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This document is the Accepted Version [AM]

**Citation:**

TAYLOR, Carol (2018). What can bodies do? En/gendering body-space choreographies of stillness, movement and flow in post-16 pedagogic encounters. International Journal of Educational Research, 88, 156-165. [Article]

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# **What Can Bodies Do? En/gendering Body-Space Choreographies of Stillness, Movement and Flow in Post-16 Pedagogic Encounters**

## **Abstract**

Bodies do inventive, dynamic and productive work in classrooms. This paper argues that bodies are vital players in pedagogic encounters, informing how gender identities are shaped, how power operates, and how pedagogies are enacted. It uses a range of theoretical resources – on space (Massey 2005), corporeal geography (McCormack 2013), material feminism (Barad, 2007) – to develop an interdisciplinary analysis of body-space choreographies in Sixth Form College spaces. Empirically, the paper is grounded in six close-up ‘material moments’ of stillness, movement and flow, which indicate that pedagogic encounters are conditioned by routine bodily enactments which happen at speed and often go unnoticed but which do important pedagogic work.

## **Keywords**

Body-space, choreography, pedagogy, matter, atmosphere, affect, refrain

## **1 Introduction**

This paper analyses what bodies do in Sixth Form College education. It draws on empirical data from a UK case study to develop a feminist argument regarding the entangled, material and embodied nature of pedagogic encounters. The paper proposes that bodies matter as vital players in classroom pedagogic practices. It considers the role bodies play in the formation of gender identities, in how power operates and is regulated in classrooms, and in how learning habits are recognized, routinized and enacted in pedagogic practices. The paper is interdisciplinary in analytical orientation, drawing on a range of theoretical resources from a variety of different disciplines to explore body-space choreographies in post-16 student-teacher educational encounters. The value of such interdisciplinary research is that it enables conceptual contributions from different disciplines to be combined in ways which produce new insights on educational events (Tibble 1966; McCulloch 2002). My aim in this paper is, therefore, to do some conceptual cross-pollination between disciplines

and knowledge domains as a means to generate some new interdisciplinary insights.

A focus on body matters is important in shifting arguments away from outcomes, outputs and metrics-oriented accounts of the purposes of post-secondary education, and in illuminating how pedagogy gets done through dynamic and performative practices of bodily mattering. This enables us to attend to what bodies can do in pedagogy as a lived, embodied and emergent event. I elaborate this argument through six empirical examples of pedagogic interactions. These interactions are mundane, routine and unsurprising instances of what goes on in Sixth Form College classrooms and, as such, are likely to be familiar to those working within classrooms in any educational sector. Yet it is their very ‘unsurprisingness’ which makes them exemplary in illuminating the pedagogic work bodies do in constituting gender, space and power relations in classroom assemblages.

The next section outlines the study, defines ‘material moments’, and explains the methodological approach. The section after that provides the context of Sixth Form College spaces and learning in the UK.’ Section four outlines the interdisciplinary theoretical framework of the analysis, and sections five to seven put this theory to work in detailed exploration of six material moments. The conclusion returns to the question – what can bodies do? – and encapsulates the main arguments.

## **2 The Study**

The data were gathered in a qualitative case study in two UK Sixth Form Colleges (SFCs). In the UK, students between the ages of 16 – 18 study for A Levels (Advanced Levels) in order to gain entry to university at 18. They usually study three or four A Levels and either choose to stay in their secondary school, go to a Sixth Form College, or Further Education college. I focus primarily on data from interviews, classroom observations and my fieldwork diary and use this data to hone in on six ‘material moments’. I define ‘material moments’ in this paper as instances, occurrences and interactions which inhere in, and are enacted through, the materiality of bodily relations; they are moments which are materially dense and specific; and they are time-bound and spatially-located. Material moments are ‘felt’ and registered bodily, their instantaneousness a part of the ongoing sensorial flow of embodied

experience. Methodologically, I deploy the concept of material moments to grasp the body-space details of micro-level classroom occurrences and interactions and thereby aim to analyse ‘the force of the material in its speed and evanescence’ (Taylor 2013). The six material moments selected are analysed as data ‘hot-spots’, that is as instances of data which ‘jumped out’ and ‘grabbed’ attention as I looked over transcripts, listened again to recordings and re-read my research diary. In pursuing this line of data analysis, I follow MacLure’s (2010) advice to tune into those fragments, splinters and nodes of data – which she refers to as ‘data hotspots – that seem to ‘glow’ and ‘glimmer’, which stay with you, touch you, and seem to spark connections with concepts. Following MacLure (2010, 282), then, the six material moments I analyse below are about putting conceptual development to work ‘at the level of singularity and specificity’. As such, they eschew usual modes of data analysis which seek generalizability, replicability and comparability. The study was approved by the University Ethics Committee and all names have been anonymized.

There are, in addition, a number of theoretical reasons for focusing on material moments. First, pedagogic processes are, by their very nature, ephemeral, fleeting and happenstance. Pedagogy is an ongoing occurrence, a happening in the here-and-now, something that does not sit still but changes moment by moment, group by group and class by class. It is never the same thing twice. Material moments, therefore, enable a focus on how pedagogic processes are precisely manifest in context, time and space: they enable attention to be given to what happens in *this* classroom, with *these* particular people, in relation to *this* curriculum ‘content’ and knowledge, and *these* specific learning processes. Second, pedagogy takes place as an event in which bodies, spaces and materialities converge. Pedagogy is a process in which meaning and matter are entangled together; learning is a body-mind act, intrinsic and inseparable. However, because it is often difficult to see the importance of those pedagogic processes which are both close and mundane, a focus on material moments brings to the fore the quiet work body-space choreographies do in enabling the routine business of pedagogy to continue. Paying fine, close-up and detailed attention to material moments in pedagogic relations can, I suggest, produce some fresh insights into the questions of ‘what can bodies do?’ As a context for this paper’s analytical engagement with that question, I now briefly outline the nature of SFC spaces and learning in the UK.

### 3 Sixth Form College Spaces, Learning and Built Pedagogy

In England, Sixth Form Colleges, along with Academy sixth forms, and school sixth forms, are considered to be the ‘academic’ route to university for 16 – 19 year olds who do A Levels. There are currently 90 Sixth Form Colleges in England with 162,541 students (22%), out of a total of 592,884 sixth formers in the whole country. Despite the fact that sixth formers in England are now only funded to receive around half of the tuition time as sixth formers in other leading economies, Sixth Form Colleges help their students to achieve better exam results (higher A Level scores) than the two other sorts of non-selective UK providers. My case study involved two Sixth Form Colleges in south-east England. The first is Seaside Sixth Form College with a student population of 1150 and an excellent pass rate of 97.5% at A Level (above the then national average 96.9%) with 71% students achieving A – C grades. The second is Grainger Sixth Form College, slightly larger than Seaside SFC with 1350 students. Grainger College students also achieved A Level grades above the national average at 97.1% with 74.3% of students gaining A – C grades at A Level.

The institutional and pedagogic dynamics of Sixth Form College spaces differ from the more formal spaces of compulsory schooling. They provide for more ‘relaxed’ and informal ways of being and behaving than schools and often act as a halfway house between the hierarchical regimes of schools and the adult freedoms student can exercise at university. Thus, one Grainger College student characterized their college culture as:

*College is a place with spaces where you can avoid surveillance, that makes it very different from school, I am now a totally different person since I came to college (Religious Studies Focus Group).*

While a Seaside College student commented on the freedom and independence they enjoyed: ‘school is like a prison camp, you have to do what you’re told.’

This informal spatial geography of SFCs influences learning and teaching. Many A Level subjects emphasise participation modes of inquiry, although some subjects work within a mixture of both ‘acquisition’ and ‘participation’ (Sfard 1998). SFC

pedagogies emphasise students' active role in learning, their agency in knowledge construction, and their creative reflexivity as agents (Bruner 1996).

This context is important to the argument I develop below. SFCs are a specific example of 'built pedagogy' (Monahan 2002) in that the design and use of space influences the pedagogic action and feelings of those who learn within those spaces. As I illuminate below, students' bodies do not simply enter and 'take their place' or 'take up space' in the built pedagogies that precede them. Rather, students use their bodies to inhabit, occupy, move and claim spaces, and do so in ways that both conform to and subtly shift the nature of those spaces.

#### **4      Theoretical Framing: Understanding Body-Space Choreographies of Gendered Mattering**

Gildersleeve and Kuntz (2011: 18) write: 'we rarely ask ... "What are the embodied experiences of this student, this faculty member, as s/he traverses these halls? In what ways does this material environment constrain or enable particularly normative embodied experiences?"' In educational research, this question – where it has been considered at all – has often been framed within the parameters of specific disciplines. For example, psychology of education might be interested in bodies as the locus for internal motivation, of individual response, or as a means of effective behaviour control techniques; economics might focus on bodies in education as human capital or on cost-benefit analyses of lessons or efficient facilities management; while philosophy of education might want to know about bodies in relation to moral principles and practices of ethical educational guidance. However, what Gildersleeve and Kuntz (2011) draw attention to is the 'materiality' of the body in its specific material and spatial contexts. Such a focus is, first of all, important in contesting the dominant Enlightenment heritage of education and its focus on intellect, cognition, reason and mind at the expense of the body, such that bodies have mostly been either ignored or seen as the vehicle of the mind. But, second, it requires an interdisciplinary response which is sufficiently flexible to be attuned to bodies and space and context and the specificities of the particular encounter at hand. Working, then, from Jay's (2013) view that interdisciplinary work can help address gaps in knowledge in new ways, in what follows I draw conceptual resources from different disciplines to

develop an interdisciplinary analytical gaze to explore the question ‘what can bodies do?’ in sixth form college spaces of pedagogic encounter.

The focus on the materiality of body-space choreographies in pedagogic encounters in this paper resonates with Foucault’s (1980) analysis of how authority and power use modes of visibility to produce certain bodies as ‘docile bodies’. Foucault brings to the fore how power acts in a ‘capillary’ way at the level of the body, reaching ‘into the very grain of individuals, touches their bodies and inserts itself into their actions and attitudes, their discourses, learning processes and everyday lives’ (Foucault 1980: 39). This leads Foucault (1980: 57) to assert that there is ‘nothing is more material, physical, corporal than the exercise of power’. This Foucauldian notion of the ‘capillary’ operation of power – its physical capacities and corporal role – is deployed below as a means to explore power as an en/gendering force which is enacted through the lived body in the pedagogic encounter. In the body-space choreographies discussed, I focus in close-up on students’ bodily situational, context-dependent and relational body-space attunements and comportments and how these work to choreograph pedagogic processes. My argument is that body-space choreographies in sixth form colleges are constructed and en/gendered; bodies matter because gendered identities are specific and differential and are enacted and instantiated through body-space relations of power. In the rest of this section I outline each dimension of the interdisciplinary theoretical frame I use and which is put to work to analyse the empirical instances which follow.

#### **4.1 Bodies**

McCormack’s (2008) observation that it is both difficult and dangerous to try to explain what bodies *are* so it is better to focus on what bodies *do* is particularly salient when considering processes of en/gendering where any presumptions of gender essentialism and stability cannot be sustained (see 4.3 below). McCormack (2008) therefore suggests that we focus on three things that bodies do. First, bodies move physically in all sorts of different ways; second, the physical movement of bodies entails affective, kinaesthetic, imaginative, collective, aesthetic, social, cultural and political dimensions; and third, bodies produce and generate spaces, in the sense that the ‘quality of moving bodies contributes to the qualities of the spaces in which

bodies move' (McCormack 2008: 1832). McCormack (2013) use the three things bodies do to develop the notion of corporeal geography which he sees as an affective, experiential and enactive relation between the moving body and space. McCormack draws on Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concept of the 'relation-specific milieu' to describe 'a vibratory block of spacetime constituted by periodic repetition of certain directional components'. I take these ideas up in the analysis which follows to explore 'how the movement, flow and stillness of bodies is both enabled and constrained by various material architectures, habitual behaviours and organizational technologies' (McCormack 2013: 1). McCormack (2013) uses three concepts in particular – affect, refrain and atmosphere – to explore the co-constitutive relations of space and bodies, and I also draw on these in my analysis.

## **4.2 Space**

McCormack's (2008; 2013) arguments regarding body-space movement and relations aligns with the 'spatial turn' across the social sciences, including education, which has focused attention on spatial practices, and has begun to bring understandings of space, materiality and pedagogy together (Fenwick and Landri 2012; Mulcahy 2012). This, in turn, has produced new understandings of the co-constitution of gendered bodies, space and matter (Taylor, 2013). These new understandings do not see space as a background, surface or mere physical container for human action but as 'the sphere of dynamic simultaneity ... constantly waiting to be determined ... by the construction of new relations. It is always being made and always, therefore, in a sense unfinished' (Massey 2005: 107).

Understanding space in its unfolding ongoingness and indeterminacy in the here-now focuses attention on how space is composed of multiple, complex and structured trajectories and practices (Massey 2005). Thus, in this paper, I take up Massey's (2005: 9) notion of space as a socially-produced and 'practiced place' which is always open, contemporaneously plural, emergent and 'under construction' to explore how SFC classroom spaces form and in-form students' and teachers' bodies. In this space, gender identities are enacted as dynamic body-space experiences, which can be explored through the practices, movements, and events in which bodies and spaces co-produce one another.



### **4.3 Gender**

Connell (2009) argues that ‘gender’ has been used to refer to a presumed biological divide between females and males and the psychological, cultural and social differences that correspond to this divide. However, she argues that this presumption is problematic because: (a) gender dichotomies are actually more fluid in reality; (b) gendered identities operate along more of a continuum than a sharply defined dichotomy of differences; and (c) gender is not a natural or essentialized attribute of individuals but is constituted by complex social factors and forces. However, gender involves ‘a specific relationship with bodies’ (Connell 2009: 10) and gender identities are both enabled and constrained by normative social practices which require differently gendered bodies to live, perform and behave in different ways.

Butler’s (1999) theory of gender performativity captures well the discursive work that women do on their bodies in order to become recognizable and acceptable as gendered social subjects. Like Connell, Butler argues that gender is not a ‘natural’ or biological category but a discursive process in which gender continually has to be ‘done’ and done appropriately. Butler sees this ongoing ‘doing’ of gender as a sort of ‘congealing’ which arises from ‘insistent and insidious practice[s] [which are] sustained and regulated by various social means’. Gender, in Butler’s (1999, 43–44) performative understanding is the ‘repeated stylization of the body’ through a ‘set of repeated acts’ so that what is actually a cultural construction looks like it is a ‘natural’ expression.

### **4.4 Materiality**

To understand how gendered bodies materialize in particular spaces I turn to the work of Karen Barad whose theory of agential realism aims ‘to give matter its due as an active participant in the world’s becoming, in its ongoing intra-activity’ (Barad 2007: 136). Barad’s material feminist account argues that ‘bodies do not simply take their place in the world ... rather “environments” and “bodies” are intra-actively constituted’ (Barad 2007: 170). Working from a basis in quantum physics, Barad argues that the process of ‘intra-action’ is fundamentally different to interaction.

Whereas interaction presupposes that things exist as separate and separable entities prior to their coming together, intra-action, in contrast, is about how all bodies are ontologically inseparable: bodies (human and nonhuman) come into being in a mutually co-constitutive emergence. This means that bodies and things are entangled.

If bodies are constituted through and by intra-action and entanglement, then where are their boundaries? This question is crucial in Barad's agential realist account because boundaries are a human invention which work by producing different patterns of mattering in which some bodies come to matter more than others. In agential realism, gender identities are produced through practices which entail en/gendering of bodies and this en/gendering process occurs through the reproduction of gendered boundaries which maintain separations and hierarchies between gendered bodies.

#### **4.5 Choreographies**

Like Massey and McCormack, Bennett (2010) does not see space as an inert background or platform on which human bodies act and make meaning. Rather bodies and spaces are part of a broader assemblage of vibrant matter. Bennett's thinking argues the need to shift from an understanding which focuses on an interiorized phenomenology of human experience to a view that human are one of many agents within vibrant material choreographies which act in concert in a spatially distributed assemblage. This shifts the focus to: what can bodies do in this distributed assemblage? How do bodies work in concert to co-produce identities? How do body-space choreographies shape pedagogic encounters and vice versa?

#### **4.6 Putting Theory to Work to Explore Empirical Instances**

In the analysis which follows these concepts and theories are put to work in an interdisciplinary account of six material moments which explore the practices, techniques and processes which organize, co-ordinate, regulate, and choreograph students' and teachers' bodies to produce particular kinds of affective spaces and gendered practices of mattering. The focus is on the detail, density and specificity of each moment in the fullness of its materiality and how such moments contribute to understanding body-space choreographies as embodied, relational, affective, sensory,

material, spatial practices. Each moment is a distinct ‘hot spot’ which suggests a need to appreciate the differences and complexities of each (and every) pedagogic interaction. I deal in turn with stillness (section 5), movement (section 6) and flow (section 7).

## **5 Stillness**

### **5.1 Material Moment 1: Embodying Philosophy**

*What is striking about the classroom space, is its ‘silence’, ‘calm’, ‘quiet’, ‘like a library’, ‘no chat’, ‘no interaction’, ‘individualized’, and that where Flores [the teacher] or students spoke it was always ‘in a whisper’. Individualized, privatized, silent learning was the dominant mode. The students were spaced out i.e. had chosen seats which physically separated them from each other in a circle around the classroom. They were either using a laptop or were reading from a text. Flores positioned herself not in the teacher’s action zone at the front of the class but joined her students within their circle, where she did her own tasks. When talking to students she went and sat beside them, not across the desk from them, and orientated her body to them. They talked quietly. Whenever Flores left the room everything continued the same.*

These fieldnotes were written after a Philosophy classroom observation. The specificity of this mode of pedagogy contrasted markedly with the noise, chat, movement and interaction in other classes I was observing. An attentive tuning into the mood and ‘feel’ of what was going on provides interesting insights into the combination of epistemological and ontological dimensions of body-space matterings and how these choreographed the specific social formation of this particular classroom.

Flores as Philosophy teacher and students as A Level Philosophy students are, in their bodily comportments and spatial practicings, *doing Philosophy in their bodies*. Their bodies make manifest a corporeal geography as a discipline-specific curriculum subject (Philosophy) and a disciplinary practice (learning to be philosopher and philosophize). The corporeal geography here enacts and embodies a static, calm and

quiet industriousness, in which Flores's whispers and bodily positioning made the classroom appear as 'like a library', a library which resembled that space imagined by T.S. Eliot (1951), a library as a sort of intellectual heaven, a space occupied simultaneously by all the great minds in history. This corporal spatial choreography achieved two things at the same time. On the one hand, the 'spaced out' distribution of bodies made the students bodies visible by the habitual spatial techniques of arranging, isolating, and separating them which, as Gore (2001: 72–74) says, could be seen to 'contribute to the functioning of disciplinary power'. Yet the room and the bodies in it did not feel 'disciplined' by power. The body-space choreography gave the room an affective feeling of an agreed, shared, distributed and concerted attempt to configure Philosophy, the curriculum subject, as a cognitive space of knowing, an epistemological space/state of mind, in which what mattered was not the visibility of the body but the abnegation of the body and the muting of the voice. The 'feel' of the room was that the space had been bodily de-cluttered for its occupation by mind. Where, then, was the gendered body in this?

Mautner (2000: 529) argues that it was Socrates who first 'presented Philosophy as a dialogue to be carried on in a social context'. In my observations, Flores chose to speak quietly to the whole group but only briefly at the beginning and end of the class. The rest of the time, she moved into the circle to sit with individual students and spoke to them in a whisper; students whispered back to her and, occasionally, whispered to each other. These whispered dialogues took the Socratic form of argumentation, in which Flores's method of inquiry was to elicit statements from the student which she then interrogated and examined, thus requiring the student to rebut or clarify their position and knowledge. By this process, Philosophy as a curriculum subject was pedagogically enacted as an ethical, relational and social bodily encounter. This encounter was produced spatially as a dialogic process in which 'the philosopher must literally learn along with his partner in discussion' (Mautner 2000: 529). Flores's bodily performative produced her not as a pedagogic authority but as an interested co-inquirer in philosophical discourse which both combines and undercuts traditional 'masculine' and 'feminine' bodily modes.

Flores did not deploy her teacher's gaze to control the space of the classroom but, rather, deploys her body and its orientations to space as a means to do power

differently. Flores used body-space relations to engender what Kreisberg (1992: 66) calls ‘integrative power’, that is, a form of ‘power with’ as opposed to ‘power over’. As Kreisberg (1992: 66) explains, ‘power with ... emerges within a group of individuals committed to the process of dialogue’ and is characterized by ‘a dynamic ... interaction involving connection, synthesis and mutual growth – co-developing power’. Flores’s body-space tactics, and the practices of power they invoke, might be gendered as hetero-normative feminine, that is, they utilize culturally specific modes of communication which have historically been designated as ‘female/feminine’ (Spender 1980). And yet, paradoxically, these same bodily modes of interaction have also been deemed ‘feminist’ (Oakley 1981) in that they attempt to destabilize ‘traditional’, ‘hierarchical’ power relations and contest ‘the [masculinist/rationalist] ethic of detachment’. The multiple significations of Flores’s use of body-space perhaps, then, testify to Butler’s point that gender performances are fluid and open as well as producing ‘congealings’ which solidify over time.

Flores’s classroom choreography, then, worked via a multiple body-space performative which a) embodied an epistemology (‘this is what philosophical knowledge is’); b) bodied forth a space within which students could learn an ontology (‘this is what being a philosopher is like’) and c) spatialized a bodily performative which put into practice principles in the history of philosophy (Socratic dialogue). The silence in this particular classroom could be seen to speak volumes about how stillness can operate as an epistemological spatial shelter for students and staff to inhabit bodily.

## **5.2 Material moment 2: En/gendering the Tutorial with Body and Gaze in Film Studies**

Classroom observations included sitting in on 1:1 tutorials in which teachers met with students individually during class time to provide them with focused feedback on extended project work. Such tutorial practices, alongside whole class teaching and small group-based classroom activities, are routine in sixth form learning, and it is their very commonality that means that the work of en/gendering pedagogy through bodily materializations often goes unnoticed and ignored.

Like other teachers in my sample, during the 1:1 tutorials Phillip (a Film Studies teacher) used his body and the space of the classroom to demarcate a tutorial action zone. Bodily, this was achieved by positioning his seat and the student's seat at the angle of the tables, thus bringing bodies closer than is usual in classrooms, and making a decisive spatial shift away from the opposing bodily stances which are normal when teachers stand at the front and students sit in rows in front of them. In the 1:1 tutorial, both are seated, bodies are oriented to each other, the volume of talk is lower, and the gaze is more focused on each other. These body-space conditions choreograph a tutorial micro-space, very different from whole class teaching.

However, it was noticeable that, although Phillip did most of the talking irrespective of which student he was with, his bodily stance, advice and rapport were individualized for that particular student, irrespective of the fact that in general he was keen to convey the same three or four key points to all students. My observation notes record:

*Phillip was friendly-sarcastic with one student about his reading technique ... He was very jokey, almost flirty, with a student called BB. One student (Ruana) barely said a word and simply responded briefly to Phillip's many questions. Body posture was much more open and orientated-to with some students than others. One student looked into space while Phillip talked even though P had moved his chair closer and to more directly face him. Some avoided eye contact altogether. One student deliberately moved the chair to be closer, and at 90 degrees.*

The importance of bodily and spatial positioning, and directionality of gaze, was of particular significance during the 1:1 tutorial with Ella. My field notes record that Ella 'talked a lot more' than other students, gave extensive replies to Phillip's questions and had brought in quotes from books to illustrate the direction her extended project research was taking. Her attention was fully directed to Phillip until, about half way through, as Phillip continued to talk, she looked directly at me where I was sitting opposite the tutorial zone, held my gaze and then smiled. It was a warm, wide and lengthy smile unnoticed by Phillip, who continued to talk and hadn't noticed Ella's look at me. I smiled back. After that, she refocused her attention on Phillip. I described this event in my fieldnotes:

*There was what I can only describe as a 'moment of intimacy' with one student, Ella, who, when Phillip was talking and had appeared to have lost track, looked over to me, and we exchanged a smile ... at that moment, my 'outsider' presence was recognized and incorporated into the flow of an interaction which I'd not felt a part of until then.*

I have pondered the meaning of Ella's gaze and smile many times since this material moment which came and went quickly. I have seen it as an eruption into the disciplinary flow of conversation, a stillness which disturbed the normalized routines of pedagogy. I have wondered if Ella's gaze and smile was her way of communicating a moment of doubt about Phillip's advice (she was clearly no longer listening to his words). And there are other possibilities: Was her smile a recognition that she had 'drifted off' while Phillip was talking and that she had failed momentarily in her performance of student? Or, was it an introduction of gendered complicity between us, a recognition that being a 'good and nice' women often entails listening to men talking, even when they don't appear to be saying much of consequence (Spender 1980). Or, was it a sociable gambit, a ploy to admit me (the observing 'outsider') into the charmed circle of the pedagogic encounter, albeit just for an instance? It may be any of these things.

The point is that Ella's smile and my returned smile works as a body-space exemplar of Massey's (2005) point that space is a contemporaneous multiplicity of heterogeneous stories which are unfolding and entangled. Ella's look and smile was a small but consequential material moment – an affective encounter which traversed the room creating a moment of affective connection. Ella's smile could be analysed as an affective instance of gendered dis/ordering, a smile which produced a stillness, an 'out of time moment', emerging from and oddly juxtaposed to the ongoing, everyday, mundane, disciplinary routine of 1:1 tutorial practice. In this reading, Ella's smile produces a moment for the horizontal circulation of power which disrupts the normally hierarchical operations of power. In the stillness of this particular material moment Ella, apparently displayed to my researcher gaze, returns the gaze to me, and our shared gazes (and smiles) both eluded Phillip's own. This body-space choreography, then, produces an escape, a moment of affective effervescence beyond

the normalized routines of pedagogy. From a material feminist perspective, the smile works as an intra-active agent which disturbs the usual boundaries by calling them into notice and making them visible.

A focus on stillness discloses the relation between bodies and spaces as being more than physical, as involving entangled choreographies of space-time-matterings taking place in specific milieus. Stillness is not, then, lack or absence. Stillness is a body-space practice for doing pedagogy through gendered, relational, spatial and material enactments.

## **6 Movement**

### **6.1 Material Moment 3: The Psychology Teacher's Moving Body and the Gendered Microphysics of Power**

I turn now to body-space dynamics in an A Level Psychology class. I focus on the teacher's moving body to illuminate how bodily comportment is put to work pedagogically to choreograph students' bodies into stillness, quietness and obedience. This data extract is from a classroom observation:

*The classroom was quiet and ordered, set out in rows ... the teacher circulated round the room throughout the whole lesson, walking up and down each row. When she'd been round the whole class she began again. She asked the class to stop talking once after 25 minutes and one student in particular to stop talking 15 minutes later. There was a steady hum of low level conversation but the students I overheard were talking about work (Classroom observation).*

The organization of desks in rows is, in itself, an entirely unremarkable way to organize classroom space, so what is interesting about this material moment is the way Marion uses this typical physical classroom layout as an effective means to organize her continuous perambulations around the room and to imbue these movements with pedagogic intent and purpose – her movements induce quiet in the room without any words having to be spoken.



Movement is a key bodily technique in pedagogy. Teachers move; students sit and watch the teacher move. Movement increases the teacher's visibility and positions their body as the centre of social space (Gore 2001). Teachers' bodies in movement in classrooms want to be noticed, they expect to be looked at, and their very movement elicits the gaze of others. Teachers who move expect students to adjust their bodies, while remaining seated, in order to follow the teacher's moving body making its way around the classroom. This bodily deployment of the power of visibility works through ordinary, mundane, everyday pedagogic practices in which the movement of the teacher's body is usually an unquestioned and normalized pedagogic practice.

The visibility of the moving body is interesting for two reasons. First, because 'the visibility of bodies ... under a system of centralized observation [is a way of] at once dividing up space and keeping it open' (Foucault, 1980: 146). In other words, the teacher's moving body ensures that a global and an individualizing mode of surveillance can be enacted. Second, the fact that the classroom space being considered here is a post-compulsory educational space makes Foucault's (1982: 221) contention that 'power is exercised only over free subjects, and only insofar as they are free' all the more pertinent. The point is that, while compulsory schooling deploys bodies and space in conditions of unfreedom, in post-16 pedagogies are relatively more 'free' (see section 3 above), and so bodily strategies depend on the deployment of a more diffuse and embodied microphysics of power. In SFC pedagogies power operates through less cumbersome, more flexible forms of bodily power in which power has already been 'incorporated' into the body i.e. it has gained 'access to the bodies of individuals, to their acts, attitudes and modes of everyday behaviour' (Foucault 1980: 58). In the SFC classroom, therefore, what pertains are 'small-scale, regional, dispersed panopticism' but, crucially, these 'dispersed panopticism' enable power to go 'much further' as it 'passes through much finer channels, and is much more ambiguous' (Foucault 1980: 72). The material moment under consideration here enables us to see how dispersed panopticism is useful in explaining how Marion's moving body en/genders and choreographs classroom space.

Marion adopted the spatial practice of 'circulating marshal' repeatedly in the classes I observed. It was a hallmark of her pedagogic practice. The students remain visible and seated while she moves around the classroom space directing the order, nature

and duration of pedagogic interactions. This bears out Foucault's (1977: 176) contention that 'a relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or an adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency.' The moving body of the teacher is the key to the efficiency and effectivity of pedagogy. This is *her* classroom because *she moves*, she knows it in her body: how many paces it takes from end to end, side to side; how warmth/cold/light are distributed; how all the things are arranged and work with her in this assemblage as a matter of course. As circulating marshal, Marion's moving body instantiates rhythms which gives the usual classroom routines a swing and a tempo which the students bodies have known for a long time. Her moving body invokes a temporal and spatial pulse for the room, providing a cadence for the students to work to. This is evident in that fact that Marion only needed to give intermittent, gentle vocal reminders to maintain order. The power of her moving body is already diffused and invested in her students' bodies.

It is interesting to see that Shulman (2004:504) described classroom teaching as 'perhaps the most complex, most challenging, and most demanding and frightening activity our species has ever invented'. In which case, Marion could be seen to be using her body as a mode of corporeal geography which wards off the fear and challenge of disorder in the classroom. Marion's body-space movements work as refrain, a repeated pattern of activity which demarcates a spatial territory (McCormack 2013) through the kinaesthetic moves of the body. Marion's moving rhythms, her movement habits, work as a sort of 'comforting' pedagogic glue in which known contours appear, reappear and are reworked, in ways which calm and contain both her fears and those of her students. Teacher and students embody the spatial habits of the couplet *she walks/we work* so that walking functions to continually anchor pedagogic practice in a productive here-and-now. This is pedagogy as materialized body-space choreography, in which the hand of pedagogic power, normally so visible, here is at work invisibly to orchestrate bodies and spaces in a complex and patterned bodily geography that appears simply to 'work' – Marion moves around, and the students get on with their work, each knowing – that is, each *knowing in and through their bodies* – their place, role and purpose in this particular pedagogic dance.

But there is another layer at work: Marion is doing pedagogy as a gendered performative in which her moving body ‘contains’ and ‘manages’ the emotional labour of pedagogy. In interview, Marion commented, ‘you need to be there and available if they need the help for five minutes, an hour, or whatever’. This indicates that the teacher’s body is a vehicle for both surface and deep emotional labour: surface labour because Marion presents her body/mind as available in and around the whole room for the duration of the class, and deep labour because the work of pedagogy is about ensuring that the teacher meets students’ needs in ‘whatever’ way it takes and for however long it takes. Hochschild’s (1983) concept of emotional labour is useful here in describing the work the individual has to do on themselves to ensure their outward appearance and inward emotional orientation are appropriate for the role they are required to do. Marion’s embodied stance of ‘circulating marshal’, her continuous walking, is therefore a bodily materialization of the work upon her self she is required to do in order to ensure that that ‘self’ matches the appropriate ‘feeling rules’ of the college she works within. Her walking can be viewed as an embodied materialization of how neoliberalism has commodified her body and her emotions: always on the move means always working means always being available to fulfil students’ needs. Such an interpretation seems to be borne out by her comments in the interview, that ‘

*I’ve done this for donkey’s years, I ... know how they can best work their coursework and come up with as good a grade as they possibly can. And it’s all about grades unfortunately.*

## **6.2 Material Moment 4: En/gendering and Embodying Care in the Psychology Classroom**

In this fourth material moment, I discuss the production of classroom space as a mutually supportive space for students. The material moment I draw on was a rare, small but notable instance of direct physicality between two female students, Kimberley and Tara. As Marion circulated round her Psychology class, she talked with Kimberley who expressed difficulty understanding different types of experiments. Marion used this as an opportunity to explain experimental and non-

experimental research design to the whole class, but Kimberley continued to express confusion. Marion asked the student sitting next to Kimberley ‘Tara, can you give her a hug please?’ Tara hugged Kimberley. Kimberley smiled and hugged Tara back. Marion then asked the class ‘can anyone explain this for me as I’m not making it clear’, and various students had a go at explaining it, until it was apparent that everyone present knew the difference, including Kimberley.

This pedagogic encounter involves the gendered production of what Quinn (2003: 460) calls an ‘emotionally framed’ classroom space, brought into being through the bodily relations of the students at the invitation of the teacher. Marion and with the students put into practice a particularly feminized form of bodily usage – a public display of touching – to co-construct the classroom as a gendered space. The hug integrates learning into A level pedagogy by the performance of normative adult femininity. It takes a small physical act, a hug, and allies it to the commonsense of gendered behaviour i.e. the hug is a socially recognizable and acceptably feminized form of physical and emotional support which one woman extends to another. It was interesting to notice that the students hugged on cue from Marion: they did not question doing so but enacted the hug with speed and alacrity. Not only does this act provide an interesting comment on the current widespread prohibition on forms of physical touching across all education domains in the UK, it served as a prelude to Marion’s request for the students to collectively come together as a spontaneous community to put forward a ‘better’ explanation that she was able to. By this means the hug deflected her authority and, perhaps more importantly, she performatively enacted a form of feminine vulnerability: in this moment, she was not the all-seeing and all-knowing teacher but was a participant in knowledge-sharing.

Doing service and care for others is a gendered act which speaks to the legacies and responsibilities of caring which have traditionally fallen (and still do) onto women. It is this that makes this particular material moment intriguing. It is unlikely Marion would have asked a young man to give another young man a hug, and it is the fact that she asked two young women and they immediately complied which makes this instance of bodily use and display worthy of notice. A feminist ethic of care is about care *for* the other, for those who are more vulnerable, less able to articulate their needs, and less ‘able’ to cope, and has often been seen as a means to ameliorate

inequalities. This gendered history of care lies behind and informs the particularity of this embodied act, a gendered history which Marion, Kimberley and Tara existentially and kinaesthetically tap into in order momentarily to shift away from the individualism of divided, separated bodies to a more relational bodying forth of communitarian goals in which self is affirmed in relation to others. Marion's invitation to 'give her a hug' is an invitation to put the body directly to work as a vital material component to promote the sharing of knowledge.

## **7 Flow**

### **7.1 Material Moment 5: Walking and Waiting in Sociology**

In interview Linda, an A Level Sociology teacher, commented:

*Students have to be at the lesson on time, and then we have the first five minutes usually just making sure everyone's ok. And then I split the hour into ten minute one to ones which happen here in class and the rest of the time they spend in the library, researching, chatting to their friends and researching probably.*

Linda's matter-of-fact disposition of space into a 'here' and a 'there' was part of the commonsense control of space that all teachers use. As Gore (2001: 174) comments, 'the distribution of bodies in space ... contributes to the functioning of disciplinary power'. Like Marion in Psychology, Linda's ability to dispose of classroom space for her purposes is naturalised as an efficient pedagogic decision: her classroom is 'here' and is to be used for tutorials. This decision places the burden of movement and discipline on students: it is *they* who must move away to other spaces and must return at their allotted tutorial time. Students, in fact, are very precise time-keepers and turn up for their tutorial early and wait in line for their allotted 10 minutes, but often find the teacher has overrun – so that 'waiting to be seen' became part of the students' tutorial discourse and routine behaviour, an interesting inversion of the lateness for which students, but never teachers, can be berated.

This dispersal and separation of students' bodies into a 'here' and 'there' spatially and temporally limits the student's access to the teacher's body and knowledge – Linda's

body, is, literally a ‘body of expertise’ for them, and they have a limited, finite amount of time to share her presence. In this spatial regime, students are required to present their bodies to her, on time, and accept dismissal from the teacher’s presence when she says so. Thus, she is still, while the students’ bodies flow from one place to another, temporarily inhabiting them. The stillness-movement flow becomes a refrain (McCormack 2013) which, as mentioned earlier, works to demarcate territories through rhythmic processes that draw in different bodily forces (sensory, kinaesthetic) in a here-and-now constitution of a particular milieu. In the material moment under consideration here, flow of movement constitutes these pedagogic encounters. The refrain emerges in the pedagogic lines made by walking between places (from library to classroom and back, from refectory to classroom and back, from study space to classroom and back), in a repeated rhythm which folds moving and still bodies into a flow of lines and directions, paths to and from, joining different places, choreographing bodies-spaces into temporary un/stable encounters. In these refrains bodily sensoriality is key: the touch of the foot on the floor, the hand brushing the wall, the quick dance move to avoid spilled coffee, the shifts and circulations of moving air, inclining the body in greeting a fellow student or friend, standing shuffling feet while waiting or shifting uncomfortably while leaning against a hard wall for an extended wait. The students’ flowing body lines express and embody the repeatable and portable nature of the refrain in assembling and temporarily holding together many heterogeneous elements (Deleuze and Guattari 1987). The flow of the refrain gives directionality to pedagogy, creates lines and spaces for pedagogy to be performed.

## **7.2 Material Moment 6: En/gendering Apprentice Mentoring in College Classrooms**

Processes of en/gendering space was also accomplished through a ‘apprentice mentoring system’ in which second year A Level students met with and explained their work to first year students. Apprentice mentoring required second year A Level students to participate in verbal and visible public performances across a range of subjects in college in order to develop their own skills and confidence and inform first year students of what to expect in the subsequent year at college.

Interviews with female students participating in the apprentice mentoring system talked about how excruciating they found it, and it was often their own bodily visibility which incurred particularly negative statements:

*Horrible! Because I hate public speaking. So I was standing there and holding my paper and I was shaking and then I went bright red and felt stupid, because all their eyes are on you so it made me feel really uncomfortable (Andrea).*

*The first one was really embarrassing, being looked at, but the second time I could do it and I was fine so (Cary).*

It is worthy of note that it is the visibility of the process that draws comment. What I suggest is operating here is a shaping of gendered identities in which these young women are performatively producing themselves in classrooms as social subjects who are ‘to-be-looked-at’. In Western culture representations of women have long been structured according to a politics of looking which privileges the male gaze, where ‘men look and women construct themselves to-be-looked-at’ (Berger 1972). Perhaps the young women required to put their bodies at the front of the classroom ‘on display’ to a group of gazing others were still learning how to bodily inhabit and acclimatize themselves to a being ‘looked-at’ form of bodily and cultural *habitus*. Their bodily discomfort expresses both resistance and compliance: resistance to embodiment of a gendered performative in which being female, or ‘feminine’, is to accept being looked at as a ‘natural’ thing; and compliance, because students recognized the utility of the apprentice mentoring system in developing communicative skills which would prepare them for higher education and/or work. What these students are expressing acutely is how it *feels* to have your body exposed to the gaze of others and made vulnerable through bodily visibility. The student’s body is being ‘accommodated’ to the dominant and highly gendered social modes of visibility. This feminist appreciation of these young women’s experiences is entangled uncomfortably for them with the valuable pedagogic work done by the apprentice mentoring system. Here what is foregrounded is the importance of ‘learning as participation’ (Lave and Wenger, 1991), even when that participation renders you embarrassed and uncomfortable on account of your bodily visibility to others. Mulvey’s (1975) argument that oppressive, patriarchal power relations

structure the look and the gaze at the female body is relevant here, as is Massey's (1994: 186) comment that 'spaces and places and our senses of them ... are gendered through and through ... in a myriad different ways'. Thus, the student's body is made visible in its gendered particularity, in a relational choreography with other bodies in this emergent body-space classroom assemblage.

## 8 Conclusion

This paper has focused on six empirical material moments to explore how and why bodies matter in post-16 pedagogies. It has focused on processes of en/gendering bodies through mundane classroom practices which are often ignored and disregarded, but do important yet unseen work in reproducing gendered bodily habits, comportments and practices. The close empirical attention to material moments is situated within an innovative interdisciplinary theoretical framework which has provided a range of important analytical concepts, including refrain, affect, corporeal geography etc, and helped to generate some new insights about body-space practices. The central argument is that body-space gendered performatives are dynamic practices of mattering. The question of 'what can bodies do?' in the lived reality of post-16 pedagogic processes moves beyond the notion of pedagogy as an individualized, internalized, cognitive act and, instead, proposes an understanding of the body as key to pedagogy, and of pedagogy as an always emergent event of bodily mattering. It indicates that bodies choreograph pedagogic events in all sorts of subtle, powerful and dynamic ways.

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