite this vocal opposition, colloquially known at the time as "The Battle for Spencer Hall," pressure to build a women's dormitory continued to mount. Faculty members favored co-education, and influential alumni held meetings, raised money, and traveled across the state to petition legislators. The university's president, Harry Woodburn Chase, pointed out that co-education was the established policy of the university, and former president Frank Porter Graham argued that a university education was a human right, not just a sexed right: "My belief in coeducation at the university is part of my belief in the university" (10). With the building of Spencer Hall in 1925, for the first time since they had been admitted in 1897, women had a place of their own.

Our field trip illustrates Massey's (2005) argument that places are always changing because of the social interactions that occur within them. In contrast to common-sense understandings that places are static, bounded, and essentially unchanging, we theorize places as "throwntogetherness," which Massey defines as "the politics of the event of place" (149). Places are messy, in flux, and always contingent. Massey's term usefully points to the often unplanned, happenstance nature of a place. We point out to students that our own presence at Spencer Hall, here at this moment, is also part of its throwntogetherness that helps define and redefine the nature of the place and what it means.

Many diverse sociopolitical futures may be imagined when students conceive of places as evolving, intersecting processes of spatial and human organization. Taking today's students to the actual places where throwntogetherness is observable, and where earlier generations of students were subjects of disciplinary spatial strategies, allows history to come alive. Our students become more open to explaining the past in ways that inform their understanding of the current world in which they live. They more readily articulate how it might have felt if they had been one of these excluded women, for example; what was

at stake for those in privileged positions; and how status quo forces work to maintain power.

It does not take much effort for students to link this process of exclusion to their own knowledge and experiences of spatialized structures of power. Experiences we hear in the classroom include racial profiling by police, who stop people for “driving while black”; differential treatment in airport security lines and other practices of crowd control; and many deeply felt instances of social and spatial exclusion within institutional settings like schools and churches. Students become more engaged in work when they are able to connect it, on a personal level, to their own experiential knowledge base, and the field trip’s discussions help students understand that spatialized power dynamics affect the lived world of the places we have inhabited, now inhabit, and will inhabit.

Students make links to larger geographic patterns of educational marginalization, arbitrarily defined boundaries, and other attempts to maintain a sense of the purity of space. Individual students indicate their awareness of, and comment on, their ancestors’ and relatives’ experiences of North Carolina’s organization of educational space—noting, for example, that women were “supposed” to go to State Normal and Industrial College at Greensboro (later renamed North Carolina Women’s College and now part of the UNC system); Native Americans “naturally” went to the Pembroke State College for Indians (now part of the UNC system); and African Americans “of course” attended North Carolina Central and North Carolina A&T State universities (both of which are historically black colleges). These institutions, students observe, served as racialized and gendered spaces that helped UNC Chapel Hill maintain its plantation-era status quo as the premier *white* educational institution in the state.

To further highlight the ways that various strategies of social control reinforce one another, we also examine issues related to student protests, a persistent and ubiquitous part of campus life. Drawing on the timelines offered by the Virtual Museum, students research various protest movements at UNC. World War II-era students, for example, attempted to protest U.S. involvement in what they argued was a European war, but they were barred from the campus. In 1966, students challenged the so-called Speaker Ban, which prohibited members of the Communist Party from speaking at state-sponsored institutions. They invited Herbert Aptheker, a blacklisted Marxist historian and political activist, and Frank Wilkinson, a civil liberties activist who had been called before the House Un-American Activities Committee, to speak at the university. Barred from the campus, the speakers positioned themselves on a public sidewalk and addressed a throng of students who deliberately arranged themselves at the very edge of the campus, along a stone-fence boundary that still demarcates the campus from downtown Chapel Hill. Our students were particularly taken with the ways in which media images at the time helped galvanize support against the ban, and they staged a reenactment of the protest

in order to better understand the divisions engendered by the convergence of social and spatial controls.⁸

The usefulness of a feminist pedagogy of place that examines place as a process was clearly illustrated by students' critical interpretation of a campus protest that took place in 2009. The event highlighted the continuing saliency of arguments about who should and should not have access to a university education. Instead of female bodies, however, our students pointed out, this case involved the exclusion of brown bodies and working-class Others: the children of undocumented migrants who have lived the majority of their lives in the United States and for whom the country is home. The 2009 incident occurred when representatives from a national student group, "Youth for Western Civilization," invited Tom Tancredo, a leading anti-immigrant activist and former Republican member of the U.S. House of Representatives, to speak at UNC about why public universities should deny resident status to children of undocumented migrants. Several hundred students turned out to protest the lecture, arguing that Tancredo's position is thinly veiled white-supremacy racism. (The Southern Poverty Law Center monitors "Youth for Western Civilization" as a potential hate group.)

Tancredo's appearance led to chaos. The lecture hall could not accommodate the overflow audience and police overreacted by trying to clear the crowded hallway by firing tasers in the air and dousing students with pepper spray. Students inside the lecture hall unfurled a banner reading "No One Is Illegal," while students who had been ejected from the hallway moved outside of the building and reportedly broke a small window pane. Tancredo fled, claiming that he had been denied his right to free speech, and the university's chancellor, Holden Thorp, and UNC system president, Erskine Bowles, apologized to him on the following day.

Our students noted the ways in which the rhetoric of excluding women that they had studied in the Battle for Spencer Hall foreshadowed the arguments of Tancredo and his supporters. Having researched the archives of the *Daily Tar Heel*, our students observed several parallel arguments: "It would 'cost too much'"; "It 'would prevent deserving' students from matriculating"; "They 'could do no possible good'"; and "They 'would only prove a distracting influence.'" "In these statements from a century ago," the students argued in their class presentation, "*they* may be women, but substitute 'children of undocumented migrants' for *they*, and you have the same argument. Only the definition of *they* has changed. The battle for space and access to space remains the same." We should note that students in our class, like those across campus, did not respond to this incident in a monolithic manner, and there continues to be ongoing debate about this issue at UNC and elsewhere. Nevertheless, as university educators, we are gratified to see students connecting field-trip experiences and academic research to events and processes in their own lives in such a direct and personally meaningful way.

Many contemporary students are particularly interested in the sociocultural conflicts of the 1960s that flow from the emergence of the sexual revolution, which included the introduction of new sexual mores that offered women more autonomy and control of their bodies. Students react with surprise when they learn about the all-too-obvious and unjust double standards of that era, as demonstrated by the case of a heterosexual couple who spent the night together and were punished under the code of behavior outlined in the 1965 UNC Honor Code. Simply stated: she was expelled, and he received a reprimand. Students of the day organized and wrote a standard of conduct for both sexes, which we then examine as a class using the techniques of spatial, rhetorical, and discourse analyses to interrogate the different sets of rules that regulated the lives of female and male students. We also use this as an opportunity to engage in comparative work by discussing UNC's current Honor Code—a document that acknowledges that it is “continuously amended to address new circumstances and challenges”—for what it reveals about today's students and their relationship to university structures of power.

Place-based field trips can be further animated by using photographic imagery in follow-up classroom activities and individual student research. Students are often keenly interested and skilled in analyzing visual images, including those of male and female students from earlier decades. We point out that the first women students at UNC were neither included in class photos nor given their diplomas in public ceremonies. Students actively discuss and interpret hairstyle, clothing, posture, and the spatial relationships among figures. They have built on this type of visual analysis in research projects by mapping onto current spaces the historical spaces they find depicted in the archives. Figure 4, for example, depicts the domestic situation of female students washing and ironing clothing in a space that our students tentatively identify as the laundry area of McIver Hall. Comparing photographs of domesticity from the 1960s with contemporary photographs of the same settings enables students to analyze the gendered nature of such tasks during the 1940s, and to compare this gendering in detailed ways to the spatial and gendered organization of domesticity in their own lives.

We have found that our approach animates student discussion of sensitive concepts, such as gender, sexuality, class, and race. The field trip allows students to make interconnections in a safe, informal environment that avoids the kind of defensive or knee-jerk responses that some students have when these topics arise in abstract classroom situations. We encourage students to consider the embodied experience of place, and to imagine places like the Spencer Area and the boundary between the campus and downtown Chapel Hill as meeting points for a constellation of processes and social relations that link locally, regionally, and globally in complex and unpredictable ways. As students become more comfortable with this method and way of seeing, they also become more skilled at analyzing contemporary social inequalities and



Figure 4. Women's Dormitory 1948. Courtesy North Carolina Photographic Archives.

the spaces that produce them, and are less likely to feel that such analyses are directed toward producing in them a sense of guilt or immediate personal responsibility. They leave the course with analytic tools to examine the intersections of power and knowledge.

We see our approach as resonating with Freire's decision in *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* ([1970]2000) to work with students' existing knowledge base and experiences, and to recognize and build on that knowledge to help them learn more. Freire's genius is in working within an existential, concrete embodied experience of place, and our field trip attempts to do the same, albeit with much more privileged students than those with whom Freire worked. Common-sense notions of place and space tend to reinforce what Massey (2004) identifies as a Russian doll notion of care—only those close to us are worthy of notice and, by extension, care and empathy, not those far away—and our hope is that our students, by extending themselves imaginatively into the past and into other contemporary places, from the local to the global, develop the skills to extend themselves critically and creatively into places of exclusion that will enable greater empathy toward others. Such is the power and the promise of a critical pedagogy of place.

Altha J. Cravey is an associate professor of geography at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. A feminist geographer concerned with how ordinary people effect social change, she is the author of *Women and Work in Mexico's Maquiladoras* (1998) and has produced three documentary videos: *People's Guelagueta: Oaxacans Take it to the Streets*; *The Virgin Appears in La Maldita Vecindad* <<http://virginappears.unc.edu>>; and *Seed Spirits: The Otomi of Carolina del Norte* <<http://seedspirits.unc.edu>>. Her work has been supported by the North Carolina Arts Council, National Institutes of Health, and National Institute for Environmental Sciences. She can be reached at cravey@unc.edu.

Michael Petit is the director of media studies and the Joint Program in New Media at the University of Toronto Scarborough. He is author of *Peacekeepers at War* (1986), co-editor of *Everyday eBay: Culture, Collecting and Desire* (2006), and co-author of *Google and the Culture of Search* (2012). His research focuses on the intersection of digital media and issues of pedagogy. He can be reached at mepetit@utsc.utoronto.ca.

Notes

1. A common approach to place is to say that it is grounded, meaningful, material, and the locus of lived experience. The idea of place draws together the idea of space and the idea of time; that is, the realities of actual places bring together ways that actual space is operationalized in situ through the experiential passage of time. While there is much debate within the field of geography about the differences between place and space, our position is that space, too, can be a locus of lived experience that is also invested in meaning. Key works on theories of space and place include Henri Lefebvre, *The Production of Space* ([1974]1991); Edward Relph, *Place and Placelessness* (1976); Yi-Fu Tuan, *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience* (1977); Edward Soja, *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory* (1989); Frederic Jameson, *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism* (1991); David Harvey, *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference* (1996); Akhil Gupta and James Ferguson, *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology* (1997); Tim Cresswell, *Place: A Short Introduction* (2004); and Edward S. Casey, *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World* (2009).

2. Feminist geography is part of a broader, critical-social theoretical approach to the lived world to argue that the discipline of geography has inadequately considered and theorized the gendered power relations that significantly influence everyday lives, institutions, environments, economies, and politics. The theoretical approaches offered by feminist geography have deeply influenced all areas of human geography.

3. In addition to Massey's key conceptual work, *For Space* (2005), see also Linda McDowell and Doreen Massey, "A Woman's Place?" (1984); Gillian Rose, *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge* (1993), which is an incisive critique of the naturalized masculinity that infuses the discipline of geography; J. K. Gibson-Graham, *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy* (1996); Heidi J. Nast and Steve Pile, eds., *Places Through the Body* (1998), which is an

anthology that theoretically and empirically examines the relationship between bodies and places; Linda McDowell, *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies* (1999), on how gendered identities are (re)produced in workplaces, such as in the financial industry; Cindi Katz, “Vagabond Capitalism and the Necessity of Social Reproduction” (2001); Robyn Longhurst, *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries* (2001); Joni Seager and Lise Nelson, eds., *Companion to Feminist Geography* (2004), which is a foundational anthology and introduction to the field of feminist geography; and Kathryn Mitchell, Sallie A. Marston, and Cindi Katz, eds., *Life’s Work* (2004), on emotional and domestic work and other undervalued forms of labor. For ongoing debates, see recent issues of *Gender, Place and Culture: A Journal of Feminist Geography*.

4. See, for example, Rebecca Ropers-Huilman (1998) and Alice Kolb and David Kolb (2009).

5. Formally named “The Carolina Story: A Virtual Museum of University History,” it is available at <<http://museum.unc.edu>>.

6. This discussion can be further enriched by providing students with works, both literary and academic, that detail the spatialized power geometries of other campus settings. Examples include Virginia Woolf’s vivid description in *A Room of One’s Own* ([1929]1989) of touring Cambridge: “It was thus that I found myself walking with extreme rapidity across a grass plot. Instantly a man’s figure rose to intercept me. Nor did I at first understand that the gesticulations of a curious-looking object, in a cut-away coat and evening shirt, were aimed at me. His face expressed horror and indignation. Instinct rather than reason came to my help; he was a Beadle; I was a woman. This was the turf; there was the path. Only the Fellows and Scholars are allowed here; the gravel is the place for me. Such thoughts were the work of a moment” (6ff.). Anthropologist Judith Okely (1996a, 1996b) combines autobiography and ethnography to expose how the spatialities of British girls’ boarding schools discipline bodies and induce female control. Ralph Ellison’s *Invisible Man* ([1952]1995) explores how power geometries discipline and contain blackness; chapter 2 opens with an evocative and ironic description of a southern black college. Feminist geographer Heidi J. Nast (2000) critically analyzes the spatial politics of the University of Chicago’s plans for urban renewal in the 1950s and their contribution to the city’s racialized geographies and segregation practices.

7. Cornelia Philips Spencer was chosen for this honor because of her efforts to reopen the university after its Civil War–era closure. Although she was a strong advocate for public education and took a progressive stance on (white) women’s rights, she was also a leader of the Reconstruction-era white supremacy movement. Class discussion of this historical context helps uncover the complex and contradictory ways in which intersectional attitudes can operate within individual actors.

8. In 1968, the federal circuit court declared the Speaker Ban unconstitutional.

References

Bentham, Jeremy. [1791]1995. *Panopticon; Or, The Inspection-House: Containing The Idea of a New Principle of Construction applicable to any Sort of Establishment, in which Persons of any Description are to be kept Under Inspection; And In Particular to Penitentiary-Houses, Prisons, Houses of Industry, Work-Houses, Poor-Houses, Manufactories, Mad-Houses, Lazarettos [isolation hospitals], Hospitals, and Schools:*

- With a Plan of Management Adapted to the Principle.* In *The Panopticon Writings*, ed. Miran Bozovic, 29–95. London: Verso.
- Blackstone, Ericka Leeann. 2003. "Climbing the Hill: When the Coed and Southern Ladyhood Came to the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill." Senior thesis, University of North Carolina.
- Brezina, Corona. 2004. *Sojourner Truth's "Ain't I a Woman?" Speech: A Primary Source Investigation*. New York: Rosen Publishing Group.
- The Carolina Story: A Virtual Museum of University History, Accessed 12 June 2012. <<http://museum.unc.edu>>.
- Casey, Edward S. 2009. *Getting Back into Place: Toward a Renewed Understanding of the Place-World*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- Cresswell, Tim. 2006. "Place in Human Geography." In *Encyclopedia of Human Geography*, ed. Barney Warf, 356–58. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- . 2004. *Place: A Short Introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Dean, Pamela. 1987. *Women on the Hill: A History of Women and the University of North Carolina*. Accessed 15 August 2011. <<http://www.lib.unc.edu/ncc/ref/unc/womenonthehill.pdf>>.
- Ellison, Ralph. [1952]1995. *Invisible Man*. New York: Vintage Books.
- Farnham, Christie Anne. 1994. *The Education of the Southern Belle: Higher Education and Student Socialization in the Antebellum South*. New York: New York University Press.
- Foucault, Michel. [1977]1995. *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. Trans. Alan Sheridan. New York: Pantheon Books.
- Freire, Paulo. [1970]2000. *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*. Trans. Myra Bergman Ramos. New York: Continuum Publishing.
- Gibson-Graham, J. K. 1996. *The End of Capitalism (As We Knew It): A Feminist Critique of Political Economy*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Graff, Gerald. 1992. *Beyond the Culture Wars: How Teaching the Conflicts Can Revitalize American Education*. New York: W. W. Norton.
- Gupta, Akhil, and James Ferguson. 1997. *Culture, Power, Place: Explorations in Critical Anthropology*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Harvey, David. 1996. *Justice, Nature and the Geography of Difference*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Jameson, Frederic. 1991. *Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism*. Durham, NC: Duke University Press.
- Katz, Cindi. 2001. "Vagabond Capitalism and the Necessity of Social Reproduction." *Antipode* 33(4): 709–29.
- Kolb, Alice, and David Kolb. 2009. "The Learning Way: Meta-cognitive Aspects of Experiential Learning." *Simulation and Gaming* 40(3): 297–327.
- Lefebvre, Henri. [1974]1991. *The Production of Space*. Trans. Donald Nicholson-Smith. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Longhurst, Robyn. 2001. *Bodies: Exploring Fluid Boundaries*. London: Routledge.
- Massey, Doreen. 2005. *For Space*. London: Sage Publications.
- . 2004. "Geographies of Responsibility." *Geografiska Annaler: Series B, Human Geography* 86(1): 5–18.
- McDowell, Linda. 1999. *Gender, Identity and Place: Understanding Feminist Geographies*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.

- , and Doreen Massey. 1984. "A Woman's Place?" In *Geography Matters! A Reader*, ed. Doreen Massey and John Allen, 128–47. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, in Association with Open University.
- McLaren, Peter. 2005. *Capitalists and Conquerors: A Critical Pedagogy against Empire*. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers.
- Mitchell, Kathrynne, Sallie A. Marston, and Cindi Katz, eds. 2004. *Life's Work*. London: Blackwell Publishers.
- Nast, Heidi J. 2000. "Mapping the 'Unconscious': Racism and the Oedipal Family." *Annals of the Association of American Geographers* 90(2): 215–55.
- , and Steve Pile, eds. 1998. *Places Through the Body*. London: Routledge.
- Okely, Judith. 1996a. "Girls and Their Bodies: The Curriculum of the Unconscious." In Okely, *Own or Other Culture*, 139–46. London: Routledge.
- . 1996b. "Privileged, Schooled and Finished: Boarding Education for Girls." In Okely, *Own or Other Culture*, 147–74. London: Routledge.
- Relph, Edward. 1976. *Place and Placelessness*. London: Pion Ltd.
- Ropers-Huilman, Rebecca. 1998. *Feminist Teaching in Theory and Practice: Situating Power and Knowledge in Poststructural Classrooms*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Rose, Gillian. 1993. *Feminism and Geography: The Limits of Geographical Knowledge*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Scott, Anne Firor. 1970. *The Southern Lady: From Pedestal to Politics, 1830–1930*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Seager, Joni, and Lise Nelson, eds. 2004. *Companion to Feminist Geography*. Malden, MA: Blackwell Publishers.
- Shapiro, Gary. 2003. *Archaeologies of Vision: Foucault and Nietzsche on Seeing and Saying*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Soja, Edward. 1989. *Postmodern Geographies: The Reassertion of Space in Critical Social Theory*. London: Verso.
- Tuan, Yi-Fu. 1977. *Space and Place: The Perspective of Experience*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- University of North Carolina Honor Code. N.d. "Instrument of Student Judicial Governance." Accessed 15 August 2011. <<http://honor.unc.edu>>.
- Williams, Jeffrey J. 2008. "Teach the University." *Pedagogy: Critical Approaches to Teaching Literature, Language, Composition, and Culture* 8(1): 25–42.
- Williams, Raymond. [1961]2001. *The Long Revolution*. New York: Broadview Press.
- Woolf, Virginia. [1929]1989. *A Room of One's Own*. New York: Mariner Books.