Preschools and the Pedagogy of Domestication
The Ideologically Haunted Landscapes of Early Learning

By

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Abstract

This thesis analyzes the “home area” learning center in open-ended preschool classrooms to address the various forms of gendered learning and pedagogy elicited by its presence in geographies of early learning. I argue that the home and block areas spatially and symbolically mimic the traditional division of public and private spheres of sociality characteristic of the patriarchal social order. I suggest that the gendered enactments of space and place in open-ended classrooms function to socialize children into heteronormative forms of sex-role consciousness through what I identify as a spatial pedagogy of domestication. I suggest that this pedagogy is enforced by ideologically haunted landscapes like the domestic landscape of the home area. By outlining critical, feminist, and queer interventions in early learning I suggest that taking a spatial approach provides a more capacious explanatory frame for analyzing how, in a neo-Marxist sense, the ideo-culturally bound relations of production are reproduced through the socializing apparatus of the preschool.
Acknowledgements

When I pictured what the process of writing this thesis would look like I imagined a simple and straightforward writing process; that writing a thesis with three chapters would be like writing three papers with very similar themes and relating them to another to make them fit together as a coherent whole. It seemed easy. That is one of my biggest faults, expecting everything to be easy. Imagine my surprise when it turned out that writing a thesis was really hard.

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Introduction

What’s Patriarchy Got To Do With It?
Gender, Sexuality and Space in Early Childhood

Figure 1. “Pink and Blue” (JeonMee Yoon 2005)

In 2005, visual artist JeongMee Yoon began a photography project called Pink and Blue.¹ Disturbed by the fact that her five-year-old daughter refused to wear, play, or engage with anything that was not colored pink, Yoon set out to photograph children amidst the pink and blue paraphernalia that she suspected likely overwhelmed the landscapes of children’s personal space. Collecting the images of over fifty children, Yoon found her daughter’s insistence that everything in her world be pink was not unique; that children in every socio-economic and cultural location owned and were everywhere bombarded by pink and blue objects that signify the socially established binarism of gender and communicate societal expectations to very young children. The individual photographs in Pink and Blue show children surrounded by their belongings, colored either pink or blue according to their biological sex [Figures 1-3]. The actual children in these photos sit in the center of their bedrooms or playrooms surrounded by all of their toys, clothes, and

¹ Yoon’s Pink and Blue is available in its entirety on her website http://www.jeongmeeyoon.com/
accessories, which are categorically laid out before them in an eerily organized fashion that gestures toward the supposedly natural ordering and rationalization of gendered relations of power. The children in these images become lost among the sea of pink and blue objects which surround them, fading into the backdrop of the popular social imagery that demarcates the divisive and binaristic logic of heteronormative gender identities using the established signifiers pink and blue.

The images in Yoon’s exhibition create a confrontational moment that demonstrates the ubiquitous presence of the iconography of gender in the landscapes of Western childhoods, signified by the color-coding of objects owned and given to children by adults. Dividing and distinguishing the individual geographies of childhood according to this pink or blue color-coding communicates the kind of stereotypical sex-role consciousness that is expected of children as they come to know themselves in, through, and by these overwhelming landscapes. The social proliferation of pink and blue objects, I believe, functions to locate children in what feminist theorist Barry Thorne, in the book “Gender Play: Boys and Girls in Schools,” refers to as the “familiar geography of gender” (1993; 1). These monochromatic geographies colonize the psyches of young children by enforcing strict boundaries of clearly defined gender identities that are understood as natural, essential, and eternal. In her exegesis Yoon writes, “[p]erhaps it is the influence of pervasive commercial advertisements aimed at little girls and their parents, such as the universally popular Barbie and Hello Kitty merchandise that has

Figure 2. “Terry and his Blue things”
(JeongMee Yoon 2005)

Figure 3. “Jeepoo and her Pink things”
(JeongMee Yoon 2005)

developed into a modern trend. Girls
train subconsciously and unconsciously to wear the color pink in order to look feminine” (Yoon 2005).
According to Yoon, the children that she photographed for this exhibition tended to exaggerate their postures in gendered ways in front of the camera. Demonstrating this, Figures 2 and 3 show “Terry” crouching in the forefront of the frame with his chin resting in his hands with a challenging and defiant expression on this face. In contrast to “Terry’s” challenging indifference to the camera, “Jeepoo” is captured towards the back of the frame with her body turned away from the camera’s exposure creating an inverted curtsey, her smile resonating with those on the predominantly white faces of the baby dolls and Disney princesses that surround her. For Yoon, “[t]he saccharine, confectionary pink objects that fill my images of little girls and their accessories reveal a pervasive and culturally manipulated expression of femininity and a desire to be seen” (Yoon 2005).

In her analysis of gender play in schools, Thorne notes that “every few years the cover of Time or Newsweek announces that males and females are fundamentally different, and that ‘they are born that way’” (1993; 2). Thorne argues that although the social imagery presented by the mass media and embodied in popular culture claims that boys and girls are essentially and naturally different from one another, the parents and caregivers of very young children go to great lengths, both intentionally and unintentionally, to secure appropriate gender identifications and performances in their children. She writes, “[p]arents dress infant girls in pink and boys in blue, give them gender differentiated names and toys, and expect them to act differently” (Thorne 1993; 2). Resonating with the confrontational impact of Yoon’s Pink and Blue, Thorne suggests,

children pick up the gender stereotypes that pervade books, songs, advertisements, television programs, and movies. And peer groups, steeped in cultural ideas about what it is to be a girl or a boy, also perpetuate gender-typed play and interaction. In short, if boys and girls are different, they are not born but made that way” (1993; 2. emphasis original).

Yoon’s images provide a striking example of the ways that children are both hailed by, and interpellated into, established social hierarchies of gender, power, meaning, and identity (Pile 1996). Her photographs demonstrate in the most immediate way possible how invasive the materiality of gender enforcement is in the geographies of modern childhoods.
Many feminist scholars of education have argued the patterns of play and identity performance that can be observed of children in schools adhere rather strictly to the requirements of stereotypical and status quo narratives about what it means to be either a boy or a girl. These feminist, queer, and critical scholars of education propose that the educational apparatus contributes to the perpetuation of social relations of power and oppression like sexism, racism, class-elitism, and homophobia (Best 1983; Chen 2009; Epstein and Johnson 1998; Fleer 2005; Gallas 1998a; Golombok and Fivush 1994; Letts and Sears 1999; MacNaughton 2000; Renold 2005; Taylor 2005; Thorne 1993; Weitzman 1979; Yelland 1998). Thorne, for example, notes that “far from muting preexisting forms of stratification, schools may help to reproduce class, racial, and gender inequalities that are fundamental to the larger society” (2005; 51). Debbie Epstein and Richard Johnson likewise argue that schools are a primary mechanism for the regulation of heteronormativity. They write that “sexual identities, whether normatively heterosexual or seen as deviant, are strongly policed and produced in and through schooling” (Epstein and Johnson 1998; 7). While feminist, queer and critical scholars of education address the ways that schools reaffirm dominant and status quo relations of gender, sexuality, race and class, images like those in Yoon’s *Pink and Blue* illustrate that children “come to school already primed for [their] archetypical roles” (Best 1983; 89). Children are trained *subconsciously and unconsciously*, as Yoon suggests, from their earliest infancy by way of iconographies of gender like those displayed in Figures 1-3. So it seems that while schools may contribute to the re/enforcement of stereotypical sex-role narratives and the formation of heteronormative sexual identities, they cannot possibly be the originary site of this phenomenon when so many other landscapes of childhood reiterate the same gendered messages. The problem, it seems, is much larger than that.

Examples of stereotypical sex-role standards of behavior and identity being imposed on children are not hard to come by since they dominate the popular culture of childhood. For example, consider the consumer advertisement for a playhouse called “Rose Petal Cottage”. Rose Petal Cottage is a tent-like play space that parents presumably assemble inside their children’s bedrooms or playrooms. It
contains a miniature kitchenette complete with a washer and dryer, an oven, a vacuum, a sofa, and a crib. Everything about the Rose Petal Cottage is pink and girly and very realistic. The washer and dryer actually spin clothes around, the oven lights up and dings, and the vacuum makes loud and annoying noises—just like the real thing [Figure 4].

![Rose Petal Cottage](image)

**Figure 4. “Rose Petal Cottage”**

The commercial for Rose Petal Cottage shows a young girl who is roughly three or four-years-old moving about the play house busying herself with domestic tasks while the jingle in the background sings: *I love how my laundry gets so clean, taking care of my home is a dream, dream, dream.* In an alternative version of this commercial, marketed toward mothers of little girls, the same childhood domesticity is put on display while a mother’s voice narrates, “*A place of her own, where she can decorate*” (the commercial cuts to the little girl moving a chair and a cradle around trying to make her home look *just right*) “*and entertain her imagination*” (the commercial cuts to the child opening up the pretend washer/dryer saying excitedly, “Time to do laundry!”) then concluding with the mother’s affirmation, “*The Rose Petal Cottage, it’s her place where her dreams have room to grow.*”

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1 To view both versions of the commercial, [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVgHrV9H-8k](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qVgHrV9H-8k) and [http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dXIAjCU8G4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2dXIAjCU8G4). Vintage commercials for the *Suzie Homemaker* line of toys, marketed toward young girls in the 1960s are still accessible online and bare a striking resemblance to the *Rose Petal*
This commercial is plainly degrading to both the mothers and daughters its marketing tactics are directed at. The advertisement assumes that not only will parents be persuaded into buying this toy by images of very young girls vacuuming, decorating, and doing laundry, but that they will also agree and not be disturbed by the fact that a little girl’s dreams be comprised solely of such anachronistic narratives of domestic femininity. That doing the laundry will, indeed, entertain a young girl’s imagination in an exciting and satisfying way that will make her voice intone with glee as she watches clothes move about in the real-to-life spinning washer/dryer. The images above in Figure 4, also used to advertise the Rose Petal Cottage, likewise illustrate the overwhelming excitement that reenacting the tasks of domestic labor will supposedly bring to very young girls. These images show a child with an expression of uncontrollable exuberance while she pretends to cook and care for her baby doll. Parents, feminists, queer, and critical scholars of gender, education or philosophy, would likely contort their faces in disgust when commercials like these interrupt the episodes of Dora the Explorer beloved by their children. We may be appalled at the audacity of these despicable advertisers for reverting to oppressive fantasies of domestic femininity in order to sell products, but do we protest the presence of the very same toys in our children’s preschools?

Most of today’s preschools are organized according to an open-ended approach to early learning that affirms the importance of play in providing developmentally appropriate learning experiences to very young children. Play-based pedagogies are touted as being child-directed because children who attend open-ended programs are free to explore the learning environment on their own and decide for themselves what they will and will not do while they are in the classroom. The recent emergence and popularity of child-directed models for educating very young children has produced the specific arrangement of spatial compartments inside the preschool space. “Home corners,” which are also known as “the home area” in the dominant discourses of early childhood education, are an architectural staple of open-ended models of early learning. These interest areas

*Cottage ads.*
contain the same offensive objects as the Rose Petal Cottage— sinks, stoves, washers, dryers, ovens, vacuums, cribs, baby dolls, dishes and plastic food. Children play in the same heterosexist and misogynist ways in preschool home corners as demonstrated in the commercial for Rose Petal Cottage and yet we—feminist, queer, and critical scholars of early childhood education— for the most part do nothing to intervene with the presence of the oppressive landscapes of domesticity in the geographies of early learning.

Arranging the classroom space into smaller, categorized, and pedagogically specific locales is referred to as the interest area or learning center method of organizing preschool space. This open-ended environmental approach is informed by developmental discourse and has been adopted by the most popular philosophies of educating young children including High/Scope, Reggio Emilia, Waldorf, and many hybrid Montessori models. The spatialized approach to preschool education has been explicitly developed to supplement outdated teacher-directed models. In earlier approaches to preschool education, learning was facilitated by methods of instruction that were directed by educators. Now a primary emphasis is placed on the educative merit of physical learning environments, which are affectionately referred to as the ‘third teacher’ by developmental and educational theorists alike (Cadwell 1997).

Within the interest area approach to equipping the learning environment the “home area” has emerged as a central icon in the developmental discourse of early learning and is often considered a key interest area that is indispensable to any quality classroom layout (Hoffer and Brierley 1981; Hohmann et al. 1995; Weikart 1970). I would like to analyze the home area and the various forms of gendered learning and pedagogy elicited by this particular place in the preschool classroom, as it is positioned in relation to other learning centers such as the block area, in today’s architecture of early learning. This analysis examines preschool space at the intersection of gender, sexuality, ideology, space, and subjectivity. In the chapters that follow I argue that popular North American approaches to preschooling very young children that include landscapes furnished according to what I refer to as the “iconography of domesticity” [Figure 5] function as a socializing apparatus that
reproduces the dominant and status quo social relations of production by securing a hidden curriculum that targets gender and sexuality which I refer to as the pedagogy of domestication. 

In the article “Queering Home Corner,” published in the November 2005 issue of Contemporary Issues in Early Childhood Education, Affica Taylor and Carmel Richardson suggest that the domestic landscapes of homecorners in preschool classrooms reaffirm hegemonic social relations of power that are organized according to the logic of patriarchy and function to enforce the compulsory heterosexuality of very young children who attend these kinds of early learning programs. They suggest that discourses on children, childhood and early learning are dominated by conceptions that figure childhood as immune to the effects of social hierarchies of power and oppression such as sexism, racism and homophobia. These discourses figure childhood as absolutely innocent of and inviolable by the hegemonic forces of heteronormativity. Presenting their argument, they write that “not only do we dispute the axiom of child innocence but we argue that the very (Western and adult) discourse of childhood innocence belies it’s own normalizing function. In other words, there is something not so innocent about the effects of the discourse itself” (Taylor 2005; 163). They propose that taking a Foucauldian position when analyzing home corners in early learning environments, and the
hegemonic discourses about children and childhood that are used to justify the presence of these gendered areas, will allow theorists of early childhood education to see the home corner “as a disciplinary mechanism that simultaneously limits the ways in which adults make sense of childhood and regulates the repertoire of identities that children have available to them” (Taylor 2005; 163).

Taylor and Richardson astutely note that the sediments of traditional modes of thought have been so ingrained in the current discourses of early childhood education that they have congealed into a set of unexamined assumptions regarding the nature of children and their development that are simply taken for granted by pedagogues today. They identify the educational scholarship of Rousseau, who was a romanticist when it came to children and human nature, as one point of origin for the now hegemonic categorical imperative to “innocence” all discourse regarding children and childhood (Taylor 2005). Taylor and Richardson remind us that “Rousseau argued that childhood is a pure and natural state and that it is incumbent upon adults to protect this innocence. When Froebel established the first kindergarten—literally [in] the children’s garden—... he was heavily influenced by Rousseau’s elision of childhood with nature” (Taylor 2005; 164). The influence of Rousseau and Froebel is evident in the principles of best practice proliferated within the pre-service programs and philosophies of early learning that are popular today. Preschool programs that affirm the notion that learning and development are processes of natural flourishing, that children are innocent and must only be supported minimally in preschools, and that free play is the best and most authentic pedagogy, are heavily influenced by both of these scholars. Taylor and Richardson argue that these conceptions have “maintained [a] strong currency throughout the nursery school movement of the early twentieth century...and they continue to influence the design of contemporary early care and educative program environments” (2005; 164).

The open-ended and play-based pedagogies practiced today are expected to conform to the standards of Developmentally Appropriate Practice. According to Taylor and Richardson,
the romantic metaphor of natural childhood innocence has been subsumed within the educational science of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and reconfigured as a foundational premise of age-appropriate—and hence protective, nurturing and enabling—sequence and order. In the late 1980s, DAP became the National Association for the Education of Young Children’s first definitive statement on good practice” (Taylor 2005; 164).

Their analysis suggests that the romanticized figure of the innocent child, when coupled with an educational discourse designed to protect the inherent innocence of childhood, erases gender and renders child sexuality nonexistent. Taylor and Richardson use the home corner, a highly gendered area in preschool classrooms, in order to engage with this disturbing absence of gender and sexuality in the justificatory accounts given by today’s mainstream scholars of early childhood education. Within open-ended approaches to facilitating early learning and the scholarly discourses that support them, Taylor and Richardson argue that “the trope of appropriateness, drawing its authority from a Western-scientific paradigm, is firmly located within a moral regime that is inextricably bound up with prelapsarian (or sexually innocent) and heteronormative conceptualizations of childhood” (2005; 165). Their analysis of the preschool home corner illuminates the ways that policies of Developmentally Appropriate Practice function to cover up gender coercion and compulsory heterosexuality in early learning. They write,

by its own orthodoxy, home corner’s stylized façade presents a classic vision of domestic utopia...the child-sized home, replete with miniaturized furniture and artifacts, suggests an idealized and uncomplicated childhood that is both pure and unsophisticated...The familial play that occurs within the confines of home corner is assumed to be normal and natural, timeless and universal” (Taylor 2005; 165).

I would like to probe further into the critical direction suggested by Taylor and Richardson in order to offer a radical critique of the presence of domestic space in the architecture of early learning. In the chapters that follow, I argue that the home area is an ideologically haunted landscape that harkens back to a dominant social imagination that historically emerged under the culturally imperial regime of the British empire. As an ideologically haunted landscape, the preschool home area is
deeply bound by narratives of feminine identity and embodiment characteristic of the Victorian cult of domesticity.

In chapter one, "Landscapes of Early Learning: Gender Sociality and Play," I provide a brief overview of the dominant North American approach to early childhood education, the emphatic allegiance assumed by today’s pedagogues to the open-ended and child-directed models of early learning described above, and what developmental and educational theorists have to say about the presence and pedagogical justifications of “home-space” in the architecture of early learning. From there I offer an overview of the ways feminist intervention has critically engaged with the dynamics of gender, power, and socialization in early childhood education. Like Taylor and Richardson, I propose that the liberalist rhetoric of exploratory freedom so pervasive in the dominant discourses on early learning and play-based pedagogy, creates a discursive veil that covers up the ways that gender pressure and compulsory heterosexuality are enforced by the sociality of early learning.

After surveying feminist interventions in early childhood education, I suggest that in order to provide a radical critique of home-space in early learning, theorists need to de-familiarize themselves with the landscape of domesticity and its assumed pedagogical value. The second chapter, “The Ideological Origins of Domestic Space,” constructs a feminist genealogy of the colonial origins and imperial emergence of the social practice of domestic space in order to reframe the socio-cultural significance and potential psychic utility of this particular locale in preschool classrooms. Connecting the historical origins of the domestic landscape to its modern enactments in early learning lends access to a radically different theoretical perspective from which questions that are unavailable to us from standard developmental and educational positions can be asked. By tracking the emergence of domestic space under the British imperial order, I propose that these homely spaces ought to be rendered suspect and argue that they are the lynchpin of a hidden ideological curriculum that I refer to as the pedagogy of domestication.

The third chapter, “The Psychic Effects of Preschool Space,” takes up the recent psychoanalytic engagements of spatial theorists by introducing critical
human geographies into the analysis of preschool space. Addressing critical human geography and psychoanalysis, and utilizing the feminist genealogy of domestic space offered in chapter two as a point of entry, I interrogate the presence of home-space in early learning and argue that the insidious ubiquity of this particular locale in the architecture of preschool is bound to a historically rooted dominant cultural identity predicated on patriarchy, racial superiority, and heteronormativity. Drawing from the work of theorists who posit identity formation in early childhood as a deeply spatial phenomenon, spaces as socially produced in ways that reproduce hegemonic relations of production, and ideologically constituted spaces as psychically coercive, I argue that the domestic iconography of preschool home areas function as a locus of ideological signification that has been built directly into the surfaces and materiality of early learning environments. I then offer a substantive engagement with the psychic implications of physical space, connecting the concepts developed throughout this analysis to the home-space of the preschool. I suggest that dominant modes of heteronormatively gendered sociality, deeply rooted in British imperial narratives of cultural identity, are reinstated by the spatial practices enacted today in popular philosophies of Western preschool education.

Early childhood educational and developmental theory ought to be cognizant of the scholarship available in critical human geography and the historical origins of the landscapes present in early learning environments. Bringing together the seemingly disparate disciplines of early childhood education, feminist historiography, and critical human geography to analyze preschool space has the potential, I believe, to disclose exciting new directions for future scholarship. Mapping preschool classroom space using critical human geography while keeping the origins of socially produced spaces in mind, provides more palpable avenues for examining the psychic effects of preschool space and how a dominant patriarchal order becomes reinstated by recruiting the participation of very young children in established social hierarchies of power and oppression. Applying critical human geography to early childhood education makes it possible to map out the web of socio-psychic relations constituted by, and with reference to, the physical landscapes that constitute the everyday landscapes of childhood, and has the
potential to show how, in the most concrete and tangible ways, patriarchy remains alive and well, living in our preschools.
Chapter One

Landscapes of Early Learning: Gender, Sociality, and Play

Figure 6. A classroom equipped with interest areas

Lost from view are the deeper social origins of spatiality, its problematic production and reproduction, its contextualization of politics, power, and ideology.

~Eward W. Soja

Gender in Preschool

Preschool classrooms are deeply gendered places. The “home” and “block” areas so ubiquitous to early learning environments are mimetic childhood versions of the traditionally constituted patriarchal division between the public and private spheres of sociality. We usher our children into a psychically domineering
heteronormative order when we design preschools with gendered landscapes familiar to patriarchy. According to Kathy Lowe, “the games that girls and boys play in the early childhood setting are designed to practice and reinforce the rules of engagement for adult behavior” (Yelland 1998; 209). Children’s play is serious business. Through play children develop an understanding about what narratives of identity and embodiment are socially and culturally intelligible. Susan Danby argues that “as girls and boys organize and build their social worlds of play through their talk-in-interaction, they are building their social orders” (Yelland 1998; 175). Through the medium of space we fashion one of the child’s earliest social experiences according to the material logic of patriarchy, the most domineering and all-encompassing social order there is. Dividing preschool space into gendered learning centers such as the “home corner” and “block area,” literalizes deeply gendered and incredibly sexist modes of social organization within the everyday, material worlds that children inhabit. Designing the landscapes of early learning according the heteronormative logic of patriarchal relations of gender and power communicates to children, in the most concrete and tangible way, that stereotypical sex-role consciousness is natural and immutably true.

One particularly telling pedagogical experiment offers an excellent example that clearly demonstrates the gendered design and use of space in a typical preschool classroom [Figure 6]. In the chapter, “Improving our Gender Equity ‘Tools’ A Case for Discourse Analysis,” from Niccola Yellend’s “Gender in Early Childhood” (1998), feminist theorist of early education Glenda MacNaughton presents a socio-spatial experiment carried out by an Australian educator who was disturbed by the divisive gender occupancy of her students in the various learning centers of her open-ended classroom. Over an eight month period this teacher struggled with the fact that “a particular group of boys dominated the [block] area and not one girl entered” (Yelland 1998; 152; emphasis added).

This classroom, like most preschools, was organized such that the block and home areas were located directly beside one another, divided by a physical border of low-lying toy shelves [Figure 6]. The teacher was frustrated to find that the physical partitions between these two interest areas tended to partition off students
according to their gender identity as well. The girls played in the home area and the boys played in the block area, each recreating and enacting the stereotypical characters and storylines appropriate to their gender. The imaginative play exhibited by children while inhabiting these areas of the room was dominated by the Mommy, Daddy and baby characters of typical home corner storylines versus the firefighters, policemen, and trucker characters of standard block area play. To intervene, the educator removed the physical barriers between these two interest areas, creating one large area that housed the play materials of both. She hypothesized that by integrating gendered spaces into one another the gendered play performances of her students would become less rigid and more fluid, and perhaps even eventually dissipate. The educator found, however, that

...despite her removal of the physical barriers, such as shelves, between home corner and block play areas, the children took three months to mix the equipment between them [...] Several children re-created the areas in traditionally gendered ways [and] despite experimenting with 'gender-neutral' physical structures [the educator] couldn't significantly shift the gender divisions between boys and girls use of space (Yelland 1998; 152).

Removing the border between the two stereotypically gendered spaces did not rehabilitate a classroom social dynamic predicated upon the binaristic division between the 'two' sexes. After all, the presence of the iconic objects that signify gender in stereotypical ways– baby dolls, toy trucks, a kitchenette, and a fire station– bound by essentialized narratives of gender stability, remained pronounced and present in the classroom. MacNaughton concludes, and I strongly agree, that it should hardly be surprising that providing children with gendered play materials results in gendered forms of play. She writes:

...the equipment provided children with clear messages about who should play in each domain and what storylines should inform the play in each domain [in this case] children were learning how to think and act in homecorner and block play by absorbing the gender messages embedded in the naming, organization and presentation of the materials in each domain (Yelland 1998; 154).

This chapter addresses the current popular approaches to early childhood education in North America, and the ways that heteronormative white patriarchy is
reinstated through the socializing apparatus of the preschool. I begin by briefly presenting the historical emergence of North American philosophies of educating young children by drawing from the foundational works of Froebel, Spencer, Piaget, Dewey, and Weikart. By taking up the work of these scholars, I demonstrate how the key principles of their educational philosophies shaped the current discourse about how best to educate children. Using Ontario pre-service textbooks as a guide—with which I myself was taught during my training to be an early childhood educator—I summarize the traditional principles that continue to infuse current conceptions about quality childcare as developmentalism, exploratory freedom, and environmentalism. These principles reveal themselves in the logic that both informs and justifies the spatial organization of modern preschools: the prevalence of open-ended models of early learning in North America, the unflinching belief in current paradigms for understanding development, and the notion that the primary purpose of the preschool is to support the naturally occurring process of flourishing that happens as children mature from early infancy to adolescence.

In this analysis of early childhood education I have chosen a very particular groups of theorists and have done so for several reasons. First, it is largely due to the influence of these pedagogues that the open-ended style of both educating young children and equipping the learning environment has become popularized in North America. Second, as a certified early childhood educator who studied in one of Ontario’s most prominent pre-service programs, I have chosen the theorists who were presented to me during my studies as the preeminent scholars of developmental and educational theory. Finally, the intentional selection of these theorists helps to locate myself squarely in my own geo-social context of praxis—the greater Toronto area, Ontario and North America.

By tracing the traditions that over time developed into current practice, I suggest that the dominant discourse on children and childhood is governed by an uncritically assumed developmentalism that ultimately functions to recast the socially mediated process of maturation as universal, natural, and inevitable. Marilyn Fleer argues that “‘Child Development’ in the context of early childhood education, as presently conceptualized and enacted in English-speaking countries,
has become a taken-for granted cultural practice based on ages and stages which has been normalized” (Feel 2005; 5). Fleer’s analysis shows that “child development” is socially constructed in culturally specific ways. She warns us that “culture not only determines the principles for defining development, but frames the contexts in which the development of children is supported” (Fleer 2005; 5). The recasting of these Western conceptions of development as universal and absolute, when combined with what can be identified as the liberalist rhetoric of freedom and exploration so prevalent in the pedagogic theory of today, renders virtually invisible how the dominant patriarchal order is reinstated through pre-schooling children. By outlining critical, feminist, and queer interventions in early learning, I suggest that taking a spatial approach provides a more capacious explanatory frame for analyzing how, in a neo-Marxist sense, the social and ide-o-culturally bound relations of production are reproduced through the social apparatus of the preschool.

**Tracing the Sediments of Tradition in Early Childhood Education**

In his book “A History of Childhood” (2001), Colin Heywood suggests that “even in the twentieth century, old ways of thinking about childhood died hard...the child [was traditionally regarded] as an ‘incomplete organism’ which developed in different directions in response to different stimuli...adulthood was the critical stage of life for which childhood was merely a preparation” (2001; 3). Heywood’s account implies that although traditional paradigms for understanding children and childhood were difficult to wrest from our collective imaginaries, we have, indeed, superseded them today. Yet as I see it, the sediments of these traditional ways of understanding the growth of children and conceiving their development are still quite present in the dominant discourses on early childhood education. Old ways of thinking about development and early childhood education continue to underwrite the day-to-day pedagogies of North American preschool teachers, although their
presence is often very difficult to articulate.¹ Philosopher of education, Kieran Egan, notes:

...[d]uring the late nineteenth century the modern apparatus for schooling everyone was put in place...[and] the ideas about education shaped these new state schools into the forms we have lived with ever since, particularly the ideas about children’s minds, their modes of learning and development, which have determined the curriculum and the organization of schools (Egan 2002; 3. emphasis added).

For Egan as well, then, the developmentalism alluded to by Heywood and inspired by the progressive movement in North American educational theory remains fixed and foundational to how we educate young children today. This developmentalism, which I discuss in detail below, is but one example of how the sediments of tradition still inform – and to a certain extent determine – our current pedagogic practices. The patriarchal tradition of dividing spheres of sociality, along with the narratives of gendered and sexual identification that prop up and sustain such a division, is another.

Today’s popular approaches to teaching very young children are modeled according to an open-ended philosophy of early learning that emphasizes the importance of explorative freedom within the learning environment (Braun and Edwards 1972; Cadwell 1997; Hohmann et al. 1995; Taylor 2005). The principle of exploratory freedom – the value of freely exploring one’s environment and learning best by being and doing – is a pedagogical approach that was originally generated out of the experiential and constructivist conceptions of learning outlined in the canonical works of educational psychologists such as Lev Vygotsky, Jean Piaget, Albert Bandura, Erik Erikson, and David P. Weikart. The late nineteenth and early

In the interest of brevity I am unable to provide a full account of the educational and psychological philosophies of each of these thinkers. Although the philosophies of these educational psychologists varied in important ways, each subscribed to some form of constructivist conception of learning and knowledge. Insofar as the progressive shift in educational thought that characterized modern education was dedicated to a naturalized approach to teaching and learning, progressivism, constructivism, play-based pedagogies, and developmental psychology, are all bound to one another by the sediments of the historical traditions they were founded upon.

**Constructivism**

According to constructivist approaches to education, learning is the process of creating increasingly complex cognitive structures (Papalia et al., 2004). Taking a constructivist position regarding the process of learning, Jean Piaget argues that “knowledge arises neither from objects nor the child, but from interactions between the child and those objects” (quoted in Hohmann et al., 1995; 15). Constructivism postulates that knowledge is a constructed set of mental schemes and that “[a]s children acquire new information their schemes become more and more complex” (Papalia et al., 2002; 29). For constructivist thinkers, knowledge is something that is built or constructed using the materials– or objects– gathered by and encountered while having experiences in the “real world.” Consequently, the knowledge that a child constructs over time will only be as complex as the richness and developmental appropriateness of her various learning experiences allow (Hohmann et al. 1995; Papalia et al. 2002; Piaget 1954). The learning environment
is crucial for constructivist pedagogies because this conception figures knowledge as dependant on having manipulative experiences with objects and materials. Hohmann and Weikart emphasize how vital exploration and experience is for learning within constructivist conceptions. They explain their constructivist approach as follows:

...a child’s actions, and reflecting on those actions, result in the development of thought and understanding. Thus...learning involves both the physical activity of interpreting these effects and the mental activity of fitting the interpretations into a more complete understanding of the world (Hohmann et. al., 2002; 17. emphasis original).

The constructivist conception of maturation is the most prevalent paradigm for conceiving child development assumed by today’s philosophies of education young children. Reggio Emilia, Montessori, Waldorf, and High/Scope each subscribe to a constructivist understanding of cognitive development. In fact, the standard Western paradigms of child development have applied the constructivist mode of explaining developmental maturation to other domains of growth, including physical and socio-emotional maturation (Fleer 2005). Constructivism involves a certain stable and sequential form of developmental maturation that graphs a narrative of predictability and stability onto the various processes of growth that occur in early childhood. The narratives of stability, predictability, and normalization involved in constructivist conceptions of development are very much rooted in its theoretical predecessor, modernity’s progressive shift in educational thought.

**Progressive Education**

The progressive shift in education began in the late nineteenth century as a reactionary movement away from classical pedagogies that were organized according to the rote memorization of academic knowledge, teacher-directed instruction, and a unidirectional relationship between teachers and students whereby the teacher’s role was understood as the imparting knowledge into the
minds of students (Braun and Edwards 1972). The classic instruction-based approach to education implied that students were passive receptacles for knowledge, whose identity and personhood was entirely inconsequential to both the process of learning and to their status as knowers. In their pedagogic manual on the High/Scope educational philosophy entitled “Educating Young Children” (1995), Hohmann and Weikart note:

...both the progressives and the cognitive-developmentalists [one fraction of constructivism] view learning as developmental change...Progressives believe that the aim of education should be to support children’s natural interactions with people and the environment, because this process of interaction stimulates development (Hohmann et. al., 1995; 16. emphasis original).

They summarize that “the progressive view of learning can be expressed as an “active change in patterns of thinking brought about by experiential problem solving”” (Hohmann et. al., 1995; 16. emphasis original).

The scholarship of the early and late modern progressive theorists instigated a Copernican revolution in Western educational practice. Progressive theorists considered the classical models of teaching and learning to be inauthentic and suggested that it is better to learn for one’s self by way of self-initiated, first-hand experiences than by simply being told orally, by teachers, what one must know (Braun and Edwards 1972; Dewey 1938; Egan 2002; Papalia et al. 2002; Piaget 1954). Progressive theorists advocated pedagogies that distinguished themselves from cerebral conceptions of the learning process. Disenfranchising themselves from classical theorists of education in this way, the scholarship of progressive educators affected an important shift in educational teleology. In contrast to the classical models whose merits were judged by what came to be known, progressive educators, much like today’s pedagogues, stressed the importance of the learning process: it’s quality, authenticity, and relevance with regard to who the child was and the social context in which she lived. According to Egan, early progressivism was characterized by the conviction that, “child-centeredness and science together could provide the engine that would modernize education” (2002; 8).
British forerunner of the progressive movement, Herbert Spencer, strongly criticized the classical approach to educating children for being far too alienated from the everyday worlds of children and therefore entirely ineffective (Egan 2002; Spencer 1963). Egan relates Spencer’s distain for classical pedagogy as follows, “[e]ducation, [Spencer] wrote, had been most often conducted by forcing irrelevant information into the minds of reluctant children by methods that were patently barbarous...instead we should make the curriculum of direct relevance and utility to the lives our students would actually lead” (2002; 15). Progressive educational psychologists John Dewey and G. Stanley Hall agreed with Spencer’s objections about the passivity and alienation consequent of conceptions of education and learning assumed by the classical approach. Taking a constructivist position to their progressive educational thought, they claimed that “a human being’s capacity to think is based on his physical, manual, and manipulative experiences” (Braun and Edwards 1972; 162). Early scholars of progressive education figured learning as something that is accomplished best by physical, manual, and manipulative experiences, rather than classical teacher-directed and instruction based methods. There is a striking resemblance between the claims of these progressivists and the constructivists that followed them.

**Naturalized Pedagogy**

In contrast to the intensely formal and sanitized pedagogies of the classical era, progressivists proposed that education ought to be naturalized. The turn toward naturalism mandated that learning both incorporate and be incorporated into the everyday lives of children. This is a pedagogical principle still prevalent today as is evident in the popularity of play-based pedagogies. Spencer was adamant that since children learn so easily in “the household, the streets, and the fields” both the school environment and the educational encounter should be organized so as to resemble, as closely as possible, “the household, the streets, and the fields” (Egan 2002). Dewey often reiterated the naturalness of this new child-centered approach to learning and pedagogy in his educational writing. He argued that, “[t]he school should grow gradually out of the home life; it should take up and continue the
activities with which the child is already familiar in the home...It is the business of
the school to deepen and extend [the child’s] sense of values bound up in his home
life” (quoted in Hohmann et. al., 1995; 69).

The work of German pedagogue and founder of Europe’s first kindergarten
program, Friedrich Froebel, proved an important predecessor of both Dewey and
Spencer, paving the way for naturalized pedagogies with his philosophy of
education. Froebel’s educational model exemplifies the shift toward a naturalized
approach to early learning, making him a primary source of inspiration for the
North American models of early learning practiced today. Taylor and Richardson
write:

...with more than a few echoes of the prelapsarian Garden of Eden, Froebel’s
first kindergarten classroom was imagined as the extension of the garden. It
was designed to be a space in which children, in a state of natural innocence,
would continue to explore and investigate the world through free play
(Taylor 2005; 164).

Froebel argued that the educational encounter ought to be fashioned to resemble
the everyday lives of children as much as possible. Whereas the progressivism of
Dewey and Spencer emphasized the importance of fashioning early learning
according to the lives of children outside of education, in the “real world,” Froebel
emphasized play (Braun and Edwards 1972; Taylor 2005). He considered play to be
the most naturally occurring thing in a child’s life, and was one of the first educators
to advocate for the developmental importance of play– a notion that is quite taken
for granted today. Froebel proposes the following:

...[p]lay is the highest phase of child development– of human development at
that period...play at this time is not trivial, it is highly serious and of deep
significance. Cultivate it and foster it...the spontaneous play of the child
discloses the future inner life of the man (quoted in Braun and Edwards
1972; 68).

Froebel advocated play as a child’s most natural inclination and thought that
effective philosophies of early learning require a play-based pedagogy. Because of
his emphatic allegiance to a child’s free play, Braun and Edwards write, “Froebel had
to build into his system both respect for the individuality of each child and an
organized, articulated curriculum designed to insure the step-by-step progress of that child through the subjects necessary for his education” (1972; 67. emphasis original). Due largely to the work of Froebel and those inspired by his scholarship, play is still the pedagogy for educating young children.

The emergence of a discourse on childhood that emphasized the naturalness with which children learn required an incredibly romanticized conception of children. Tracing the origins of open-ended preschools, Taylor and Richardson also note the idealization of children and childhood by early modern scholars of education. They argue that “the powerful European discourse of childhood innocence is a construct of the Romantic era, often traced back to Rousseau’s 1972 canon work Emile...Rousseau argued that childhood is a pure and natural state and that it is incumbent upon adults to protect this innocence” (Taylor 2005; 164). They elaborate on this proposition by relating the continued survival of traditional conceptions of child innocence, “[d]iscourses of nature, innocence and free play maintained strong currency throughout the nursery school movement of the early twentieth century and they continue to influence the design of contemporary early care and educative program environments” (Taylor 2005; 164).

In the book, “Queering Elementary Education” (Letts and Sears 1999), Cahill and Theilheimer argue that the adult categorical imperative to “innocence” all conceptions of children and childhood functions to erase the very real presence of influential gender identifications and sexuality during childhood. They explain that because society figures children and childhood as inherently and unequivocally innocent, the possibility that children are gendered and sexual beings, and childhood can be a sexually charged time of life, is rendered impossible. They also point out the ways that abstract and imaginary conceptions of children shape the lives that children actually lead. These scholars make the following suggestion:

As a society, we create definitions about children, and our expectations of them follow from these definitions. A common belief in the innocence of children results in the belief that children have no sexuality...that sexuality has nothing to do with children, other than that we need to protect children from their own sexual curiosity and from predators (1999; 41).
The accounts offered by Taylor and Richardson and Cahill and Theilheimer each identify the master-narrative of absolute innocence regarding children and childhood as a trope that functions to erase the very real presence of heteronormative coercion in schools and the existence of sexual desires on the part of very young children. Each of these scholars argue that the strength of the dominant discourses that figure children and childhood as absolutely innocent is derived from the long-standing tradition of educational thinkers who have figured children in this way. All of these theorists identify the romanticism of modernity’s “naturalized” approach to education, the liberalism that characterized the progressive movement in educational theory, and the dominant Western paradigm of child development as traditions that still underwrite the pedagogical practices of today.

For Froebel, Spencer, and Dewey, naturalizing education meant not only bringing the everyday experiences of students into the classroom but grounding the entire learning encounter using these experiences, thereby predicking the educational encounter on the conventionality of a given socio-cultural context. Pedagogues of every style have long touted early childhood education as the best circuit of sociality by which young children are ushered into their broader culture as future citizens and community members (Braun and Edwards 1972; Dewey 1930; Egan 2002; Heywood 2001; Hoffer and Brierley 1981; Hohmann et al. 1995; Piaget et al. 1929; Piaget 1954; Rousseau and Foxley 1974; Weikart 1970). The emergence of naturalized pedagogies was an important precursor to both the character and citizenship programs in education of today since they were dedicated to binding, as closely as possible, the outside world –including its socio-political ideo-cultural order– to the educational encounter. Of this Braun and Edwards write:

...the progressive viewpoint has been woven into the fabric of American education...progressive education is still very much with us, and so are the conservative trends as manifested by the emphasis on perpetuating the skills, knowledge, and values of the past (Braun and Edwards 1972; 147 emphasis added).
Critical philosophers of education are quick to note the tendency of traditional pedagogies to place a high educational value on hegemonic cultural reproduction. A well-functioning apparatus of cultural reproduction in a social order predicated upon patriarchal modes of organization would, by definition, secure the reinstatement of stereotypical sex-role identifications in the minds of those subjected to and subjects of that order. If the modern preschool was produced as a product of traditional practices that sought out such ends, then it remains bound by this legacy. The shift toward “naturalized pedagogies” played a crucial role in simultaneously securing and rendering invisible the reproduction of hegemonic relations of production through the modern socializing apparatus of education.

**Developmentalism**

Progressivism was founded on the affirmation that the best and most lasting learning experiences happen in the most organic and spontaneous way possible. According to Egan, “the most fundamental tenet of progressivism is that to educate children effectively it is vital to attend to children's nature, and particularly to their modes of learning and stages of development” (2002; 5). To illustrate his point, Egan draws from Dewey who argues, “education...must begin with a psychological insight into the child’s capacities...The law for presenting and treating [educational] material is the law implicit within the child’s own nature” (quoted in Egan 2002; 6). The “nature” of the child alluded to by Dewey and Spencer is a developmental process of maturation that occurs according to what they conceived of as an essential and universal human telos. I refer to this characteristically Western and totalizing mode of conceiving of human maturation as **developmentalism**. Fleer objects to the fact that Western paradigms of development are consistently recast by theorists as universal modes according to which children everywhere develop. Fleer writes, “‘Child Development’...now represents a static and monocultural view of children, notably Western middle-class children and their families” (Fleer 2005; 6). The proliferation of hegemonic narratives of child development, and the recasting of specifically white, Western paradigms of growth and maturation as natural, inevitable, and universal, are the foundations upon which **developmentalism**
rests. Resonating with Fleer’s argument regarding child development, Taylor and Richardson argue:

...[t]oday it is scientific discourse, or to be more specific the discourse of developmental psychology, that prevails in early childhood education. The Romantic metaphor of natural childhood innocence has been subsumed within the educational science of developmentally appropriate practice (DAP) and reconfigured as a foundational premise of age-appropriate— and hence, protective, nurturing and enabling— sequence and order (Taylor 2005; 164).

Developmentalism was granted the authority of scientific legitimation by the behavioral movement of psychology and the cognitive shift in pedagogy of the twentieth century. Braun and Edwards note that “an interest in child development research was the motivation behind” the emergence of preschooling children in North America (1972; 150). They suggest that “[t]wentieth century attempts to determine teaching-learning principles have been based substantially in psychology” (1972; 180). The alignment of education with developmental psychology was a strategic alliance since, “early childhood education gained more stature and acceptance [when] allied with the new science of child study” (1972; 343). Braun and Edwards suggest that under the influence of the emerging educational and developmental psychology of the early twentieth century, preschools became an idealized placeholder for the collective hopes of an emotionally healthy future society— particularly in the post-war context within which the spike in popularity of early childhood educational occurred:

Preschools would be an instrument whereby the new generation of children, emerging relatively unscathed from their permissive and loving homes, would grow toward a full and free maturity never before seen...early childhood education and psychiatry became fused (Braun and Edwards 1972; 162).

The solidification of the principles of developmentalism, exploratory freedom, and environmentalism in today’s most popular approaches to educating young children owes much to the escalation of the psychological study of children of the mid-
The psychological movement in educational theory had a huge effect on early childhood education. During the mid-twentieth century peak of popularity for both behaviorism and cognitive constructivism, psychology took the shape of this emerging developmentalism and the child became the psychological subject par excellence. This shift in psychology was intensified by the fact that, as mentioned, many prominent scholars of education and development–Dewey, Piaget, Weikart, Bandura–were also trained psychologists (Braun and Edwards 1972; Hohmann et al. 1995; Papalia et al. 2002). Under their influence, the burgeoning obsession with early learning, particularly between the ages of 0 to 6, emerged (Papalia et al. 2002). Hohmann and Weikart demonstrate a strict adherence to this developmentalism while adding a sense of urgency to the matter by quoting developmental psychologist Rima Shore who argues that “early experiences have a decisive impact on the architecture of the brain, and on the nature of adult capacities. They directly affect the way the brain is ‘wired’” (quotes in Hohmann et. al., 1995; 16).

Developmentalism dictates that the first six years of life are of critical importance for establishing the foundational bedrock upon which future capacities will be built. Weikart writes, "[t]here are times during the life cycle when certain kinds of things are learned best or most efficiently" (Hohmen et. al. 1995; 15). According to developmental models, the earliest years of life are a period characterized by a process of growth whose teleological unfolding is akin to ascendance on a staircase. Founder of the popular North American High/Scope method and prominent figure of the North American laboratory movement for preschooling young children, Dr. David P. Weikart, consistently echoes the perenniality

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3 There are two constructivist conceptions about how ascension along the developmental sequence of a particular domain occurs. These are the mechanistic and the organismic understandings of developmental progress. According to mechanistic theorists, development is a passive process where growth in a particular domain is determined by stimulus alone. Mechanistic conceptions of development imply a gradual and stable process of maturation. The organismic conception suggests that development is an active process that relies on the self-initiative of the developing child. According to organismic accounts, development occurs differently at each stage and resembles ascension along a staircase, each stage is separate but mutually constitutive of the others. For a full account of the various conceptions of development see the second chapter of Papalia, Olds, and Feldman, A Child’s World: Infancy through Adolescence.
of developmentalism in both his educational theory and pedagogic manuals. Weikart offers a fairly standard definition of development in his pre-service textbook, “Educating Young Children: Active Learning Practices for Preschool and Child Care Programs” (1995). Weikart notes:

Human beings develop capacities in predictable sequences throughout their lives. As people mature, new capabilities emerge. Despite the general predictability of human development, each person displays unique characteristics from birth, which through everyday interactions progressively differentiate into a unique personality. Learning always occurs in the context of each person’s unique characteristics, abilities, and opportunities (Hohmann et. al., 1995; 15).

According to developmental theorists, the process of maturation occurs according to a stable and universal continuum of growth along which each individual child will progress in her own way and at her one pace, meeting one milestone after another toward self-mastery and excellence. Recalling the resonance of today’s developmentalism with theorists of the progressive movement, Hohmann et. al. note that, “[progressivists] believed that human development occurs gradually through a series of ordered, sequential stages” (Hohmann et. al., 1995; 16 emphasis added). The developmental conception proposes that maturation follows a sequential ordering of learning and skills and entails the schematic or constructivist understanding of progress detailed above. Such a conception mandates that without its immediate predecessor a new skill or bit of knowledge could not be acquired. Weikart explains, “[c]hildren construct their own models of reality, which develop over time in response to new experiences” (Hohmann et al., 2002; 16). According to the developmentalism of twentieth century educational psychology, each stage of growth inevitably follows its predecessor in the same kind of natural, organic, and sequential manner so glorified by earlier pedagogues of the progressive movement.

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4 While each developmental theorist or educational psychologist may suggest a different variation of the continuum along which maturation occurs, they all suggest a stabilized and generalized pattern of development. Insofar as assuming a generalized pattern of growth in order to account for how children mature, their paradigms tend to graph a narrative of universalism onto developing children, despite their individual particularity. See for example Slentz and Krogh, Early Childhood Development and Its Variations / Kristine L. Slentz, Suzanne L. Krogh.
This flourishing developmentalism lent itself nicely to the preceding progressivism of North American educational approaches characterized by scientism and an “emphasis on tests and measures” that had earned it the credibility noted above by Braun and Edwards (1972). Within the philosophies of educating young children that were emerging in North America, the preschool became defined as a place where specific learning goals had to be met and documented using psychological assessment tools, and where curricular models were constantly fine-tuned to better facilitate the young child’s ‘optimal’ development as it was understood under the rubric of developmentalism. Though the mid-century shift toward developmentalism generated several predominant models for educating very young children, including Montessori, Reggio Emilia, High/Scope, and Waldorf, these educative values remain common to them all. Each evidently influenced by both progressivism and a newly standardized developmentalism, their common denominators include developmentalism, exploratory freedom, and to a varying extent, environmentalism. According to Taylor and Richardson, these models were heavily influenced by Piaget’s constructivist account of learning and emphasized “the importance of providing children with learning experiences and environments that are both temporally and spatially organized to be individually and age-appropriate” (Taylor 2005; 164).

The developmentalism that emerged from the progressive movement in education is the most prevalent grand narrative about childhood existent today (Fleer 2005) and has retained a domineering presence in Western conceptions of children and childhood since at least the time of Rousseau’s Emile. Noting this Taylor and Richardson write that “notwithstanding critique of its narrow individual focus and its implicit Eurocentrism, DAP remains the dominant paradigm of early childhood education” (Taylor 2005; 165). Due to the long-standing tradition of thinkers like the progressivists and the more recent constructivists who take a strictly developmental approach toward understanding the lives of children and

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5 There is a plethora of pedagogic manuals and pre-service textbooks available that offer comprehensive overviews of these popular approaches to educating young children. See for example, Krogh and Slentz, Early Childhood Education: Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow; Nutbrown, Clough, and Selbie, Early Childhood Education: History, Philosophy, Experience.
how they learn, it is now entirely taken for granted that the purpose of early childhood education in general and quality childcare practices in particular is to assist and facilitate a child’s optimal growth and development. The current form of developmentalism—instigated by these early theorists and now propped up by scientific study and observation—insists that the experiences of early childhood determine the adult that a child will inevitably become.

After much research I am forced to concur with Egan who, resonating with Braun and Edwards, notes that “one or another form of progressivism has been promoted and tried in the schools of North America since the beginning of mass schooling in the late nineteenth century” (2002; 6). As argued by Taylor and Richardson, as well as Fleer and Cahill and Theilheimer, it is certainly the case that pedagogies grounded by a belief in children’s natural inclination for play and facilitated by an organized and articulated curriculum thought to reinforce the natural process of children’s developmental maturation still hold a central position, not only in today’s popular approaches to educating young children, but also in our conceptions of children and childhood. Egan directly addresses the residual effects of tradition with regard to current practice. He argues that “progressivism’s tenets have become the conventional wisdom of American education” (2002; 6). The naturalized, play-based approach to early childhood education characteristic of progressivism has retained the vibrancy of its dominance to this day.

Braun and Edwards propose a stronger thesis than that of Egan, suggesting that the sediments of tradition that underwrite the logic of today’s pedagogies are infused with a troubling conservatism. As already noted above, they argue the following:

The progressive viewpoint has been woven into the fabric of American education...progressive education is still very much with us, and so are the conservative trends as manifested by the emphasis on perpetuating the skills, knowledge, and values of the past (1972; 147).

An educational system grounded by an interest in reinstating skills, knowledge and values implies the reproduction of the relations of production, the perpetuation of a dominant and status-quo sociality, and the proliferation of the
ideo-cultural order are key concerns of the social/socializing apparatus of education. In the following section, I explore the ways that preschools promote traditional narratives of heterosexual monogamy, stereotypical gender identities, and patriarchal sociality in order to demonstrate how the conservatism suggested by Braun and Edwards is manifest in popular philosophies of early childhood education.

**Behind the Veil**

In “Gender in Early Childhood” (1998), Nicola Yelland expresses her concern that early childhood education has been disturbingly neglected when it comes to incorporating equality policies designed to rehabilitate the noted sexism inherent in typical grade-school curriculum:

Despite the exclusion of the early years from policy implementation, the significance of young children and their families, and institutional services such as childcare centers, preschools, kindergartens and schools, in the social construction of gender cannot be underestimated (Yelland 1998; 6).

As the section above demonstrates, our conceptions of development come from somewhere and are constituted by assumptions about children that, despite their cultural idealization, are contingent and could be otherwise. These culturally specific and historically bound notions about how children mature are recast in the Western imaginary as universal, absolute, and natural. Recasting child development as an eternal and inviolable process of growth, renders anything that is not already included in this narrative as nonexistent and impossible, creating a veil that erases all that falls beyond the pale of established conceptions of learning and development. The developmental veil sustained by romanticized notions about children and the adult categorical imperative to regard aspects of childhood as inherently innocent, creates a *cordon sanitaire* around the sexual identities of very young children. As Fleer argues, these dominant paradigms for understanding how children develop are inexorably bound by, and only coherent in, the context of Western childhoods. She argues that, in fact, the models of development we use in the West fail when graphed onto the realities of other global childhoods, proving
their contextual specificity (Fleer 2005). The developmentalism I have been
describing is one example of a contextually specific paradigm that has proved so
pervasive that it has now reached the status of a virtual global order and is that
upon which our North American philosophies of educating young children are
predicated. Taylor and Richardson write:

DAPcentrism has its own hegemonic effect. Its cultural partialities are
simultaneously obfuscated, generalized and internalized. As a result, the
universal applicability of its appropriate childhood ‘norms’ are widely
accepted as self-evident and rarely debated (Taylor 2005; 165).

As the account of Taylor and Richardson implies, what is most disturbing is
that contained within this developmentalism are a number of unchallenged and
unexamined assumptions, which, in being recast as neutral and uncontroversial
truisms, erase the system-sustaining telos of educational practice. As Fleer suggests,
the belief that our very particular vision of optimal development is the purpose of
early education tout court is but one of several currently presumed truisms
regarding children, childhood, and the best practices for their care and education
that are only justifiably warranted within a particular socio-geographic and ideo-
cultural location. As is the case with most established truisms, the underlying logic
of the grand developmental narrative of Western childhoods remains, for the most
part, unexamined and unknown. The universalizing tropes of “naturalism”
proliferated by progressivism function to erase the ways that the “outside world”
glorified by scholars like Froebel, binds the educational encounter to a particular
socio-historical and ideo-cultural context. When these pedagogies are recast by the
term “naturalized,” the systemic logic of patriarchy inflected within them is
rendered invisible–able to enter the schooling apparatus, once again, undetected.

In the North American context of today, developmentalism infiltrates every
fissure of childhood. The idea that any early experience might be the exact
prerequisite for a particular form of achievement later in life colors virtually every
aspect of adult-child relations. From parents who transform the most basic
household task into an opportunity with which to teach their children pre-math
skills (Walkerdine and Lucey 1989) to the multitude of daily news articles and
reports on the latest scientific studies regarding children’s emotional wellbeing (Thorne 1993). It seems that our collective gaze remains fixed and fascinated by children and how to turn them into the best possible adults (Cobb 2005; Dewey 1930; Egan 2002; Fleer 2005; Hohmann et al. 1995; Martin 1992; Papalia et al. 2002; Weikart 1970). While I do not intend to “do away with development,” I certainly share Fleer’s concern that child development is itself a socially constructed and constituted process bound by “the legacy of a traditional view on development...still commonplace within the field of early childhood education” (2005; 3).

Play as Pedagogy: The Open-Ended Approach to Preschooling Children

Though the impact that the progressive and psychological movements in education had on developmental theory is still evident today in many of the perennial values of early education, free play is certainly the most pronounced. (Braun and Edwards 1972; Hohmann et al. 1995; Papalia 2003). As I describe above, emerging from the tradition that can be traced as far back as the mid-nineteenth century to the work of Froebel, naturalized and play-based pedagogies are to this day understood as the best practices for facilitating the optimal growth and most authentic learning of young children (Braun and Edwards 1972; Hohmann et al. 1995; Papalia et al. 2002; Piaget et al. 1929; Taylor 2005; Weikart 1970). Braun and Edwards write that “play has been considered the crux of the preschool experience for much of this century” (1972; 163). Quoting educational theorist Eveline Omwake, they note that “[as far back as] the early days of the nursery school movement, such phrases as good play environment, appropriate play experiences, free play, dramatic play, play materials...comprised much of the teacher’s professional vocabulary [since] play was a child’s work” (1972; 163).

According to experiential and constructivist conceptions of the developing minds and identities of children described at the beginning of this chapter, you come to identify your unique self by being-in-the-world, going through a behavioral period of trial and error during childhood, after which personality and identity become
fixed and relatively stable (Nairne 2003; Papalia et al. 2002; Sugarman and Piaget 1988). Necessitated by the primacy of value placed on experimentation, exploration, and learning through play within these popularized conceptions, the learning environment became an important pedagogical mechanism. Since play is regarded as the most natural inclination of children, play-based pedagogies dedicated to the value of freedom and exploration required learning environments and educational encounters that were fashioned so as to be both as natural and as open-ended as possible while at the same time able to effectively implement a pre-planed pedagogy informed by the narrative of development. Iterating this point, Hohmann and Weikart declare that “the overarching goal of our early childhood work is to establish a flexible, ‘open framework,’ operational model that supports developmentally appropriate education” (Hohmann et. al. 1995; 15).

Dr. David P. Weikart has had a long-lasting effect on the field of early childhood education and his philosophy of educating young children places particularly high value on the educational importance of spatial practices. In 1967 he opened one of America’s first proper preschools—the Perry Preschool Project—and quantified the educative value that preschools had for very young children using longitudinal research. The Perry Preschool project and the pedagogy it generated was instigated by prior studies which indicated that high school students from poorer neighborhoods consistently demonstrated the lowest levels of achievement in intelligence and academic assessment tests. To intervene Weikart took very young children between the ages of 3-6 years from Ypsilanti’s poorest neighborhoods and opened Michigan’s first preschool program to “prepare preschool-aged children from poor neighborhoods for future success in school” (Hohmann, Weikart et al. 1995; 4).  

Weikart named his philosophy the High/Scope model of educating young children. His pedagogy assumed a neo-Piagetian approach that combined the principles of both educational psychology and developmental constructivism. In

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response to the poor academic performance he observed in certain populations of children, his program was developed to facilitate children’s intellectual development through play. The goal of his educational philosophy were to equip children with the pre-cognitive skills required to transition easily into Kindergarten and achieve greater success later in life. Resonating with the traditionally bound principles of progressivism and developmentalism outlined above, he named the High/Scope learning process active learning and defined it as “having direct and immediate experiences [in the learning environment] and deriving meaning from them through reflection [by which] young children construct knowledge” (Hohmann, Weikart et al. 1995; p.5). For Weikart, children ought to be the active initiators of their own learning process since, “no one else can have experiences for the child or construct knowledge for the child. Children must do this for themselves” (Hohmann, Weikart et al. 1995 p.17).

The curriculum of open-ended play-based pedagogies such as the High/Scope model is facilitated in preschool classrooms by equipping the learning environment in strategic ways to create specific learning experiences that are considered key to achieving particular developmental milestones. Hohmann and Weikart specify that, “the creation of an environment rich with key experiences, and the delivery of appropriate adult support, are critical elements in educating young children” (1995; 23). The emphasis on exploratory freedom present in both progressivism and educational psychology inspired the open-concept preschool classrooms organized by compartmentalization into interest areas or learning centers taken up by Weikart and others (Braun and Edwards 1972; Hohmann et al. 1995, 2002; Nutbrown et al. 2008; Sugarman and Piaget 1988; Weikart 1970). The interest area approach requires the strategic partitioning of space into highly specialized areas of learning and is now the spatial practice of early childhood education.

Dividing the space of the preschool classroom functions to meet two important pedagogical goals. The partitioning of space achieves the rational categorization of areas according to their intended developmental outcomes and creating physical boundaries within the space manages the movement of children in
the room. Compartmentalizing the space of the preschool classroom ensures that, although children are allowed to explore the space ‘freely’ as they wish, crucial learning goals identified as key developmental milestones by educational psychology will still be met (Hohmann et al. 2002). Despite the over-articulated emphasis these approaches place on children’s exploratory freedom within the preschool space, certain directive techniques remain vital to their success. In contrast to other philosophies of educating young children—where directive techniques were embodied by the teacher and her interactions with her students—Weikart’s preschool, along with other open-ended models, install these directive techniques directly into the architecture of the classroom space itself, literally inscribing a normative standard into the space. Weikart writes:

> Because the physical setting has a strong impact on the behavior of children the High/Scope Curriculum places a strong emphasis on planning the layout of the preschool... *Thus, adults organize play space into specific interest areas* (Hohmann, Weikart et al. 1995 p.7 emphasis original).

Although a teacher in an open-ended classroom is *supportive* rather than *directive*, behavioral management is still important to maintain order and stability. Rather than direction from teachers, under Weikart's model the direction comes from the room itself. Children are both managed and taught through the space of the classroom. Partitioning the room into segmented and specialized space prevents boisterous activity, helps to focus children’s attention, and communicates the categorization of play in the classroom according to the theme of a given learning center (Hohmann et al. 1995).

This spatial pedagogy is so emphasized in the current North American discourse of early learning that the materiality of classrooms is affectionately referred to as the ‘third teacher’ by developmental and educational theorists alike (Cadwell 1997). In her book, “Brining Reggio Emilia Home: An innovative Approach to Early Childhood Education” (1997), Cadwell identifies “the environment as third teacher” to be one of the eight principles of early childhood education. Describing the justification for the “third teacher” principle Cadwell writes:
The design and use of space encourage encounters, communication and relationships...There is an underlying order and beauty in the design and organization of all the space in a school and the equipment and materials in it. Every corner and every space has an identity, a purpose (Cadwell 1997; 5).

While Cadwell glorifies the use of space in play-based pedagogy, it is important to keep in mind that both the third teacher and the third curriculum taught by this spatial pedagoge are invisible when left unchallenged.

The physical environment has come to be regarded a key site of educational instruction, a literal surface of curriculum. Consequently, the classroom itself is staging stages of development. It is interesting to note, however, that although much emphasis is given to the cognitive power of pedagogical staging–organizing space in ways that effect particular learning outcomes–many scholars of education persistently fail to attend to the potential presence of other modes of staging, such as the staging of white, bourgeois, heteronormatively gendered narratives of desire and identity that I am suggesting. While describing quality classroom layout Weikart points out that, “[t]he way we arrange and equip spaces for children says, in effect, “This is who we are and what we value” (Hohmann et. al. 1995; 120). This begs the question: if the way we arrange and organize preschool classrooms does indeed say, “This is who we are and what we value,” then who are we and what do we value?

From Gendered Space to Sexual Place

There are five key interest areas in an open-ended preschool: the home, block, and sensory, creative, and cognitive areas. Though there are other areas that would likely be included in the classroom space should room-size and layout allow, these five are considered essential and not to be omitted from the classroom (Hohmann et al. 1995; Cadwell 1997). Each of these spaces is staged according to a particular type of development. For example, the creative area is an artistic space where children handle, manipulate, and create using various materials to develop fine motor skills, hand-eye coordination, problem solving, recognition, and representation. In comparison, the cognitive (or table-toy) area of the room contains
more directive materials such as puzzles, pegboards, and simple games intended to assist classification, seriation, and other important pre-math skills. These two examples are more cognitive-oriented areas of the classroom and are tailored toward very different intellectual ends. Interest areas such as the home and the block centers are much more social locales and are often organized to facilitate group activities like pretend play and cooperative building projects (Hohmann et. al., 1995). I focus only on the home and block areas and their gendered juxtaposition for the purposes of the present analysis.

Figure 7. Two Home Areas and a Block Area

The home interest area is defined by its domestic connotations and is one of the most popular places of gender mimicry, the other being the block area. I am confident that the stereotypically gendered texture of the home area is familiar to us all. Put simply, the home area is where young children *play house*. As a cordoned off part of the room, *home space* serves as a container for mock but homely domestic objects. Taylor and Richardson argue that “by its own orthodoxy, home corner’s stylized façade presents a classic vision of domestic utopia,” also noting that “the premises of childhood innocence, domestic natural order and developmental appropriateness are embedded in the architecture of the home corner and hence naturalized as part of the everyday landscape of ‘normal’ childhood” (Taylor 2005; 165). While Taylor and Richardson’s article provides an excellent analysis of the domestic landscape in the home area, there is a stunning lack of literature available that engages in anything other than a descriptive account of this space. Weikart’s account specifies that:
...the home area supports both individual and cooperative play. Many children spend considerable time in the home area [...] they may imitate cooking sequences they have seen at home or pretend to feed a doll or stuffed animal (Hohmann et. al., 1995; 120).

A table in the Hohmann and Weikart text on how to equip the home area recommends that it be plentifully stocked with dolls, cribs, blankets, strollers, brooms, dustpans, household appliances, sponges, used food packages, cookbooks, dishes, and a child-sized kitchenette with a sink, stove, and refrigerator (1995; 120). In other words, the landscape of the preschool home area is configured according to the iconic pink paraphernalia of *anachronistic domesticity* [Figure 7]. Developmentally, the home area is tailored toward intimate, imaginative, cooperative play between smaller groups of children and is often praised as being an important classroom locale for socio-emotional development. The virtues of relating well to one’s peers and understanding oneself as an emotional being capable of care, self-reflection, and understanding are areas of ability traditionally cast as feminine, and particularly maternal, capacities. They are also the key developmental intentions behind the staging of home space (Cadwell 1997; Hohmann et. al., 1995). Despite the rhetorical and liberalistic over-emphasis of the principle of exploratory freedom— a child’s freedom to choose and ability to choose freely— this space is *girly*, and children are *girly* if they play there. This space materially mimics the private sphere of the patriarchal division of labor.

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Figure 8. A block area organized to facilitate large group activities.

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7 *Anachronistic Space* is a concept developed by Anne McClintock in her book *Imperial Leather: Race, Gender and Sexuality in the Colonial Conquest* (1995). I rely heavily on this concept for the arguments I make in the second chapter of this thesis.
In comparison, the block area is characterized by its civic connotations and is typically located beside the home area because these two spaces tend to be more active than other learning centers. Figure 6, located at the beginning of this chapter, shows a typical placement of home and block areas in preschool settings with the block area in front and the home area located behind it. The boundary between the side-by-side interest areas is constructed by using low-lying shelves that permit the children inhabiting each area to see one another despite their different positions in the room. Placing these two areas near one another prevents the disturbance of play in more quiet locales of the room. The block area requires an open, carpeted space and is usually cordoned off by low-lying shelves containing blocks and other building materials, little toy cars, big Tonka trucks, floor puzzles, and sometimes dress-up clothes [Figure 7]. If there are dress-up clothes in the block area they are usually the garb of firefighters, mechanics and police officers (Hohmann et. al., 1995).

This space also functions as an open and public space in the classroom and although girls do play in the block area, it tends to be—unsurprisingly—dominated by boys [Figure 7]. The space is designed to suit more boisterous, structural, problem-solving types of play between larger groups of children, usually working toward building or ‘saving’ something. The block area is also the place where the entire classroom congregates during group activities such as ‘circle time’ because it is usually the only wide-open carpeted place large enough to accommodate bigger groups in the classroom [Figure 8].

It is touted as being a prime locale for the development of conceptualization, spatial awareness, and the ability to group or categorize objects (and other children?). These capacities resemble those traditionally cast as masculine—specifically those of rational man. In this space a child tends to succeed most when he is able to display managerial prowess— the

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8 From her own experience as a participant-observer studying gender in school Raphaela Best interestingly notes, “this persistent theme—more space for boys, less space for girls—unchallenged by any teacher, corroborated girls’ view of themselves as inferior and supports the boy’s image of themselves as superior” (Best 1983; 61). This connection noted by Best, is a key motivation of my analysis: that spatiality communicates the boundaries of identity, and the social value attached to identity, along the axis of gender.
ability to lead and manage others toward achieving some common end. This space is a material metaphor for the public sphere.

In their account of the interest area approach, Hohmann and Weikart never address gender, not to mention sexuality, race, or any other markers of difference that are commonly used to justify oppressive social hierarchies. Though concerned with the socio-emotional development of very young children, their pre-service manual remains disturbingly genderless. In their chapter on the home area, the inherently gendered tone of this particular interest area is erased by the liberalist discourse they use to describe it, and the emphasis so unceasingly assigned to the principle of exploratory freedom in child-directed, open-ended preschools. Of the home area Hohmann and Weikart write:

...by providing a setting for role play, the house area allows children to make sense of their immediate world. Children have numerous opportunities to work together, express their feelings, and use language to communicate roles and respond to one another’s needs (1995; 128).

They consistently stress the open accessibility of all interest areas to all children in the classroom but fail to consider how gender might direct (or discipline) a child toward a certain learning center, particularly in the case of a space like the home area. The fact that this area of the room and the materials stored within it are blatantly gendered and inexorably bound by the popular social imagery of housewifery and motherhood is not mentioned at all in the High/Scope manual “Educating Young Children”. It seems that for these educational theorists, domestically oriented learning experiences are an inevitable part of young children’s pretend play. In the exegesis they offer of the block area, they overtly negate the potential significance that gender can have when children choose where to play. Dismissing the fact that gender can assign play-space they write that “almost

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9 In Democracy in the Kitchen, Walkerdine and Lucey point out the historical specificity of such a practice arguing that during the mid-twentieth century glorification of domesticity and emergence of the modern housewife domestic labor in the home was commonly used to facilitate intellectual development. They point out that educational psychologists and the media recommended these spontaneous, “natural,” and everyday experiences authentic, quality early learning experiences that ought not be missed. Critiquing these practices as a mode of patriarchal regulation Walkerdine and Lucey ask, “a deeper question, that is, why is domestic labor transformed into the very basis of children’s cognitive development?” (Walkerdine and Lucey 1989; 23).
all children enjoy playing in the block area and can find something to do with blocks” (1995; 126). The danger of omitting all consideration of the presences of gendered relations of power in open-ended preschools organized with landscapes familiar to patriarchy seems so obvious that to neglect them boarders on culpable. If the way we arrange and organize a preschool classroom does indeed say, “This is who we are and what we value” then I absolutely must ask again, who are we and what do we value?

Susan Danby warns us that “children’s learning cannot be fully discussed without understanding that gender (the social-not-biological construction of being masculine or feminine) is an organizing element of all children’s learning” (in Yelland 1998; 178). In the article “Gendermaps,” also published in Yelland’s “Gender in Early Childhood” (1998), Kathy Lowe argues that children are active participants in the construction of their own gender identities and the enforcement of power relations involved in performing gender in early educational settings. Lowe suggests that previous conceptions of gender socialization which figure children as passive and inactive beings who simply absorbe the social norms of gender, erases the fact that children actively and elaborately participate in the en/gendering of both themselves and their peers (Yelland 1998). According to Lowe, children come to school already well versed in the dichotomous narratives of the dominant binaristic discourses on gender, which they learn in the context of home and family. She writes, “[f]or many children, the educational context either reinforces the position they have constructed for themselves, or creates a dissonance between the prevailing dominant gender culture and the child’s individual position” (1998; 208). Deeply gendered forms of sociality are a noted fact by feminist, critical and queer scholars of education, making the silence of pedagogues like Hohmann and Weikart suspicious to say the least.

The socio-spatial experiment discussed at the beginning of this chapter of the early childhood educator who tried to undo gendered play by integrating the homecorner and the block area makes clear that undoing the gendered inscriptions of the classroom’s space is not simply a matter of re-presenting the materials in a different way. Regardless of how the objects that constitute the iconography of
domesticity are named, presented, and categorized within the space of the classroom, they exist as inherently gendered objects in popular culture. Staging a play kitchen in the block area will not negate the domestically heteronormative texture that the home and block area landscapes exude. The iconic objects of each area are themselves bound by an ideo-cultural legacy that is inseparable from them. In particular, the domestic landscape of the home area and iconic objects it contains are laden with an ideo-cultural significance that extends well beyond the classroom context. I believe that the presence of landscapes that mimic the spatial and symbolic division of spheres of sociality in preschools is enough to elicit not only gendered play but also ideologically constituted truths about sexuality, race, desire, and identity in the minds of developing children. The solidification of gendered meanings in preschool classrooms accomplished by the establishment of both physical and psychic divisions between these gendered interest areas does not create, but exacerbates, the problem.

It seems as though the dominant discourse of early childhood education has a tacitly accepted don’t ask, don’t tell policy when it comes to gender oppression that is evidenced well by the silence of Hohmann and Weikart. When it comes to child sociality and socio-emotional development in preschools, particularly in the open-ended classroom approaches that are so popular today, there seems to be a pervasive assumption that the freedom to direct one’s own preschool experience is enough to facilitate the growth of a healthy and empowered sense of self. The genderless account of Hohmann and Weikart’s seems to assume that by allowing free exploration and self-direction a child will develop unaffected by the psychic coercions of strict gender norms of heteronormativity. Child development and early educational theory are so deeply infused by the liberalist rhetoric of exploratory freedom and a blind faith in a child’s right to choose, that in order to critically interrogate these open-ended pedagogies, one must speak outside of their dominant discourses. As queer and feminist scholars who study childhood have shown, this naïve assumption on the part of educational theorists is seriously misguided (Best 1983; Chen 2009; Epstein and Johnson 1998; Gallas 1998a; Golombok and Fivush

We wimply cannot expect that, when left to their own devices, children will do it on their own. Children “come to school already primed for [their] archetypical roles” (Best 1983; 89) and our preschools await, equipped with stereotypical landscapes that both facilitate the performance of, and solidify identifications with, these archetypical roles in the minds of very young children. Taylor and Richardson write that “the resolutely utopian architecture of home corner is inscribed with a heteronormative semiology that frames its functional and moral parameters. In other words, children are both symbolically and physically guided by the imagery, layout and artifacts of home corner to undertake particular forms of domestic play that are deemed to be a natural and normal part of their healthy development” (Taylor 2005; 166). Essentialized gender binaries are both materialized and literalized in the presence of gendered spaces that reiterate the ubiquitous public/private divide as obviously as the home/block area do, both in how they are used and who they are used by. These two spaces, when placed beside one another in the classroom, juxtapose one another along the same axis as the public/private divide characteristic of white, Western, capitalist patriarchy and function to reinforce existing divisions of gender through the division of space. Modeling early childhood education according to the presupposition that very young children are naïve and unaware of gender and power hierarchies will not prevent their reiteration in the preschool; it simply assists in making this reiteration invisible.

**Heteronormativity and Pretend Play**

My analysis is centered upon the gendered relations of power in preschools and the reinforcement of patriarchal modes of social organization through the socializing apparatus of early childhood education. As feminists have long pointed out, patriarchy is a systemic and systematic order of socio-political, economic, and psychic regulation and control (Frye 1983; Greer 1985; Nederveen Pieterse 1995; Rich 1986a). According to Judith Butler, there exists an elaborate web of sociality
predicated on a dominant psychosocial order, organized according to the logic of patriarchy, that requires the conformity of identity, gender, and sexuality to a broader system of power. Butler calls this the *heterosexual matrix*. She writes:

The heterosexualization of desire requires and institutes the production of discrete and asymmetrical oppositions between ‘feminine’ and ‘masculine,’ where these are understood as expressive attributes of ‘male’ and ‘female.’ The cultural matrix through which gender identity has become intelligible requires that certain kinds of ‘identities’ cannot ‘exist’ – that is, those in which gender does not follow from sex and those in which the practices of desire do not ‘follow’ from either sex or gender (Butler 2006; 24).

Within the heterosexual matrix of patriarchy, gender and sexuality are mutually sustaining and cannot be separated from one another (Butler 2006; Razack 2002; Rich 1986b, 1986a). As an ideological apparatus of the ubiquitous heterosexual matrix by which a dominant patriarchal order is reinserted into the minds of children, the spatiality of the preschool relies foremost on hailing young children on the grounds of the sexualities and desires that haunt the strict and historically specific spatial divisions of gender. In this section I use child sexualities as an inroad for articulating the problem of the psychic effects of preschool space.

Children are highly charged sexual beings. By this I mean that the tactile worlds of very young children are deeply permeated with sensuality, strange pleasures, and often times orgasmic encounters with objects and other children. Despite the adult categorical imperative to desexualize all discourse concerning childhood, in an effort to maintain the totalizing narratives of innocence in developmental and educational theory, a substantial amount of queer and feminist scholarship provides strong evidence that the worlds of childhood are indeed the highly sexual places I am suggesting (Best 1983; Bruhm and Hurley 2004; Epstein and Johnson 1998; Renold 2005; Stockton 2009; Weitzman 1979; Yelland 1998). By taking up this scholarship I hope not only to make a case for the fact that children are sexual beings—despite our self-imposed blindness to this particular aspect of child sociality— but also to analyze what the preschool educational apparatus does to the powerful desires, sometimes sexual, other times not, of very young children.
In the early eighties Raphaella Best spent a year as a participant-observer in a typical white, middle-class, North American grade school in order to investigate the connection between gender and academic achievement. She observed first-hand the highly political and deeply gendered worlds of child sociality, which she notes are strikingly sexual (Best 1983). With some surprise she found herself privy to parts of childhood that are usually guarded from adult exposure. Desire, sexual contact, and gender pressure are particularly pronounced in the findings of Best’s research. For Best, there are three curricula in schools. The first is the official curriculum that is taught by teachers. This curriculum is standardized, planned, and visible to everyone. The other two are hidden curriculums, premised on gender and sexuality and presented in the form of cultural texts, and are enforced by the requirements of acceptance into childhood peer groups. Best observes that gender lessons are learned but not taught in any identifiable way. Children register the lessons of gender and sexuality on a visceral and symbolic level and mutually reinforce them amongst one another rather strictly through social interaction (Best 1983). In open-ended preschool classrooms where the juxtaposition between the home and block areas provide the ground upon which childhood sociality occurs, the texture of this preschool geography inserts these gender lessons in the most literal way possible.

According to Best, gender curriculum is woven into the fabric of the everyday worlds of childhood. This is evident in “pictures, posters, library books, and text books [...] the children’s behavior, remarks, and gender-identifiable clothing” (Best 1983; 59). Best argues that although divisive narratives about gender identity are overwhelmingly present in schools, children come into schools already well aware of the lessons of this gender curriculum (1983). She argues that the gendered images proliferated by cultural texts create a sex role consciousness through which children come to know both themselves and their gendered relation to the world. Resonating with Best’s argument, Lenore Weitzman’s cognitive account suggests that the sex-role learning which occurs during early childhood follows three analytic processes. Very young children first learn to categorically distinguish between women and men, a process of differentiation which, as Weitzman points out, is
organized according to which gender characteristically does what. From there, children begin to “express appropriate sex role preferences,” thereby internalizing and then actualizing heteronormative gender divisions by behaving in accordance with established sex-role standards (Weitzman 1979; 4).

In schools, behaving in accordance with the requirements of heteronormative sex-role standards manifests itself as playing in the most gender appropriate area of the room, the block area in the case of boys and the home area in the case of girls. In the landscapes of preschool that are fashioned according to patriarchal social divisions Best’s sex role consciousness is already present and waiting in a material form. Kathy Lowe suggests that “most children interpret gender positions as mutually exclusive. That is, boys should not show traditionally ‘feminine’ characteristics, and girls should not display ‘masculine’ traits” (Yelland 1998; 207). Her analysis of the ways that performing gender function to locate children within societal maps of power suggests that early childhood settings are key for communicating to children that the gender binaries of dominant and status quo sociality are both expected and strictly enforced by society. Lowe argues that gendered meanings are mapped onto the classroom and function as markers that help children navigate their way through the space, both literally and symbolically. She writes:

Observations of early childhood settings illuminate the references children use, particularly in the home corner and during outdoor play. Children position themselves subjectively with these discourses [of gender normativity] (1998; 211).

While researching schools Lowe observed the gendered segregation of children’s play, particularly between the home and block areas in preschool settings. She suggests that the literal way children position themselves in classroom space displays a positive correlation between how children symbolically position themselves in gendered maps of social power. When Lowe interviewed children, she found that girls mapped themselves as submissive to boys and lacking social power in what they understood as established social relations demarcated by one’s gender. Contrastingly, boys mapped themselves higher, as powerful and dominant,
compared to the girls around them. The gender maps that children constructed for themselves, Lowe observes, are modeled largely after the relations of power they observe at home, within their families: "The type of family structure and the role and activities of the mother seemed to have a significant effect on the behavior and gendermap of the individual" (1998; 215). After interviewing these children and observing the gendered patterns of inhabiting preschool space, Lowe concludes that children's play, when modeled according to the heteronormatively gendered performances of their parents, is a serious process, through which children prepare themselves for what they understand as their expected social roles as adults. The gendered expectations children assumed determined where children played “many girls felt most at home in the home corner setting, where they were familiar with the rituals and positions involved” whereas boys gravitated towards stereotypically male behaviors in play, “developing the skills they felt they would need as adults to work outside the home” (1998; 209). Lowe’s research demonstrates that very young children, some as young as three or four-years-old, explicitly identify with patriarchal divisions of labor and heteronormatively demarcated gender identifications, and project an image of themselves into an already-established future through play.

The spatial practice of designing landscapes for early learning with the home and block areas described in the previous section has important implications for the flourishing desires and developing sexualities of young children. As Lowe’s research implies, heteronormative narratives of sexuality are so deeply woven into children's understanding of gender that they are seemingly inseparable from them. This is particularly the case for young girls whose future is projected by and for them by dominant social narratives of identity centrally oriented around domesticity. When these narratives are built into the everyday environments of child sociality, they become both literalized and concretized as reality tour court, in ways that work to discipline the boundaries of identity. As Ruth Frankenberg notes, “[t]he landscapes of childhood are important because, from the standpoint of children they are received rather than chosen (although of course from an adult standpoint they are
chosen and crafted in complex, conscious and unconscious ways)" (McDowell and Sharp 1997; 212; *emphasis original*).

The domestic landscapes "received" by young girls, particularly in educational contexts, but elsewhere outside of schools as well, are incredibly important since once again as Weikart claims, "the way we arrange and equip spaces for children says, in effect, "[t]his is who we are and what we value" (Hohmann et. al. 1995; 120). When the home and block areas of preschool space are positioned as areas in the room that symbolically mimic the division between private and public spheres of social existence, the message we are enacting spatially and sending to very young children, becomes quite obvious. *We* are a culture premised on heteronormativity and we *value* citizen-subjects who constitute themselves in ways that are coherent with the institution of the monogamous, heterosexual family unit, organized by the logic of patriarchy.

Femininity manifests itself spatially in open-ended preschool classroom in the feminized domestic space of the home area. The gendered texture of this geography invisibly enforces a heteronormative organization of child sexuality and desire, making the domestic landscapes of early learning an appendage of Butler's heterosexual matrix. Not only does the home/block spatial categorization control the dispersion of bodies in the room according to over-articulated gendered narratives of identity. But because of the mimetic public/private connotations of these locales, imbued with the relations of production and the hegemonic reproduction of the status quo, they are predicated on the same heteronormative logic that organizes the dominant sociality of society writ large. The interpellative force of these mimetic spaces is evidenced in the most obvious of ways by what children can and do play while located within them.

Best notes that *playing house* was unsurprisingly prevalent throughout pre and grade school classrooms until the third grade. She points of the ubiquity of Mommy and Daddy games, particularly for little girls:

...socialized in early childhood and throughout their years in the primary grades to think of themselves as future wives and mothers [...] girls had never thought beyond the sex-role choices presented to them by the second curriculum, especially motherhood (1983; 68).
Taylor and Richardson suggest that the presence of the domestic landscape in early learning communicates “the specific kind of adult world deemed ‘appropriate’ for re-enactment through dramatic play...Whether or not it ultimately succeeds in mediating children’s understandings of the adult world, this sign-laden space is clearly designed to represent an idealized image of the home” (Taylor 2005; 166). Taylor and Richardson note examples of queered gender performances from children in the home corner: boys who want to play with dolls and girls who transgress their own gender in order to enact an idealized image of fatherhood. While I do not wish to dismiss that indeed children are equipped with the agency to perform multiple gender identities while inhabiting the landscapes of early learning, I do wish to point out how the patriarchal organization of space in early learning creates an obstacle to be overcome by children inclined to queerness. I am also wary of under-estimating the influence of child-on-child surveillance in the context of the social worlds of preschools. Taylor and Richardson seem to share this concern:

...the powerful normalizing effects of domestic signs that symbolically reiterate a sense of natural order. For even as home corner signifies a domestic idyll or norm, it implicitly draws upon a spectrum of hegemonic discourses and their associated stereotypes that function to value some lives and ways of living whilst devaluing others (Taylor 2005; 166).

Cahill and Theilheimer resonate with the concerns of Taylor and Richardson, particularly with regards to the developing sexualities of very young children. They suggest that inclusive representations of all sexual identities are important additions to early learning environments. In the contexts of schools, they argue that “teachers behave as if they do not consider children sexual beings. They act as if all children were heterosexual until proved otherwise” (Letts and Sears 1999; 41). For Cahill and Theilheimer, treating all children as if they were straight until proven otherwise runs the risk of psychically damaging LGBTQIA\textsuperscript{10} human beings. They warn educators that,

\textsuperscript{10} LGBTQIA: Lesbian, Gay, Transgendered, Bisexual, Queer, Intersex, Ally.
Children’s feelings about homosexuality cannot be taken lightly. Children who develop into gay or lesbian young people with negative perceptions about being gay are at ‘high risk for physical and psychosocial dysfunction’ (Letts and Sears 1999; 41).

The compulsory heterosexuality enforced by dominating representations of stereotypical gender identities and sexualities in the cultural texts, iconographies, and aesthetic codes that constitute the geographies of Western childhoods, have a profound potential to psychically damage human beings in the ways warned of in both these accounts.

When geographies of early learning are built to resemble the stereotypical spaces of traditional gender divisions, such as the public and private divide mimicked by the home and block areas, they literally stage archetypical gender performances in highly coercive ways. The narratives of compulsory heterosexuality and the patriarchal order are concretized by and made psychically coherent during the imaginative play supported by this mode of spatiality. The home area becomes a stage upon which very young girls act out phantasmic investments in their future selves as wives and mothers, and the block area becomes a public place of civility and commerce where little boys prove themselves by acting out traditional narratives of masculine success. The sensual desires and sexual identities that develop in the contexts of such landscapes are incredibly vulnerable to being disciplined into what is coherent or intelligible with the heteronormative, white, patriarchal, cultural matrix, subjugating the emerging identities of young children to the requirements of this socio-symbolic order.

For Thorne, the social worlds that children construct in the elementary school context are inexorably bound by gender and enforced by the child-to-child surveillance of establishing personal feelings of belongingness in peer-groups. As discussed in the introduction, despite popular notions proliferated in the professionalized discourses of science, developmental psychology, and mainstream educational theory, the identities constituted by children are not the result of an essential and biologically determined form of gender. Thorne is adamant that children are socialized into gender positions by the omnipresent reverberation of
social expectations. As a participant-observer in schools, Thorne observed children’s strict adherence to stereotypical sex-roles organized according to the dichotomous logic of established gender relations of power. She argues that gender is the primary organizing principle of everyday life during childhood, and can inform everything from a teachers’ insistence on gendered line-ups at recess to the how children establish stable peer groups.

Like Butler who proposes that “gender is always doing” (2006; 25), Thorne argues that gender in childhood is a “dramatic” performance grounded by and usually dismissed as merely play. She points out:

Kids use the frame of play (“we’re only playing”; “it’s all in fun”) as a guise for often serious gender related messages about sexuality and aggression. Notions of performance, or scripted action, can be used to understand shared practices that enact, and sometimes challenge, varied gender arrangements and meanings (1993; 5).

From her time spent observing school-aged children Thorne concludes that gender play is a ritual defined by repetitious, predicable performances, “ritualized not as high ceremony, but by virtue of being stylized, repeated and enacted with a sense of performance” (1993; 66). Thorne suggests that gender play is a ritualized performance of identity infused with sexual and gendered meanings. Taylor and Richardson, examining the home corner, propose the following:

Following the logic of its signs, one might assume that the domestic and familial play occurring within home corner would be accordingly uncomplicated and derivative of a cohesive and benign adult world. One might expect to see children engaged in straightforward (heterosexual) family play that conforms to the styles and manners deemed appropriate to ‘normal’ development (Taylor 2005; 166).

The ritualized and performative nature of children’s gender play affirmed in Thorne’s analysis is bound by the gendered play spaces of home corners and block areas. These areas of the classroom operate as a stage specifically set for such performances. The architecture of early learning is not only infused with sexual and gendered meanings, but elicits and is designed to provoke, the performance of a
ritualized modes of gendered being. These modes of gendered being are profoundly sexual in nature and epitomized by sexual encounters during early childhood.

In her book, “We’ve All Got Scars: What Boys and Girls Learn in Elementary Schools” (1983), Best recalls the striking sexual dynamics of childhood that she observed while researching elementary peer grouping in schools. Best argues that the storylines of children's pretend play opened up a space for sexual experimentation. She writes that “playing in the doll's corner in kindergarten was easily carried over to playing ‘house,’ where other children took the place of dolls... It offered them a chance for almost unlimited physical contact” (1983; 110). The sexually charged and sensual nature of childhood reinforces the compulsory heterosexuality of early childhood gender identity-formation. Best writes that she often observed voyeuristic behavior in very young children, facilitated by sexually infused games of show and tell. Boys “took great delight in teasing little girls with the suggestion of a displayed penis. To get the effect they wanted they thrust their hands into their pants and then wiggled their fingers at girls through an open fly” (Best 1983; 112). The pedagogy of sexual domestication, described in detail in chapter three, requires that children come to understand themselves as heteronormatively gendered beings with “normal” sexual desires for the “opposite” sex only. The identities formed according to the sex-role expectations that are enforced in schools are characterized by the traditional nuclear familial unit, and this is reflected by the imaginative play of very young children.

In older grade-schoolers Best notes that while parents hesitated, uncertain as to whether or not to have “the talk” with their children, the “children had been providing their own sex education” (1983; 121). Although the sexualities of very young children seemed to be shrouded by a lack of information, they remained vibrant and active nonetheless: “[t]o the youngest children the term ‘fucking’ did not mean penetration but, rather, the rubbing together of genitals. Even with one's clothes on” (1983; 121). Best recalls that while teaching in a preschool program years before undertaking the research for her book she would very often witness children “climb unabashedly on top of one another and simulate sexual intercourse. When asked what they were doing they would answer either that they were playing
‘Mommy and Daddy’ or that they were ‘fucking,’ apparently synonymous in their minds” (1983; 121).

In the introduction to their reader of feminist geography, Linda McDowell and Joanne P. Sharp note that, “[p]hysical and social boundaries reinforce each other and spatial relations act to socialize people into the acceptance of gendered power relations– they reinforce power, privileges, and oppression and literally keep women in their place” (1997; 3). The gendered public/private divide mimicked by the home and block areas, the hidden sexual curriculum of cultural texts described in Best’s research, and the spatial stages set for playing out heteronormative narratives of identity, each contribute to what I call the pedagogy of sexual domestication. The heteronormative texture of childhood geographies, particularly those present within the spaces of early learning, function to discipline youthful desires into clusters compatible with heterosexual familial organizations. The disciplining of these youthful fields of desire is secured by grounding imaginative play in domesticity, creating the perfect place to play Mommy and Daddy in the classroom– and inviting, through space, heteronormative sexual contact.

McDowell and Sharp point out the critical importance of the psychic effects of space, arguing that “spatial relations and layout, the differences between and within places, the nature and form of the built environment, images and representations of this environment and of the ‘natural’ world, ways of writing about it, as well as our bodily place within it, are all part and parcel of the social constitution of gendered social relations and the structure of meaning and place” (1997; 2). In the third chapter I extrapolate the geo-ontological position that subjects come into being in accordance to where they are physically located. The geo-ontological presupposition present in my analysis is critical for understanding the psychic effects of space proposed by McDowell and Sharpe and vital to the spatial analysis of preschool classrooms. As children participate in the spatial enactments of social narratives through play, they construct a worldview organized by the dichotomous logic that materializes the symbolic psychic distinction between domestic and civil or public and private spheres of sociality. They know their social, symbolic, and political place by way of space.
As Iris Marion Young astutely notes, “Racism, sexism, homophobia, ageism, and ableism, have not disappeared but have gone underground, dwelling in everyday habits and cultural meanings of which people are for the most part unaware” (McDowell and Sharp 1997; 220). Spatial analysis offers us an explanatory frame capacious enough to articulate what has been heretofore beyond our grasp because space is material, tangible, and literal. I am suggesting that the everyday habits of organizing a space, particularly a classroom, must be investigated in order to make their underground and unaware gendered and sexual contents and messages known. The pervasive liberalistic rhetoric of freedom, exploration, and choice in these open-ended interest area approaches function to cover up and erase the reinsertion of a dominant ideo-cultural order by way of preschooling children. I do believe that by tracing this order in the spatiality of the preschool we can better articulate the ways the minds of children are inoculated into these dominant modes of patriarchal sociality. When positioned this way, the patriarchal landscapes of early learning are visible for their psychic effects. The space itself is an apparatus by which the ideo-cultural relations of production are currently reproduced. In order to provide the radical critique of the domestic landscapes present in early learning that, I suggest, popular pedagogies so desperately need, we need to de-familiarize ourselves with the space and the currently justifications accepted regarding it’s pedagogical utility. To de-familiarize oneself with something is to disenfranchise and distance oneself from its relational intimacy and immediacy. By de-familiarizing oneself with a thing one is able to see it anew, as if for the first time, as something foreign and odd, rather than ordinary, natural, and normal. From a de-familiarized position we can ask new questions to address old problems and perhaps move beyond an impasse that is insurmountable within current paradigms of thought—like the current paradigms of early childhood educational thought that is dominated by fictitious master-narratives about children’s innocence and lack of sexuality. In this chapter I have attempted to initiate the process of de-familiarizing the spatial enactments in early childhood education by tracing the legacies of tradition from which our current practices have derived. But this process must be pushed further. Since spatial analysis is the most literal engagement available to theorists, de-
familiarizing ourselves with spatial practices should retain this literal character. The following chapter constructs a feminist genealogy of the colonial origins and imperial emergence of domestic space in order to reframe the socio-cultural significance and utility of this particular locale. I suggest that the original socio-symbolic utility of domestic space haunts its modern enactments in uncanny ways. As a haunted presence, the ideo-cultural order of tradition is conveyed through space in ways that cannot be seen, only registered viscerally. Connecting domestic landscape’s historical origins to its modern enactments in early learning lends access to a radically different theoretical perspective from which we can ask questions that are unavailable to us from standard developmental and educational positions. Tracking the emergence of domestic space under the British imperial order, I suggest that these homely spaces must be rendered suspect, as the lynchpin of a hidden ideological curriculum that is the pedagogy of domestication.
Chapter Two

The Ideological Origins of Domestic Space

Patriarchy is the power of the fathers: a familial social, ideological, political system in which men—by force, direct pressure, or through ritual, tradition, law, and language, customs, etiquette, education, and the division of labor, determine what part women shall or shall not play...difficult to grasp because it permeates everything, even the language in which we try to describe it. It is diffuse and concrete; symbolic and literal; universal, and expressed with local variations which obscure its universality

~Adrienne Rich

The new historian, the genealogist, will know what to make of this masquerade

~Michel Foucault

On Patriarchy

There are those that allege that our historical moment is “post-feminist,” “post-modernist,” and “post-colonial,” but the use of the qualifier post in these terms is highly suspect and only warranted from a particularly privileged and indifferent social location. How can we be “post-colonial” when so many First Nations people are living on remote reserves denied access to basic health care resources during flu pandemics? What radical shift supposedly occurs when infested blankets are traded
for body bags? This earns us the status *post*? Who gets to make this claim and with what evidence? Can we be “post-feminist” while incarcerated women are forced to deliver their babies wearing shackles? When conservative U.S. senators advise women to “make lemons out of lemonade” and keep their babies, even if they are the victims of rape or incest, since “two wrongs” don’t make a right? To the contrary! Patriarchy still exists. We live in a patriarchal society. Patriarchy is the ruling logic upon which our dominant status quo historically emerged and currently rests. It is, as Rich claims, difficult to grasp because it has, in the words of Iris Marion Young, “gone underground, dwelling in everyday habits and cultural meanings of which people are for the most part unaware” (McDowell and Sharp 1997; 220). We can no longer name patriarchy using strategies that worked well in the past and this evidenced by the fact that there are those among us who opt for *post* descriptions of our current epoch. The master’s tools won’t work anymore. He changed the locks and has hidden the keys.

Patriarchy is not the system of gendered domination of women by men. Patriarchy is infinitely more complicated than a system by which people are merely oppressed, and to figure patriarchy in this way is to define its scope far too narrowly. Colonialism, imperialism, and the global networks of trade they produced, capitalism and consumerism, the exaltation of Western civilization and its self-instituted narrative of infinite progression, are the historically specific practices through which the logic of patriarchy has congealed itself within the collective social imaginary of “the West.” Insofar as the history of patriarchal domination established itself as a global order, first by colonization and later in a more complex and articulate fashion through cultural forms of imperialism, it infused the very ground upon which modernity constituted itself.

Patriarchy is not the system of gendered domination of women by men. *White supremacist capitalist patriarchy* is the system of social organization through which a very particular group of men have achieved the global domination of all Other(ed) groups of people by political, economic, ideological, cultural, epistemic and psychic means. It is all encompassing. It is the organizing logic upon which our socially constructed version of reality is built. Marilyn Frye famously argues that
“[r]eality is that which pertains to the one in power, is that over which he has power, is his domain, his estate, is proper to him” (1983; 155. emphasis added). For Frye, the logic of patriarchy has established, and continues to maintain, the boarder between what is real/rational and what is unreal/absurd, and is the central point of reference according to which people and, I suggest, even very young children render themselves, their position within social relations of power, and the entire world intelligible. As a logic that underwrites our socially constructed version of reality, patriarchy infiltrates even the most intimate fissures of sociality, right down to our inner most experiences of self and identity.

Patriarchy is the motivating inertia that drives the elaborate web of sociality Judith Butler calls the heterosexual matrix, “that grid of cultural intelligibility through which bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized” (2006; 208). Bodies, genders, and desires are naturalized according to what is rendered natural under patriarchy: the heterosexual, monogamous, nuclear familial unit. A cultural grid of intelligibility defines the boundaries of what identities can be plausibly constituted within a given ideo-cultural context, and what lies beyond the pale of its discourse. As a grid of cultural intelligibility, the heterosexual matrix functions to secure the socio-psychic mechanisms that enforce what Rich refers to as the rule of compulsory heterosexuality (Rich 1986b). According to Rich, compulsory heterosexuality is an ideological standard that coerces human beings into rigidly divided subject positions, organized along the axis of the heterosexual formations of gender ordained by patriarchy’s rule. These subject positions are distinguished from one another by internalized narratives of identity that are compatible with and necessary to the maintenance of the social relations of production and reproduction (Rich 1986). Social relations of power are organized according to the all-encompassing logic of patriarchy.

In the first chapter I argue that the preschool apparatus is a social institution by which the relations of production are both reproduced and socially reinstated by recruiting the participation of very young children. The preschool, as with the educational apparatus generally, is but one facet of patriarchal sociality among others such as the family, law, the state, and the corporately owned mass media. It is
a place where children learn about what kinds of performances, roles, and subject positions are required of their particular social location—whether male or female, black or white, and so on. As I describe in the first chapter, critical, feminist, and queer theorists of early childhood education argue that the socio-emotional success of very young children often depends on their ability to successfully embody the stereotypical characteristics of their gender and convincingly perform sexual identities bound by heteronormativity using the familial storylines typical of children’s play. The capacity to experiment with and act out the stereotypic sex-roles of the dominant status quo is quite commonly considered vital to the healthy socialization of today’s children (Best 1983; Bruhm and Hurley 2004; Chen 2009; Epstein and Johnson 1998; Gallas 1998a; Letts and Sears 1999; MacNaughton 2000; Renold 2005; Taylor 2005; Thorne 1993; Weitzman 1979).

I have also suggested that these performances are provoked by the presence of domestic landscapes in the learning environment. The strictly gendered patterns of play described in the first chapter, I believe, testify to the fact that the gendered landscapes of today’s childhoods elicit the constitution of rigidly gendered selves, identities that then manifest themselves in children’s imaginative play. Yet although gendered play and patterns of habitation in preschool classrooms is a noted fact by theorists of early childhood, and some scholars even go so far as to critically address room arrangement and the spatialized binary of the home/block areas as a key contributor in effecting gendered play, not one theorist disrupts the validity of the presence of home-space in preschools. That is, not one theorist suggests that perhaps the domestic landscape ought to be removed from early learning environments because it has the potential, I believe, to be both psychically repressive and emotionally damaging (Best 1983; Gallas 1998b; Taylor 2005; Thorne 1993; Walkerdine and Lucey 1989; Weitzman 1979; Yelland 1998). Why do preschools so persistently contain the domestic landscapes of home-space? And how is it that leaving these spaces out of early learning does not occur to even the most critical scholars of early childhood education?

This chapter draws out in greater detail my analysis of how “the relations of production” are reinstated by the social apparatus of the preschool. By tracing the
original social relations of power whose facilitation influenced the historical emergence of the public and private landscapes characteristic of modernity, we can achieve a better grasp of the psychic implications of home-space in preschools. The preschool is a circuit of sociality, a mechanism that enables the continued circulation of subject positions and identity narratives emblematic of citizenship in the psychically domineering white, bourgeois, and patriarchal order. It achieves these ends by mimicking the traditional division of the public and private sphere, a spatial practice historically characteristic of imperial modernity. While inhabiting these preschool landscapes, children learn their societal position within relations of power and privilege that depend on their race, class, and gender. These relations have been inherited from the long-standing tradition of patriarchal social organization reliant, in its late-modern configuration, on the production and strict separation of these public and private spheres. As long as the division between private (domestic) and public (commercial) landscapes of social signification enjoy continued enactments in the spatiality of preschool classrooms, the dominant patriarchal order will survive psychically in the minds of children— the future citizens tacitly expected to uphold the status quo.

My attempt at getting a better grasp at the mechanisms by which the patriarchal order reinserts itself into the sociality of today interrogates what social psychologist and critical human geographer Derek Hook refers to as “the troubling intersection of ideology, space, and subjectivity” (Hook 2005; 693). Where do ideology, space and subjectivity intersect in early learning environments? Critical human geographers argue that space and place contribute to the constitution of self-identity in critically determining ways (Adams et al. 2001; Duncan 1996; Grosz 1995; Kirby 1996; McDowell 1999; Pile 1996; Soja 1989; Tuan 1977). Psychologists Dixon and Durrheim, for example, argue that space functions as a resource of identity. This implies that inhabiting spaces bound by established signifiers of sociality determined by discourse, effects the self-constitution of identity in ways only rendered intelligible by that discourse (Dixon 2009). In other words, Dixon and Durrheim’s geo-ontology implies that if space and place are laden with the characteristic signifiers of an ideo-cultural order, so too will the self-identities
constructed by those located in space and place weighted in such a way. This means that patriarchal space produces the constitution of patriarchal subjects.

This chapter attempts to tease out the ideological and subjective significance historically attached to the domestic landscape in order to discover what sediments of signification are present as a result of its presence in the preschools of today. The imperially rooted division of public and private spheres of sociality is a spatial practice that is still currently enacted even, as I have demonstrated, in the spaces of early learning. The resurfacing of spatial enactments bound by the ideo-cultural legacy of what I will suggest is a distinctly white, Western imperialism, in the architecture of early learning function as a mechanism by which today’s children are inoculated back into the social relations of power predicated upon a social imaginary historically produced by the now sedimentary socio-psychic narratives of colonialism and imperialism.

**On Genealogy**

Foucault turned toward genealogy in the middle of his career because he saw it as an explanatory frame capacious enough to closely interrogate the workings of power—by tracing the historical developments of the practical mechanisms by which power is permitted to circulate—in ways that could not be accounted for by the discursive, archeological method of his earlier work. The key to understanding the ways that power circulated through social practices, for Foucault, is to observe the ways that “particular technologies of power [are] embodied in social practices” (Mills 2003; 25). By tracking the lost origins of social practices that are so familiar to us today that they are assumed to be entirely natural or inevitable, the genealogist is able to “dispel the chimeras” of official histories that, in casting themselves as an absolute narrative of truth, erase “the details and accidents that accompany every beginning” (Rabinow 1984; 80). For Foucault, “what is found at the historical beginning of things is not the inviolable identity of their origin; it is the dissension of other things. It is disparity” (Rabinow 1984; 79). Genealogy reveals the practices through which regimes of discipline and truth secure their dominance by the
subjection of those rendered subject to their rule. Writing on Foucault, Sara Mills describes genealogy as a *history of the present* with the profound potential to reveal what cannot be accounted for within ones own historically specific moment, since “it is the very strangeness of the past which makes us able to see clearly the strangeness of the present” (Mills 2003; 24).

Keeping this in mind, it is my intention in this chapter to demonstrate the strangeness of the domestic landscape’s past in the hopes that the strangeness of its presence in our present will reveal itself. The historical division of the public and private spheres is a spatial practice that is deeply rooted in colonial conquest and British cultural imperialism— the touchstones of a white, Western regime of truth and discipline. As such, it is helpful to retrace the early and late modern colonial and imperial practices through which the power of patriarchy became constituted as a global order of things by paying particular attention to the spatial manifestations of the Victorian ideology of domesticity. As Anne McClintock announced:

> The cult of domesticity...has a historical genealogy. The idea of ‘the domestic’ cannot be applied willy-nilly to any house or dwelling as a universal or natural fact...the cult of domesticity involves processes of social metamorphosis and political subjection of which gender is the abiding but not the only dimension (1995; 34).

I offer a version of the genealogy of domestic space and its psychosocial significance that highlights its historical emergence and the ways that the presence of these landscapes propped up the collective identity of an emerging bourgeoisie status quo. I hope that by offering this genealogy new ways of articulating the troubling pedagogical implications of home-space in preschools will disclose themselves to us.

**Race, Gender and Class in the Social Imaginary of Imperial Britain**

The production of a distinctly British space— the domestic landscape— played a vital role in globalizing patriarchy. The civilizing mission of British empire building relied on the domestic landscape as an arena of display for the civility, cleanliness, and superiority characteristic of white identity and embodiment in the social imaginary of British nationalism. I would like to suggest that the domestic
landscape was designed to both literalize the psychic order of British identity narratives, and serve as a tool of containment for white women’s sexuality. This was a form of containment that was absolutely indispensable to the imperial projects of empire building, maintaining the traditional patriarchal order, and securing the ‘purity’ of the white race for those who inhabited the colonial frontier. Separating the public and private spheres was but one spatial mechanism by which the containment of white femininity and exaltation of the white male subject was achieved. By casting the civility of whiteness as a form of moral superiority, the domestic landscape also provided the nostalgic grounding required to both justify and erase the brutality of colonialism and the arrogation of all other modes of sociality under Britain’s regime of cultural imperialism.

According to “The Dictionary of Human Geography,” imperialism is defined as “the creation and maintenance of an unequal economic, cultural and territorial relationship, usually between states and often in the form of an empire, based on domination and subordination” (Johnston 2000; 375). Colonialism, broadly speaking, is a process of settling foreign lands and claiming them for one’s own nation, despite the inevitable presence of indigenous peoples. Imperialism is the process whereby one nation claims ownership and authority over settled and colonized land, seizing all social and political power in the process in order to serve the exploitative economic requirements of building an empire. Cultural imperialism is the process whereby the nationalist narratives of an empire are inserted into the colonial frontier, erasing and often taking ownership over indigenous ways of life. Cultural imperialism is also the process whereby the nationalist narratives of identity that prop up the sociality of an empire are able to establish themselves as a global order of things. The focus of the present analysis is the ways cultural imperialism literalized the identity-narratives of nationalism by utilizing socially produced, distinctly colonial spaces. In the words of Edward Said, “men make their own history—what they know is what they have made” (1979; 5). So, what have we made?

There is no one history of colonialism or imperialism; colonial and imperial accounts vary greatly depending on whose account it is, the empire an account
recalls, and which colony is in question. Insofar as imperialism requires a colonial conquest—since it is only by the colonial settling of foreign lands that the ideological, cultural, economic, political project of imperialism can secure itself—the material practices of imperialism, colonialism, and nation building are inexorably bound to one another. The processes of building a nation must be propped up by the internalization of the ideo-cultural narratives regarding what it means to be a citizen of empire. The trouble is, what we are able to gather from the official histories of colonial empire is by and large only the accounts of white male colonial subjects.

Feminist historiography and post-colonial theory are disciplines dedicated, albeit in different respects, to resurrecting the lost histories disavowed by official narratives of colonialism. The histories resurrected by this scholarship focus on the events that structured the colonial experience of indigenous peoples and white women of various classes, upon whose backs, and without whose labor, the white male process of building an empire would not have succeeded. Feminist historians and colonial theorists such as Burton (1999), Moane and Campling (1999), Poon (2008), Hall (1992), McClintock (1995), Oliver (2004), and Mohanram (1999) have affirmed the vital importance that recruiting the participation of colonial subjects in an imperially bound and nationally constituted social imaginary had for success of empire. They each argue that the process of nation building requires subjects who self-identify strongly with the narratives of nationalism, even in their inner most experiences of self. I am able only to offer a brief sketch of their work in order to show that imperialism is a deeply cultural enterprise by which global empire is established by not only political and economic means, but culturally, ideologically, and psychically as well.

Along with feminist historians and post-colonial theorists, I would like to suggest that the white, Western, patriarchal order of British colonialism and imperialism relied on the establishment, proliferation and maintenance of a dominant— and psychically domineering— social imaginary in order to secure the nationalist identifications required, however imprecisely, of citizens of empire for their success. Social imaginaries are epistemic, socio-political, ideological, psychic
structures that function to establish the normative standards, mores, and grids of intelligibility of a particular formation of sociality. Epistemologist Lorraine Code defines social imaginaries as “often implicit but nonetheless effective systems of images, meanings, metaphors, and interlocking explanations-expectations within which people...enact their knowledge and subjectivities and craft their self-understandings” (2006; 29). She elaborates, “social imaginaries work to hold certain conceptual frames in place, thereby maintaining the legitimacy of hegemonic interpretations of experience and the world, while discrediting others” (2006; 22). While Code’s analysis is concerned with the troublesome epistemic implications of sedimented and assumed social imaginaries for knowing well, she does warn of the socio-psychic and political consequences of social imaginaries, since they are also narrative-ordaining structures. For Code, social imaginaries have the capacity to reinstate inherited layers of ideo-cultural sociality. Likening social imaginaries to Bourdieu’s concept of embodied history, Code writes:

It has to do with having a sense of ones place, with the cumulative totality of sedimented cultural and personal experiences a human being caries as he or she moves about in a social space and in relation to the power structures that shape such a place...its limits are ‘set by the historically and socially situated conditions of its production’ (2006; 28).

The psychic reinstatement of the patriarchal order of British imperialism can be observed as existent today insofar as the subject positions and identity-narratives ordained under this regime are still enacted, perhaps as an embodied history, and enforced by an compulsory heterosexuality anchored by the heterosexual matrix which structures the world in which we live.

The compelling account of colonial subjectivity offered in Antoinette Burton’s “Gender, Sexuality and Colonial Modernities” (1999) demonstrates that, like any regime of truth and discipline, colonial regimes were always and inevitably incomplete and unfinished. She suggests that ideo-cultural orders, like the British colonial order, can never achieve the pure and un-resisted subjugation of all those subject to their rule, but are in constant need of re/enactment. She writes, “[t]he ‘precarious vulnerability’ of colonial modernities in all their various historical incarnations and cultural forms was due as much to the permeability of
national/colonial boarders as it was to the instability of political regimes” (Burton 1999; 2). For Burton, modernity constituted itself through colonialism and colonial identities are performative projects that must be constantly maintained. On Burton’s account, the social practices propped up by a dominant ideological discourse were key sites in securing the continual re/enactment of the performative identities of colonial modernity and were organized according to the needs of the overarching patriarchal tone of colonialism. For her, “[i]deologies of gender and sexuality were foundational to the (practical) projects of colonial modernities” (1999; 2). Burton continues by pointing out the vital role that tropes of domesticity had in enforcing colonial narratives of identity, arguing:

...domesticity was a key regulative norm of modernity...sexual relations within the family incubated the race both biologically and morally...ideas of bodily health became infused with moral and patriotic purpose (1999; 20).

For Burton, while the proliferation of the heterosexual patriarchal family unit was the crux of colonial modernity’s success, it also betrayed the anxious insecurity of an ideological order attempting, fictitiously, to globalize itself as absolute inviolable truth. She notes that, “political and cultural anxieties...often underwrote experiments in colonial modernity. These anxieties coalesced particularly around the bodies of women, children, and non-white men who endangered convictions about the naturalness of European family formation” (1999; 8). White, male anxiety was a central– albeit repressed and recast– point of reference according to which socio-psychic and material practices of colonialism developed during the nineteenth century.

In his canonical text “Orientalism” (1979), Edward Said takes a discursive approach in accounting for empire. Said argues that the European project of imperial empire building was, at its very core, a project of constituting and then globalizing a dominant social imaginary. The white colonial subject comes to know himself first and foremost by defining what he is not. Through the process of identifying the Other– in Said’s account the Oriental subject who becomes racialized by white colonials– Europe solidified its own distinct sense of identity, predicated on notions of whiteness. The Orient, suggests Said, is man-made– a socially
constructed representation that exists in our collective social imaginary derived
from the relationality and anxiety which accompanied colonial encounters with
difference. The Western social imaginary constituted itself in binaristic negative
relation to (O)ther people and cultures, establishing its own superiority as it cast
colonized Others as barbaric, threatening and animalistic. Burton makes a similar
claim, stating:

The fiction of the belatedness of non-Western cultures in the march towards
modernity has been an enabling colonial strategy since the eighteenth
century (if not before), helping to obscure the fact that the 'Enlightenment
promise' was historically as unrealizable for women citizens as for colonial
subjects of persuasions (1999; 4).

The superiority of a distinctly European civility generated out of these colonial
encounters with the Other, required a hegemonic attitude towards the Other’s way
of life in order to justify the dismissive and arrogant perception that characterized
white embodiment. Alluding to this, Said writes that “[h]egemony [is] an
indispensable concept for any understanding of cultural life in the industrial west”
(Said 1979; 7). Western hegemony is a hegemony of racial, gender, and economic
superiority that subjugates all other cultures to it’s own self-administered position
of superiority.

As both Burton and Said’s accounts imply, the social hierarchies of
oppression like racism, sexism, homophobia, and class elitism share origins in the
rigid solidification and exaltation of the phallocentric, white, bourgeois subject of
colonial modernity, an archetype of the white Western social imaginary. Resonating
with both Burton and Said, Kelly Oliver argues that it is only through the process of
self-exaltation that colonialism and imperialism are able, paradoxically, to justify the
brutality and violence they inevitably require. Oliver observes:

Imperialism rationalizes its right to colonize and dominate others through
doctrines of manifest destiny dependant on distinctions between the
civilized and the barbarian, the rational and the irrational, the human and
subhuman. The privilege of autonomy and creative meaning making has been
bought at a cost to those others figured as inferior, dependent, and incapable
of making meaning. This is true not only of colonization of other nations,
lands, or peoples but also of oppression and repression in the forms of
racism and sexism within a culture or a nation (2004; 24).
For Burton, Oliver and Said then, the domination of all other people by white colonial and imperial men of power birthed the intersecting hierarchies of oppression that still exist today. The material practices of imperialism simultaneously required and produced economic domination, racial oppression, violence, and the ownership of women and in order to succeed. These hierarchies, in turn, relied on the vibrancy of a dominant and domineering social imaginary to reproduce themselves.

Taking a similar position and offering an eloquent account of the British colonial conquest in her book “Imperial Leather” (1995), Anne McClintock argues that “race, gender and class are not distinct realms of experience, existing in splendid isolation from each other...rather, they come into existence in and through relation to each other—if in contradictory and conflictual ways. In this sense, gender, race and class can be called articulated categories (1995; 5. emphasis original). The social hierarchies that justify sexual, racial, and economic domination are as utterly inseparable from one another as imperialism, colonialism, and nation building— all of which are deeply implicated in the history of British imperialism (Burton and ebrary Inc. 1999; Hall 1992; Moane and Campling 1999; Mohanram 1999; Nederveen Pieterse 1995). In order for nation building, nationalism, and empire to succeed they need to be both embodied and enacted in the everyday lives of real people. McClintock explains:

History is not shaped around a single privileged social category. Race and class cannot, I believe, be understood as sequentially derivative of sexual difference, or vice versa. Rather, the formative categories of imperial modernity are articulated categories in the sense that they come into being in historical relation each other and emerge only in dynamic, shifting and intimate interdependence. The idea of racial “purity,” for example, depends on the rigorous policing of women’s sexuality; as a historical notion, then, racial “purity” is inextricably implicated in the dynamic of gender and cannot be understood without a theory of gender power (1995; 61).

Suggesting that race, gender, and class are articulated categories implies that they cannot be separated from one another, either psychically as narratives of identity, or materially as social practices of oppression. All of which, McClintock demonstrates,
emerged in order to prop up empire and assist in congealing the identity-narratives of colonial Britain. Critical race scholar Sherene Razack is similarly emphatic in her work that multiple systems of oppression are interlocking and mutually sustaining to one another. She explains that a "focus on racial formations is automatically a focus on class and gender hierarchies as well. Racial hierarchies come into existence through patriarchy and capitalism, each system of domination mutually constituting the other" (Razack 2002; 6). Gender, race, and class are inseparable from one another, I believe, insofar as they are all appendages of the same patriarchal regime of truth and reality.

By highlighting theses socio-psychic accounts of colonialism and cultural imperialism, I am proposing that the globalization of the British imperial order through empire was foremost an ideo-cultural phenomenon. National identities need to be embodied by citizens and empire must be enacted; they can be embodied and enacted only by reference to a social imaginary within which the standards of nationalism are ready-at-hand and steadfastly available. McClintock notes that the “governing themes of Western imperialism [were] the transmission of white, male power through the control of colonized women; the emergence of a new global order of cultural knowledge; and the imperial command of capital” (1995; 3). These were the social relations of ideo-cultural production that had to be reproduced under the psychic order of British empire, and it was towards these ends that the material practices of colonialism and imperialism were directed. Transmission of the patriarchal order through the establishment of a domineering social imaginary was a primary achievement of cultural imperialism.

Our historical moment has inherited the ideo-cultural order upon which empires of the past were built. It is the sedimentary ground of the collective social imaginary that is effect today. Colonial theorists Moane and Campling suggest that gender and racial oppression are incredibly similar psychological events, whose systemic causes– patriarchy and colonialism– manifest themselves in incredibly similar ways psychically. They suggest that by analyzing the social and cultural practices of colonialism we can better understand how the social hierarchies existent today are maintained or controlled (1999). Moane and Campling’s work
offers and useful account of the ways that identity formations required of the British patriarchal colonial order—for example the compulsory heterosexuality of white women—are linked to state institutions such as the law, religion, and the family. They argue that these institutions were largely produced in order to control and regulate the “sexual, emotional, and economic relationships of citizens of the empire” (1999; 3). For Moane and Campling then, insofar as these social institutions emerged in order to regulate and control colonial subjects and enforce the heterosexual monogamy of the white patriarchal family that is still very much in effect today, tracing the originary practices of their historical emergence will reveal the key to a “liberatory psychology” that would emancipated us from their remnant forms. The psychic account of oppressive social hierarchies offered by Moane and Campling does not, I believe, go far enough because it implies a discontinuity between the inertia of oppression under the colonial order and the psycho-social order of patriarchy that exists today. In so doing, they therefore fail to account for the continued survival and vibrancy of phallocentric narratives of white superiority that characterized imperial modernity.

Catherine Hall warns us that “[t]he Empire’ is not just out there, it’s inside us too” (Hall 1992; 20). Taking an Althusserian approach to colonial modernity, Hall insists that the sexual division of labor ordained by the institution of the patriarchal family was, and still is, a key site for the hegemonic reproduction of the social relations of production. She argues that, “the power relations between the two sexes are at the heart of the social and psychic order” (1992; 16). Hall emphasizes how important it was to the success of empire that colonial subjects, both on the frontier and in the metropole, embody and enact a distinctly British identity. She, and many other feminist historians and post-colonial theorists, suggest that these national identities demarcated by the British empire were epitomized by the domestic ideology that distinguished the heteronormative, bourgeois and white British nuclear family from “everyone else” (Abate 2003; Burton and ebrary Inc. 1999; Hunt and Lessard 2002; Poon 2008).

This distinctly British identity was characterized by the tropes of whiteness, civility, and bourgeois status amassed under the ideological category of domesticity
(Abate 2003; Berg 2002; Bryden and Floyd 1999; Burton and ebrary Inc. 1999; Hall 1992; Hellerstein et al. 1981; Hunt and Lessard 2002; McClintock 1995; Moane and Campling 1999; Mohanram 1999; Poon 2008; Stoler 1995). Burton suggests that conforming to the conventions of civilized, domesticated Europeanism was taken very seriously by the middle class, arguing:

...at stake in the confrontation between state policy, social reform and sexuality in these contexts was nothing less than the creation and maintenance of Americanness, Englishness, and Austrailianess; all were corollaries of whiteness, all indexes to a claim of racial superiority which was never given or prescribed but which was always on shaky ground because it was always in the process of being negotiated wherever the micropolitics of law encounters 'natural' culture, symbolically or materially (1999;6).

Like Burton, McClintock takes a rather strong stance regarding the role that the categories of gender, sexuality, race, and class played in constituting the social imaginary of imperial Britain:

Imperialism cannot be fully understood without a theory of gender power. Gender power was not the superficial patina of empire, an ephemeral gloss over the more decisive mechanics of class or race. Rather, gender dynamics were, from the outset, fundamental to the securing and maintenance of the imperial enterprise (1995; 7).

In the following section I turn towards the psychic trope of civility captured in the Victorian ideology of domesticity. By exploring the multitude of ways that this domestic ideology propped up other narratives of whiteness and bourgeois class status, the ideological origins of domestic space, the material practice that I address in the final sections of this chapter, become evident.

**The Ideological Landscape of Domestic Space**

“...[w]omen played a far greater role in the formation of middle-class identity than has been acknowledged. The cult of domesticity was crucial in helping to fashion the identity of a large class of people (hitherto disunited) with clear affiliations, distinct boundaries, and separate values– organized around the presiding values of monogamy, thrift, order, accumulation, classification, quantification and regulation– the values of liberal rationality through which the disunited middling classes fashioned the appearance of a unified class identity (McClintock 1995; 168).
The Victorian cult of domesticity is well documented both by feminist historiography and post-colonial studies of whiteness. This cult bound together the articulated categories of race, gender, and class, and was intensified by the burgeoning global consumer market made possible by industrial capitalism. McClintock argues that the cult of domesticity was the foundation from which the bourgeois middle class emerged. She writes,

The cult of domesticity...became central to British Imperial identity, contradictory and conflictual as that was, and an intricate dialectic emerged. Imperialism suffused the Victorian cult of domesticity and the historic separation of the private and the public, which took shape around colonialism and the idea of race. At the same time, colonialism took shape around the Victorian invention of domesticity and the idea of the home (1995; 36).

The cult of domesticity operated as an ideological placeholder that marked the distinctly white and British intersection of empire, industry, and the reproduction of race. Arguing that the cult of domesticity functioned as a mechanism of modernization, Burton writes, “[n]owhere is the tenuous success of modernizing regimes more clear than in studies of the domestic and the familial under colonialism” (1999; 10). She continues, noting that “[d]omesticity was at the heart of both nationalist and imperialist projects. The re-valorizing of the domestic– and with it a certain kind of heterosexual female respectability– was the generative core of the nation” (1999; 10). The cult of domesticity proliferated an angelic image of true womanhood as utterly docile, subservient, delicate, meek, and of the highest moral purity. Distinctly white, this figuring of femininity amassed the socializing tropes of superiority and civility, utilizing an idealized conception of the white woman as a placeholder for the nationalist identity-narratives strived for by citizens of the empire. The figure of the true woman was the pride of the empire; modern, evolved, and a vision of self-restraint. “She” provided evidence of the self-evolved progressive superiority of British nationalism.

This fair and delicate figure of true womanhood justified the relegation of women to the privacy of the home because she was conceived as too fragile for the rough exposure involved in the public world of commerce and politics. Figuring
women this way, the cult of domesticity was the ideo-cultural linchpin that secured the separation of distinct public and private spheres of sociality. This spatial and spatializing practice, women in the home and men out in the “world,” was a particular relation of production by which the containment of women was achieved. McClintock writes, “private domesticity and the imperial market [were] two spheres vaunted by middle-class Victorians as entirely and naturally distinct” (1995; 32). Though “it is commonplace to observe the historic emergence in the nineteenth century of the distinction between the private and the public. However, the separation did not happen overnight and it did not happen naturally” (1995; 166). She continues, “[I]n ideology at least, the homes of the Victorian middling class became vaunted as a distinct sphere lying naturally secluded from public commerce and thus beyond the abstract principles of the liberal market economy and the regime of rationality” (1995; 167).

Burton also notes that the socio-psychic inertia of the Victorian domestic ideology, “amplified the scrutiny applied to the relations, habits, and environment of domestic life and the spatial arrangements it implied which sustained biological and social reproduction” (1999; 20). The cult of domesticity combined with the rationalizing force of colonial modernity, affected a peculiar shift in spatiality. Burton suggests that as a regulative norm of modernity, the ideological regime of domestic truth lead to a drastic reconfiguring of British home-space that “reconfigured the conception of the family from a ‘temporal organization of kinship’ to a specific ‘spatial entity’ that encompassed the heterosexual marriage, children and servants in a self-contained [and ideologically intelligible] dwelling” (1999; 20). Burton is not alone it observing this shift, much of the recent work in critical race studies, feminist historiography, and post-colonial theory emphasizes the importance that symbolic spatial tropes– which become literalized in the physical layouts of actual homes– had for the construction and proliferation of white, Western narratives of identity during the late nineteenth century period of British high imperialism. Radhika Mohanram (1999), Anne McClintock (1995), Anna Laura Stoler (1995; 2006), Antoinette Burton (1999), Catherine Hall (1992), Sara Mills (2003), and Inga Bryden (1999) have all argued that the emerging order of white,
middle-class modernity was accompanied by the global reconfiguration and intensification of distinctly Western imperial landscapes, and that these spaces literally wove the “colonial order of things” into the materiality of the everyday worlds of white, Western, colonial subjects.

The built materiality of modern homes is a relatively new spatial practice whose emergence coincides with the rise of global capitalism and cultural imperialism made possible by colonialism: “Domesticity denotes both a space (a geographic and architectural alignment) and a social relation to power. The cult of domesticity—far from being a universal fact of ‘nature’—has a historical genealogy” (McClyntock 1995; 34). Space is a social product and social space is specifically designed in order to facilitate the reproduction of certain social relations of production (Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1989). The simultaneous emergence of consumerism, capitalism, a bourgeois class, and the domestic space we know today, imply that the design of this landscape was strategically tailored to meet the needs of these correlating systems of sociality. The social practice of producing domestic space has been an over-determined engagement with regard to its social utility. Insofar as the domestic space emerged as a meeting place for the intersecting phenomena of commodity fetishism, the containment of femininity and sexuality, and the spectacle of white superiority, that it historically emerged in order to further facilitate circuits of power embedded within these social practices can be inferred from the space itself (Abate 2003; Burton and ebrary Inc. 1999; McClyntock 1995; Mohanram 1999).

As the ideological cult of domesticity established itself as the dominant nineteenth discourse on femininity in the social imaginary, domestic space emerged—literalizing and concretizing the socio-psychic narratives of British empire. In “Domestic Space: Reading the Nineteenth Century Interior” (1999), Bryden and Floyd examine the ways that the material culture of domesticity supported socially and psychically bound social relations of power and identity. Bryden and Floyd define the cult of domesticity as “a code of beliefs and, for some scholars, practices, that can be linked to the development of a quiescent mass culture exemplified in the popular ‘domestic’ fiction and the instructional and
didactic texts” (1999; 2) This socio-psychic cult “relieved the masses from the burden of thinking” by imposing a strictly defined and pre-established ideological order onto the everyday practices of women in the home (1999; 2). They suggest that the social imaginary of colonial Britain participated in a “domestic environmentalism” where, “the home was imagined, in the nineteenth century domestic discourse, to provide a powerfully influential space for the development of character and identity” (1999; 2). Even though domestic space, as a material artifact of culture and a space of moral training was a sphere of sociality conceived as entirely separate from the outside world of politics and commerce, “the values and behavior inculcated in the home were considered crucial to the formation and maintenance of national identity, a necessary protection against less predictable social and economic changes” (1999; 2).

The domestic landscape constituted itself as a mechanism of female containment within which compulsory heterosexuality was deeply implicated and literally enforced through the medium of physical space. In her book “Privacy, Domesticity, and Women in Early Modern England” (2003), Corinne Abate argues that the separation of the public and privates spheres under the early modern configuration of British nationalism was a double-edged sword for white women subjects of empire. Noting the early modern moment when the domestic landscape historically emerged, Abate suggests that the redesigning of British homes was a spatial shift that represents the codification of patriarchy. Resonating with McClintock, Abate writes, “...private and domestic and predominantly females spaces were imagined and employed in the early modern period so as to produce and reproduce culture” (Abate 2003; 4). The separation of the public and private spheres and the emergence of distinctly domestic landscapes with their correlating discourse of true womanhood in early British modernity, secured the spatial confinement of white women to the private sphere. Domestic space became an arena for the intense surveillance of women and the enforcement of a reconfigured patriarchal order. The socio-psychic functioning of domestic space represents both the nucleus of the social order and the primary site for the subjection of women, and was both generated out of, and organized according to, the logic of patriarchal
power. For Abate, privacy and domesticity are overlapping spaces that make up the invisible backdrop of patriarchy. As such the domestic landscape and the unprecedented privacy it afforded white women, simultaneously maintained the patriarchy of the British order and allowed white women a fractional opportunity for resistance (Abate 2003).

The values that infused social practice during the nineteenth century located white women in a precarious position within the nationalist order of British imperialism. White women were both agents of and subject to the oppression of this ideo-cultural order. Kathleen Weiler takes education as an example in order to note the precarious position of women in the patriarchal regime of modernity. Her analysis examines nineteenth century educational reform to argue that during this period there occurred a “transformation of teaching into ‘women’s work’” (Weiler 1989; 9). According to Weiler, the relegation of women to the role of teacher in the nineteenth century was itself an ideological construct that supported the patriarchal division of public and private spheres of social activity: “Separate sphere ideology was based on the assumption that men and women were meant to exist and move in two different spheres of activity–women in the private domestic sphere of the home, and men in the public sphere of wage work” (1989; 13). For Weiler, the historical emergence of the ideologically constituted figure of the “woman as teacher” troubled the validity of the ordained separation between the public and private domains because women teachers did, indeed, earn wages and were therefore active economic participants. With women earning wages through teaching, the previous conception of education as a public endeavor shifted, and the school become recast as an extension of the home and an appendage of the domain of domesticity:

That women became teachers made perfect economic sense. But women waged workers, at however low the wages, were a challenge to the dominant ideology of separate spheres. The problem was solved, as many writers have noted, by the development of an ideology of teaching as women’s true profession (1989; 17).
It is important to note that through the role as educators of children, white women simultaneously disrupted and sustained the patriarchal regime and the separation of the public and private spheres it relied on. By conceiving of women as the “natural” teachers of children, education became an extension of the domestic and private sphere. “Woman as teacher” utilized the status quo narratives of maternal nurturance and moral purity already established within the Victorian image of “true womanhood” (Weiler 1989). Madeleine Grumet argues that in the context of modern education in the nineteenth century women became responsible for ushering young children into the order of patriarchy, despite the fact that they were themselves subjugated and oppressed by the organization of relations of power within the patriarchal order. According to Grumet, pedagogy, insofar as it has evolved according to and within the dominating social order of patriarchy, is, inexorably, patriarchal:

This is the logic we need to understand, for women, through our work as mothers, as students, and as teachers, have contributed our labour and our children to the institutional and social organizations that have extended our own subordination (Grumet 1988; 45).

Women, as teachers, became the vessels through which children were socialized back into the cultural matrix of patriarchy. And for Grumet, pedagogy became the practical apparatus by which we ushered children back into the hegemonic relations of production that sustained the patriarchal order. Education is an excellent example of how women participated in the same social order by which they were oppressed. As an extension of the private sphere, education opened up a space for subversion and resistance. This fractional potential for resistance, Abate argues, allowed women some level of empowerment and independence. But the space of resistance opened up by education and the relegation of white women to the role of teacher, is as precarious as white women’s relation to empire. Education, then, was one social practice where, by eliciting their participation, white women became simultaneously oppressor and oppressed. White women who acted as ideologues of the patriarchal order, is another.
Catherine Hall argues that while the privacy of the domestic landscape provided an opening for resistance, many white women enacted, upheld and went to great lengths to proliferate the pure femininity of white domesticity crucial to the ideology’s success. By advocating Victorian domesticity, Hall notes, “women ideologues...played a vital role in defining and articulating the boundaries of a new domestic morality” that was cited as proof of civility and general superiority of whiteness (1992; 9). It is quite well documented that during this late nineteenth century period of British high imperialism white women were relegated to the role of domestic pedagogues who were responsible, most often through women’s associations and clubs, for educating Other women, particularly in colonial communities, about how to be “properly” domestic (Abate 2003; Burton and ebrary Inc. 1999). As noted above, notions of white civility and superiority inflected by tropes of domesticity were deeply bound by the collective idealization of the moral superiority of domesticity in the dominant social imaginary. These narratives were deeply tied to religious faith and often manifested themselves in the educational programs taught by white women acting as domestic missionaries (Burton and ebrary Inc. 1999).

Hall writes:

...the new bourgeois way of life involved a recodification of ideas about women. Central to those new ideas was an emphasis on women as domestic beings, as primarily wives and mothers. Evangelicalism provided one crucial influence on this definition of home and family (Hall 1992; 75).

Hall's analysis demonstrates how the Victorian cult of domesticity, in becoming bound by notions of moral superiority, which were reinforced by religious faith, was disseminated through the educational programs of white women as domestic missionaries. Upholding and facilitating programs of domestic education to women of Other races was one way that women ideologues played their vital and active role in sustaining empire. Insofar as white women testified to the absolute supremacy of domestic ideology, they too were implicated in the construction of the new bourgeois culture of nineteenth century Britain.
McClintock addresses this phenomenon as well, writing that “white women were not the hapless onlookers of empire but were ambiguously complicit both as colonizers and colonized, privileged and restricted, acted upon and acting” (1995; 6). Despite enjoying a relative amount of privilege, white women were still subject to an immense amount of surveillance and subjugation under the social order of British imperialism. The regulation and control of white women’s sexuality was indispensable to (re)producing the white race and its empires. The containment of women in the private domestic sphere, a *cordon sanitaire* advocated by the Victorian ideology of domesticity, maintained men’s patriarchal control over women.

White women, as both ideologues and the primary agents of domestic educational programs, helped to proliferate, through cultural coercion, the domestic landscape. Observing the historical emergence of the domestic landscape not only provides literal, tangible examples McClintock’s *articulated categories* of gender, race, and class status, but it also helps us to understand the ideo-cultural *traces* that remain present in the texture of such landscapes. In the third chapter I explore further how these traces are still psychically effectual on some deeply sedimentary level in our collective imagination. The white Western imaginary that was both produced by and emerged out of the social practices of colonialism and imperialism affected the social production of the domestic landscape. As I argue, spaces are socially produced according to their socio-psycho signification in order to literalize and concretize their particular ideo-cultural order.

In “Imperial Leather” (1995), McClintock tracks the trope of domestic space as it was commonly deployed by the colonial ideological order during Britain’s high imperialism. McClintock’s analysis offers a psychological account of how an ideo-spatial trope like the domestic landscape functioned to secure the dominant social imaginary of an empire. According to McClintock, the utilization of the domestic space conceptually collapsed cleanliness, civility, and white embodiment, such that they became interchangeable and equivalent to one another within the dominant social imaginary of nineteenth century Britain. She describes the domestic spatial trope as a psychic narrative that conceptually bound the private space of the home to an essentialized and static feminine identity. This narrative of domesticity was
co-opted by capitalism and consumer marketing, and reinforced by visual
technologies that coined these images as distinctly aristocratic, privileged, and \textit{white} (McClintock 1995). She argues that as such, the trope of domesticity was used to
graph social narratives of civility and racial superiority onto notions of whiteness,
and functioned as a mechanism of cultural and psychic imperialism that effectively
secured whiteness as a global status quo (McClintock 1995). A pervasive theme in
recent spatial turn of feminist history is the contention that by constructing these
distinctly white, middle-class material landscapes—on both the colonial frontier and
at home in the metropole—the narratives of identity that sustained the ideo-cultural
formation of imperialism became solidified in national imaginaries. As domesticity
achieved its ubiquitous status as a practice of material culture, the ideological
narratives of colonialism were simultaneously woven into the fabric of everyday
landscapes and psychic life of white, Western, colonial citizens (Abate 2003; Bryden
and Floyd 1999; Hall 1992; McClintock and American Council of Learned Societies.
1995; Mills 2005; Mohanram 1999; Oliver 2004; Said 2003; Stoler 2006). These
theorists highlight the various ways in which spatial practices are informed—and to
an extent determined—by the ideo-cultural context within which they historically
emerged, manifesting ideo-cultural norms and values in material ways.

Burton notes, “the imperial reach of American modernity depended on the
success of white women in creating domestic space in foreign terrains that
protected against the disorder and contagion of alien races” (1999; 21). Resonating
with the work of Said described above, Radhika Mohanram contends with Burton’s
argument, that constructing the domestic landscape in as many contexts as possible
was an essential strategy which satisfied the colonial need for self-assertion while
inhabiting the territory of the Other. Mohanram writes:

The daily interaction with difference at all levels—landscape, people, customs,
hemisphere, climate, aesthetics, and meanings—required the construction of
at least one particular factor as constant, unchanging. The notion of the
domestic ideology, women at home, restructuring British homes in foreign
spaces, functioning as metonyms of home and Britannia, went a long way in
fulfilling the needs of the British (men) in diaspora (Mohanram 1999; 165).
The landscape of the home and the relegation of white colonial women to the private sphere were deployed as material and conceptual tools which, when bound together, were used to craft and congeal the identity of white colonial and imperial men. For Burton, Mohanram, and McClintock, this meant that women and their naturalized domestic habitat were socially constructed as an iconic place holder, a point of psychic reference that allowed a particular identifications with the British homeland to remain fixed in the the social imaginary.

On its own, the idealized figure of the white British woman as an *angel in the home* was not enough to secure this narrative of national identification as the dominant mode of collective thinking. A more concrete and tangible backdrop, as Abate suggests, was required to physically manifest dominant social imagery into reality in order for it to be considered inevitable, literal, and grounded by some immutable reality. As described above, an interesting shift in the physical landscapes of the British homes emerged. By tailoring the domestic fabric of British everyday lives to match the dominant social imagery and narratives of identity, proliferated visually and psychically in pop culture, the conceptual collapse of whiteness with civility, cleanliness, and homeliness, became materialized, literalized and *real* and the tangible landscape of domesticity. Mohanram writes:

> The colonizer is authorized to remake colonial spaces in the image of the mother country...the replication of home and its aesthetic familiarity bespeaks comfort for the settler population [Since] the alien and unfamiliar must be domesticated (Mohanram 1999; 150).

As Abate, Burton, Mohanram and McClintock all suggest, the proliferation of an iconic homely landscape– the chosen habitat of white British colonizers and the natural locale of white civilized women– quite literally materialized the imperial nationalism of empire. What is most interesting about McClintock’s argument with regard to the present analysis is her suggestion that domestic space was itself developed in and through colonialism as a mechanism of identification to ensure the vibrancy of ideological narratives of whiteness during the prodigal journeys of British colonizers. Journies into an unknown colonial frontier threatened to dilute the strength of British nationalism because of the unavoidable encounters with

McClintock argues that under the culturally imperial regime of colonialism, the spatial shift in materially organizing colonial dwellings was characterized by the emergence of the kitchen as a smaller more specialized area of the home. Influenced by a global shift in capitalism effected by colonialism, McClintock writes:

...the cult of industrial rationality and the cult of domesticity formed a crucial but concealed alliance [...] Household arrangements gradually took shape around a geometry of extreme separation and specialization that came to discipline every aspect of daily life (McClintock 1995; 168).

As rational categorization and a compulsion to order came to dominate Victorian collective consciousness, the physical space of the British home was itself partitioned off and qualified. Reconfiguring both the material space and the social significance attached to particular areas of the British home initiated a transformative shift the socio-symbolic trope of home-space. McClintock writes, “[d]omestic space [became] mapped as a hierarchy of specialized and distinct boundaries that needed constant and scrupulous policing” the result of which was “the arrangement of smaller, highly specialized rooms” (McClintock 1995; 168). Instead of the massive hearth characteristic of late seventeenth and early eighteenth century homes, which functioned as a general living space, an area for food preparation, the room where guests were received, and the location of basic cleaning rituals, there emerged the parlor, the drawing room, and the kitchen:

The middle-class Victorian home must surely rate as one of the most consciously contrived creations of domestic space in history. The affluent Victorian household ensured that its wealth and status were reflected in every aspect of its construction, furnishing and ornamentation (Donald in Bryden and Floyd 1999; 106).

In “Tranquil Havens? Critiquing the Idea of the Home as the Middle-Class Sanctuary” (Bryden and Floyd 1999), Maria Donald argues that the nineteenth century patriarchal separation of the public and private spheres resulted in deeply gendered meanings being attached domestic space. The reconfiguration of British home-space
into "smaller more specialized rooms," noted in the work of McClintock, resulted in what Donald identifies as "a typical Victorian layout." Like McClintock, Donald describes how the layouts of home were rearranged in order to facilitate new relations of cultural production that mandated making all signs of domestic labor invisible in order to reflect the family's bourgeois class status. Donald notes that "the facades of prosperous nineteenth-century homes enclosed interiors which were showcases for consumption, but they also hid unpleasant working conditions" (1999; 116). She describes the reconfiguration of home-space as follows:

Within the middle-class home, space was divided into more or less private areas, as well as between 'upstairs' and 'downstairs' or 'front' and 'back,' and only some of the inhabitants had the freedom to cross over these boundaries...The domestic Victorian space, then, was elaborately segregated according to social status, age, and gender (1999; 107).

McClintock astutely notes that while this newly reconfigured domestic space emerged as a locus of colonial identification during the nineteenth century, it did so paradoxically. The space was socially produced in order to meet the needs of an ideological order, as a place mark by which imperialism was able to track its own progress, and was only newly emerging during the period of Britain's high imperialism– the peak of its power and popularity. Despite its recent emergence, it was infused with a profound nostalgia that fictively recast the landscapes of domesticity with the sense of it being some long-standing tradition, practiced throughout the ages. Though it was constructed as a traditional, inevitable, and eternal landscape of white British Victorians, it was itself only emerging as a spatial practice (McClintock 1995). So while images of domestic space evoked this nostalgic reference to some shared and unifying cultural history, it did so fictitiously, as it was itself just emerging as a cultural artifact of whiteness and an apparatus of imperial power.

Women became conceptually linked to images of the kitchen and the drawing room, the femininely gendered locales of domestic space. Attaching gendered meanings to these areas of the home functioned a mode of collective identification that infused gender, race, and class in the social imaginary of Victorian domesticity.
New chronological parables of essential femininity also emerged. McClintock names
the chronological parable regarding women and the domestic landscape
anachronistic space. The concept of anachronistic space is defined by the
proliferation of an iconic image, in this case the new landscapes of Victorian
domesticity, that is imaginatively placed in some pre-modern state and rendered
static, eternal, and beyond the passage of time (McClintock 1995). McClintock
suggests that the both domestic landscape and the idealized figure of white woman
take on the same chronological narrative of being outside the passage of time. This
is a common strategy of colonial identification– taking a point of reference in
relation to which the trope of white male progress justifies and affirms itself (Hall
The emergence of this domestic landscape– a cultural artifact inexorably bound to
notions of white femininity– functioned in the colonial imagination as a locus of
nostalgic signification. It became an icon that represented the eternal homely
goodness of British civility, the cleanliness of white embodiment, and the harkening
back to a more nationally pure era of racial homogeneity that never actually existed
(McClintock 1995; Moane and Campling 1999; Mohanram 1999).

The domestic psychic trope of identity and the material landscape of the
home was also used as a ground for a burgeoning colonial obsession with class-
status. The narrative of civility that dominated domesticity assisted in erasing the
violence and brutality of imperialisms material practices, and to some extent
influenced the shift in the physical layouts of British homes mentioned above. As
domesticity came to signify civility and white bourgeoisie leisure, white women
under colonial rule were placed in the precarious position of being delegated
managers of household labor, while simultaneously having to totally erase all signs
of the labor involved in maintaining the home. Donald writes:

For women, the domestic space represented not so much a place of leisure as
a place of work. In the nineteenth century the ideal of the leisureed housewife
was a goal which those on the boarders of the upper-working class and lower
middle-class aspired, but leisure time was scares even within the upper
ranges of the middle class and upper class...The realization of the domestic
ideal relied on the labors of servants directed by a mistress whose own labor
had to be made invisible (in Bryden and Floyd 1999; 107-109).
A “true” woman of the bourgeoisie would have several servants to tend to the labor of maintaining the household. If a white woman participated in domestic labor, McClintock suggests, her racial status decreased, since distinctions between race and class were hitherto being collapsed under global consumerism (McClintock 1995). For the domesticated white woman, “life took shape around the contradictory imperative of laboring while rendering her labor invisible. A fresh and pretty housewife presiding at the table disavowed the anxious and sweaty hours of cooking, cleaning, and polishing” (McClintock 1995 p.162). Present only by its absence, a white woman’s was labor rendered observable only by its unobservability. In order to be proper, truly white women, colonial females had to present the image of utter angelic leisure. Leisure served as a testament to complete docility, which remains the normative standard of white femininity (McClintock 1995).

The paradoxical demand that women work in the home but hide all signs of this work produced interesting implications for the domestic landscape that still have residual effects today. The deeply social signifiers attached to the domestic landscape under the British imperial order offer a plausible avenue for rendering home-space in preschool classrooms as monumental spatial site. Because signs of visible labor implied class degradation, domestic objects were rendered degenerate artifacts that conflicted with the imaginary purity of white civility. As such, these objects became spectacular icons of degeneracy. McClintock argues that “the theatrical paraphernalia of domesticity: brooms, pails, soap, water, dirt– mundane household objects became invested with profound fetish power” (McClintock 1995; 147). With the physical layout of the British home becoming rationally categorized and renegotiated, and socially designated signifiers attached to the new architecture of empire’s homes, a closeted space was needed to house the degenerate artifacts of domestic fetishism. The kitchen emerged and became linked to the abject, signifying racial degeneracy and betraying a non-middle class status. The metonymic link between domestic labor and abject feminity was justified by the history of patriarchal domination insofar as it was compatible with other psychic
constructions of femininity, hypersexual fetishization, and degeneracy. The investing of these domestic objects with certain ideological affects and values during colonialism and the continuation of social imaginaries organized according to imperialism’s traditional racial hierarchies result in the residual– and perhaps collectively unconscious– connotations that contribute to their insidiously monumental status when they appear in preschools.

**Offering**

When Adrienne Rich famously wrote that “the patriarchal institution of motherhood is not the 'human condition' any more that rape, prostitution, and slavery are,” she was commenting on how immensely essentialized and ubiquitous narratives about mothering and motherhood have become in the Western social imaginary (1995; 33). I would like to suggest something similar regarding the domestic landscape. We tend to consider the homely domicile as a “human condition” insofar as it is thought to be the zenith of evolved human dwelling– the precise arrangement of private space that best reflects and facilitates the needs of the modern, nuclear familial unit. But domestic space is not the environmental appendage of human being that we so often take it to be. Human beings do not need to live in dwellings containing the entryways, living rooms, bedrooms, and kitchens so prevalent in the architecture of modernity. For McClintock, these “family households are, above all, historically variant economic structures” (1995; 93). The domicile is not our nest, burrow, or hole and we have not– despite the nostalgic recasting of our social imaginary– been housing ourselves this way for any substantial amount of time. As a mode of organizing the internal space of the home, the domestic landscape is, in fact, a relatively new spatial practice that only dates back to mid-nineteenth century white, Western colonial society (Abate 2003; Bryden and Floyd 1999; Burton and ebrary Inc. 1999; McClintock 1995; Mohanram 1999). Despite the relatively recent emergence of this spatial practice, the domestic landscape is deeply bound by a strong sense of nostalgia that implies a deeply rooted history of natural tradition, which is in actual fact quite fictive. When we
mistake our nostalgia for historical fact we render ourselves unable to imagine doing things any other way.

Like the historical origins of the space itself, the social values and relations of power out of which the domestic landscape emerged, are now so entirely foundational to the white, Western collective imaginary, that their psychic implications are inarticulate without a highly complex theoretical analysis. This may be the reason why theorists of early childhood education have resisted omitting home-space from the landscapes of early learning. It is odd however, that though gendered play in early learning is a noted problem for feminist, queer, and critical scholars, the omission of home-space– a locale so blatantly gendered when figured in juxtaposition to the block area– has not been figured as a plausible solution. I can see no necessary pedagogical ends achieved by the presence of home-space in early learning, other than the insertion of what I am suggesting is the spatial pedagogy of domesticity. The pedagogy of domesticity is a hidden psychic curriculum communicated by the social signifiers contained in the landscape of home-space. Why do we so steadfastly include such an ideo-culturally bound space in the architecture of early learning? By what reasoning has home-space been rendered the natural habitat of children’s imaginative play?

The significance of this landscape and its presence in the spaces of early learning is difficult to grasp because it has been so persistently cast as the natural dwelling place of human beings– or rather the white, Western subjects of modernity who are presumed to stand for everyone else (Mohanram 1999). One does not interrogate what one considers natural and inevitable, just as one cannot trouble what has been historically rendered neutral. The domestic landscape has been construed in the white Western social imaginary as the natural habitat of white women, but of course, it is not (McClintock 1995). In this chapter I have proposed a radical critique of the resurfacing of the domestic landscape in the architecture of early learning, and have offered this feminist genealogy of the historical emergence of home-space in order to initiate the radical and historically conscious critique that the presence of home-space in early learning requires. We must de-familiarize ourselves with this space; look so closely at it that it begins to appear strange. Ask
ourselves, where did it come from? For what uses has it been originally designed? To de-familiarize ourselves with home space means to both suspend whatever investments or attachments we have to this particular landscape and the familial formations it has been designed to shelter and contain. It is my hope that my attempt at resurrecting the lost origins of the domestic landscape, the social relations of production is was originally designed to reproduce, and the socio-psychic significance embedded in this space has achieved, if nothing else, just that.
Chapter Three

The Psychic Effects of Preschool Space

Real life indeed appears quite close to us. We feel able, from within everyday life, to reach out and grasp it, as though nothing lay between us and the marvelous reality on the other side of the mirror. All the prerequisites for it exist—so what is missing? An utterance of some kind, spoken or written? A gesture? A successful attack on some particular aspect of things, or the removal of some particular obstacle—ideology perhaps, or religion, or the educational system, or the spectacle?... A total revolution seems to be in the offing, as though already immanent to the present. To change life, however, we must first change space.

~ Henri Lefebvre

In the first chapter I explore the ways that the dominant North American discourses of early childhood and developmental theory emphasize the educative merits of the learning environment. The physicality and environmental tone of the dominant North American discourse on early learning is so prevalent that the architecture of the preschool is affectionately referred to the as the third teacher who accompanies curriculum and the human pedagogue in the decided trifecta of today’s best practices. In “Bringing Reggio Emilia Home: An Innovative Approach to Early Childhood Education” (1997), Louise Boyd Cadwell reiterates the importance of the presence of this third teacher—space and place— for the tactile and experiential nature of early learning. She argues, “we now know that the environment is a valuable teacher... Each space and each small corner of every space has an identity, a purpose” (Cadwell 1997; 92). This thesis is an attempt to identify
what exactly the purpose of the home area could be such that it has become so familiarized within the built space and place of early learning.

The open-ended preschool is organized according to a pre-planned curriculum that incorporates developmental milestones and cognitive learning goals, which are understood as facilitated naturally by well-organized classroom space. There are a plethora of textbooks available that provide incredibly detailed and overly articulated standards regarding how to best organize and equip the physical landscapes of early learning. In the Ontario pre-service program that I attended during my training as a preschool teacher, I was required to take two full courses on the learning environment. These courses were focused entirely on how best to organize the built environments of early learning in order to assure that children meet specific developmental and behavioral milestones. The liberalist rhetoric of exploratory freedom, so ubiquitous in scholarship on children and childhood, consistently emphasizes the importance of the preschool environment in the providing the most authentic early learning experiences possible. And as I have demonstrated in the first chapter, authentic early learning is understood as something that happens by being-in-the-world, being actively engaged in one’s own learning, and initiating one’s own experiences.

While I accept that these are, indeed, key elements of healthy development and socialization, and do agree that the learning environment is crucial for quality early childhood education, I am deeply troubled by the lack of attention given to the influence that gender power and sexual coercion can have on the ways children direct their own play experiences. My concern becomes particularly piqued within the highly gendered locales of open-ended preschool classrooms equipped with landscapes organized according to the iconography of domesticity [Figure 10; 11]. Throughout this thesis I have proposed that the preschool is a social apparatus that functions to reproduce dominant and hegemonic social relations of ideo-cultural production. The preschool is, I believe, a mechanism of a patriarchal truth and discipline. While exploring the ways that gender and power operate in preschool settings, I suggested that stereotypical sex-role narratives of identity are evoked by the gendered landscapes of early childhood education. In open-ended preschool
classrooms, the home and block areas spatially and symbolically mimic the traditional division of public and private spheres of sociality characteristic of a Western, patriarchal, capitalist society historically rooted in colonialism and cultural imperialism.

The presence of the spatial and symbolic mimicry of these relations of social production and divisions of labor in the geographies of North American open-ended preschools—laden with ideo-cultural narratives that sustain a patriarchal vision of truth and reality—function to subjugate children within hierarchies of power and discipline organized along the intersecting axes of compulsory heterosexuality, whiteness, and bourgeois class-status. After surveying feminist, queer, and critical interventions that attempt to trouble the ways that gender and heteronormativity circulate in and are reinstated by preschools, I suggested that the physical landscapes of early learning are in need of a radical critique able to directly address the spatial practice of organizing preschools in such gendered ways. Children come to know the world by way of their earliest social experiences and for many children preschool is the first truly social experience they will ever have. When our preschools reflect a patriarchal order of things, they communicate to children that this is just the way it is; that the separation of the public and private spheres, the relegation of women to the home and men to the world of commerce, trade, and political activity, is a natural order of things that is stable, immutable, and uncontested by everyone else.

Historically, domestic space secured the confinement and surveillance of white women and provided an arena for the display of civility, cleanliness, and class-status during the late nineteenth century period of Britain’s high imperialism (Abate 2003; Bryden and Floyd 1999; Burton and ebrary Inc. 1999; Hall 1992; McClintock 1995; Mohanram 1999). It also served as a key site for the circulation and facilitation of identity narratives that sustained the culturally imperial project of building the British empire. As I see, it the socially produced, and mass proliferated, architecture of domesticity that came to characterize modernity was a key mechanism by which the Western ideo-cultural order established itself as a global status quo. Socially produced space concretizes the dominant social imaginary by
crafting spaces reflective of the subjectivities and subject positions presumed to
inhabit particular landscapes. By constructing or producing spaces infused with, and
reflective of, dominant and hegemonic social relations, these landscapes facilitate
the continued circulation of patriarchal power. Seen this way, it becomes evident
that the domestic landscape historically functioned to literalize the white, Western,
patriarchal order in ways that assisted in achieving its dominance as a global order
of things. This landscape served as a socially constructed version of reality that, in
being woven into the physical spaces of everyday life, became conceived of as reality
tout court. Taking up the work of critical race scholars and feminist historians, I
have suggested that the domestic reconfiguration of colonial homes concretized a
dominant social imaginary that was organized according to a logic of nationalism
and empire, and was deeply bound by tropes of moral, political, and racial
superiority. As a socially produced space, traces of these narratives of remain
present, inscribed in the surface of the domestic landscape, and etched in the social
imaginary when they are enacted today.

In order to connect the arguments of the first two chapters, this final chapter
revisits the spatial practices typical of North American early childhood education
and the ways that the social relations of heteronormativity, sex-role specific
narratives of gender identity, and distinctly white bourgeois tropes of domesticity
are reproduced and reenacted in the spatiality of open-ended preschools. Thus far, I
have relied on early childhood and developmental theory in order to present the
popular open-ended approach to preschooling children, focusing on the emphatic
value placed on free exploration of the learning environment and play-based
pedagogy. Clearly spatiality is a concern to early childhood educators, though very
little scholarly attention has been given to room arrangement other than the
practical and descriptive accounts discussed in chapter one. The liberalist rhetoric
of exploratory freedom that persists in such accounts silences gender, race, and
class in ways that make critical intervention very difficult to articulate. I then turn
toward feminist historiography and critical race scholarship in order to radically de-
defamiliarize the ubiquitous domestic landscape and the division of public and private
spheres of sociality characteristic of white, Western, patriarchal modernity. Taking
up the genealogical method, I suggest that the strangeness of the historical emergence of the social practice of *domestic space*, reveals the strangeness of its presence in our present; a strangeness erased by the nostalgic and liberalist recasting of domesticity within the dominant white, Western social imaginary we have inherited today.

The analysis of preschool space I am proposing is positioned, precariously perhaps, in the tenuous and interdisciplinary space between early childhood studies, feminist theory, and critical human geography. In order to tie these seemingly disparate disciplines together in this final chapter I would like to bring psychoanalysis into the mix. Since psychoanalysts have always had an interest in children and childhood, to include psychoanalysis in an analysis of preschool space seems like an appropriate beginning. The relevancy of psychoanalysis to my study of preschool space is also supported by the recent spatial turn in psychoanalytic theory.

In this chapter I explore the psychoanalysis of space and psychoanalytic conceptions of identity formation in order to address the psychic processes of constituting the self that occur during early childhood. I then propose that in preschools today the *third teacher’s* curriculum ought to be figured as the *pedagogy of domestication*. From there I engage with feminist post-structuralist arguments regarding the gendered mechanisms of power and discipline that, I believe, prop up and secure the *pedagogy of domestication*. Finally, I turn to critical human geography in order to engage with the socio-psychic significance of this ideologically and culturally laden domestic landscape in the immensely social environments of early learning.

**Psychoanalysis and Space**

In his book, “The Body and the City: Psychoanalysis, Space and Subjectivity” (1996), Steve Pile, taking up the critical human geography of Edward W. Soja and Henri Lefebvre, suggests that a “psychoanalysis of space’ might help to untangle the relationship between subjectivity, spatiality and power relations” (Pile 1996; 174).
Pile notes a tenuous gap between psychoanalytic accounts of identity, subject formation and socialization, and the geo-ontological concerns of critical human geographers described in detail below. Commenting on what he sees as the productive potential these two seemingly disparate disciplines could have for one another, and suggesting something similar to my argument regarding early childhood education, Pile notes:

Geographers have long known that space is socially constructed and that the social is spatially constructed...It is known that space is not fixed and passive, but fluid and active...Yet, the thinking through the spatialities of everyday life has been difficult to articulate—perhaps because there has not been a language sufficiently adept at capturing the complex psychodynamics of place (Pile 1996; 100).

In order to theorize the dissonance between spatial theory and psychoanalysis, Pile revisits the psychoanalytic accounts of socialization given by Freud and Lacan who, though in very different ways, posit identity formation as bound by processes of psychic discipline. In rereading Freud and Lacan, while retaining an interest in critical human geography, Pile re-presents the psychic phenomena of socialization and identity formation as a fundamentally spatial engagement. While Pile gives credence to the Freudian vision of socialization as the process by which the unbounded affective register of a child’s psyche becomes disciplined by repression of unacceptable and unruly drive instincts into socially acceptable formations, he ultimately suggests that the traditional psychoanalytic account is incomplete without reference to the ways socialization is mediated through the medium of spaces, which are themselves socially produced (Pile 1996).

According to Freud, very young children are psychically unbounded beings who in early infancy are unable to differentiate themselves from the external world. Pile describes this process as follows:

In object relations theory, the child gradually develops a sense of itself, initially as the result of its gradual realization that it has a separate body from the mother. The child’s self is constructed as a relationship between self and other objects, such that the boundaries between self and the external world become increasingly well demarcated, but where the child’s sense of self (or ego) is always mediated through its relationship to objects (Pile 1996; 90).
Freud proposed that because infants are unable to distinguish themselves from their environment, they are likewise unable to perceive objects as separate from themselves. It is only through physical encounters with the environment—recognizing, through experiences with objects in the world, that a child is separate and distinct entity—that the “unbounded” infant, being comprised of various affects and drives, constructs a perception of its’ bodily boundaries (Pile 1996). The surface of the body is first and foremost a projected and psychically perceived surface and, as Pile points out, insofar as an infant’s first recognition of itself develops from a process of relating to objects, a person’s identity formation is predicated on a psychic relationship to space (Pile 1996).

Freud proposes that once a child comes to know herself as a separate and distinct being, by relating her distinct self to other object in space, a host of other childhood traumas lead to the constitution of self that remains present and relatively stable through adulthood. Paraphrasing Freud, Pile writes that “personality is initiated, constituted and specified through conflicts, prohibitions, inconsistencies, ambivalences and incoherences, broken across many boundaries and situated by many lines of meaning, identity and power” (Pile 1996; 105). In Freud’s psychoanalytic conception of identity formation, “five key concepts are used: identification, incorporation, idealization, introjection and internalization, each marking a different mode through which individuals take on the characteristics of their chosen ideal” (1996; 104). Though it would detract from the purposes of the present analysis to diverge into the details of each of Freud’s dramas, which do play out during childhood and are fundamental to identity formation, Pile, through Freud, makes a critical point concerning the relevance of space, place and identity. The formation of identity is understood in psychoanalysis as, first and foremost, a process whereby the unbounded desires, affects, and drives of young children are disciplined into socially acceptable formations through repression. According to Pile:

...‘civilization’ is a process of control and limitation, of coercion of the individual in the interests of the group. In the free play of desire...social taboos instigate the repression and reorganization of desire into socially
acceptable forms. Initially, the child in unaware of taboos and the girl/boy
takes narcissistic pleasure in its own body. When the child becomes aware of
the existence of love objects outside of its own body, she/he also experiences
the force of taboo and its’ associated power relations (Pile 1996; 111).

Pile argues that “[t]here is no essential self; the child becomes a subject through its
responses to the circumstances it finds itself in: these are multiply determined, the
result of the interactions between the internal and external worlds” (Pile 1996;
119). As a participant-observer in primary school classrooms, Raphaela Best
observed that while the rules of gender and sex-role consciousness are quite clearly
learned by children– evidenced by their gendered performances of self in the social
context school environments– they are not taught in any identifiable way. Best
suggests that children register the lessons of gender and sexuality on a visceral and
symbolic level, and mutually reinforce these lessons rather strictly through their
social interactions with one another (Best 1983). Within the gendered locales of
preschool space and place, child-on-child surveillance and the social feedback
received regarding the quality of their gender performances, contribute to the
circumstances, interactions, and responses that, for Pile, determine the formation of
identity.

The social reverberation that occurs within the sociality of the preschool
impacts not only the way a child knows herself as a gendered being, but can shape
every fissure of the subjectivity developed while inhabiting a heteronormative
educational environment. Pile summarizes the various aspects that contribute to
identity formation with the following:

...psychoanalytic mythologies suggest that there is a relationship between
desire, the body, and spatiality, and that particular conjunctures of these can
result in punishment and compensation, delivered by a punitive, arbitrary
and indisputable authority. Indeed it would appear that subjectivity is
conditional on these elements: desire, the body, spatiality; authority,
punishment, compensation; the unquenchable thirst for pleasure (Pile 1996;
116).

The findings of strict gender identifications illustrated in Best’s research testify to
the fact that children are privy to the force of sexual taboo noted by Pile. These
taboos are, I believe, physically reinforced in the context of preschools by the
gendered divisions of the home and block area.

Moving from psychoanalytic accounts of identity formation to critical human
geography, Pile suggests that theories about the social production of space could be
elaborated in much more productive ways by psychoanalysis. He suggests an
alliance between the two disciplines would “enable the gaps between their
respective analyses to be opened up– and in this space it is possible to articulate
other possibilities for psychoanalysis and spatial understanding” (Pile 1996; 146).
For him, geo-ontological position– which proposes that one comes into being
according to where one is physically located– is a fundamental element of
subjectivity. Space is crucial to the formation of identity and identity performance.
Pile warns of “the power of landscape to captivate the viewer. The fascinating
spectacle of landscape is better thought of...as a mirage...[a] ‘theatrical space’” (Pile
1996; 161). This implies that the socially produced spaces that children inhabit
while constituting a self image and a coherent sense of self are both performative,
scripted according to the social reverberation of taboo, and staged by locales of
space and place.

Pile’s rereading of the psychoanalysis of socialization and identity formation
in childhood considers what an attention to spatiality can offer these paradigms of
development. For him, the socially produced spaces through which children move
about and inhabit during childhood function to corporeally locate and fix children as
subjects in established social hierarchies of meaning, power, and identity (Pile 1996).
He notes that “the seemingly normal, natural and inescapable categories of social
distinction...are predicated on the power-geometrics of space” (Pile 1996; 146).
Taking up the work of Soja through Lefebvre, Pile suggests that, psychically, “[t]he
dialectic is this: prohibition–as power–produces space and space–as
prohibition–produces power” (Pile 1996; 153). The locales of space and place that
have been built into the architecture of early learning locate children in hierarchies
of meaning, power, and identity organized according to the logic of patriarchy.
The Pedagogy of Domestication

Main Entry: do·mes·ti·cate
Pronunciation: \dˌ-ˌmes-ti-ˌk t\nFunction: transitive verb
Inflected Form(s): do·mes·ti·cat·ed, do·mes·ti·cat·ing
Date: circa 1639
1: to bring into domestic use: adopt 2: to adapt (an animal or plant) to life in intimate association with and to the advantage of humans 3: to make domestic: fit for domestic life 4: to bring to the level of ordinary people
— do·mes·ti·ca·tion \ˌ-ˌmes-ti-ˌk-ˌsh_n\ noun
(Merriam-Webster; 2010).

The persistent emphasis given to the pedagogical importance of room arrangement implies that scholars of childhood and early learning, for good reason, acknowledge that spatial pedagogy is a primary element of early childhood education and ought to be taken seriously. Yet while the cognitive and developmental significance of space and place is so tacitly assumed by scholars of early childhood, the possibility of hidden gender and sexual curriculums staged by, and inscribed in, the very surface of preschool space and place, remains unexplored. As already mentioned, Linda McDowell and Joanne P. Sharp explain the crucial psychic implications of space:

Spatial relations and layout, the differences between and within places, the nature and form of the built environment, images and representations of this environment and of the ‘natural’ world, ways of writing about it, as well as our bodily place within it, are all part and parcel of the social constitution of gendered social relations and the structure of meaning and place (1997; 2).

As I see it, children, through their imaginative play, participate in the spatial enactments of social hierarchies which demarcate the distribution of social power within the gendered landscapes of open-ended preschools. While participating in hierarchies of meaning, power, and identity in their pretend play, children construct a worldview organized by the dichotomous logic materialized in the symbolic distinction between domestic and civil, or public and private, spheres of sociality reflected by the home and block interest areas. They come to know their social, cultural, and political place by way of preschool space and where they belong within it. Yet the ways that the spatial practices of early learning both evoke and enforce
social hierarchies of gender, sexuality, race, and class remain unaddressed in the scholarship on early childhood and development.

McDowell and Sharp’s analysis of gender, power, and space demonstrates that “[p]hysical and social boundaries reinforce each other and spatial relations act to socialize people into the acceptance of gendered power relations— they reinforce power, privileges, and oppression and literally keep women in their place” (1997; 3). In preschools designed in such a way as to mimic the division between public and private spheres of social life, a divisive spatiality that has historically achieved the confinement, surveillance, and oppression of women, the third curriculum imposed by the invisible third teacher is the pedagogy of domestication. The pedagogy of domestication teaches children their assigned place in the intricate web of sociality that is the heterosexual matrix. The gendered public and private divide of social spheres mimicked by the home and block areas, the hidden sexual curriculum of cultural texts described in Best’s research, and spatial stages such as the home corner that are set for playing out heteronormative narratives of identity through the typical Mommy and Daddy storylines of children’s imaginative play, each contribute to the hidden gender and sexual curriculum that I am referring to as the pedagogy of domestication.

The definition of domestication offered by the Merriam-Webster dictionary, cited above, defines it as the process whereby something is made fit for domestic life and brought to the level of ordinary people. The pedagogy of domestication, inscribed
in the architecture of early learning, socializes very young female children in a way that makes them fit for domestic life. The presence of home-space in the preschool offers little girls a vision of what their daily lives as adult women will entail. This space is furnished according to the iconography of domesticity: built with a kitchenette that includes a stove, a fridge, a sink, a washer and a dryer, a crib and a kitchen table, and is home to toy vacuums, brooms, baby dolls, dishes, plastic food, and dress-up clothes. Feeding their family, caring for their children, doing laundry and cleaning their homes— the female domain of the patriarchal division of labor—are all tasks that the home area is designed to facilitate through play. The narratives of domestication are mimicked in miniature in the preschool landscape by the home area and incorporated into a child’s psyche while playing house. Though girls are told that they can “do anything,” the message communicated by the unspoken relegation of little girls to the domestic landscape of the home corner betrays what they really ought to want do. Despite our “post” feminist moment, the pedagogy of domestication teaches very young girls that their proper place in the world is confinement to the home as a housewife and mother. The presence of the domestic landscape in the architecture of early learning once again relegates the women to the private sphere of the home, maintaining the historical tradition of their confinement.

I want to probe more deeply into what I propose is the theoretically neglected potential of space and place in preschools to enforce stereotypical sex-role consciousness and compulsory heterosexuality. Enforcing heteronormative modes of identity formation by constructing and maintaining the strict boundaries between gendered places in preschool space characterizes the spatial pedagogy of domestication I am proposing. If preschool space reinstates the patriarchal order in the way I am suggesting, then there is an urgent need to inquire as to the effects that this spatial pedagogy has for the identities constituted by very young children while attending open-ended preschool programs and inhabiting the ideologically haunted landscape of domesticity enacted in the home corner. Applying the scholarship of both critical human geography and psychoanalytic theory grounded in a concern for the psychic effects of space, can, I believe, offer an interesting theoretical
opportunity to better account for the psychic consequences of how space and place are enacted in today’s preschools. Reading Marxist conceptions of space which propose that spaces are socially produced in ways that are bound by ideology, politics, and the social status-quo, alongside psychoanalyses like Pile’s, which posits the formation of identity as a deeply spatial phenomenon, the architecture of early learning can be figured as a mechanism of power by which the logic of a white, Western, patriarchal regime of truth and discipline engraves the docile and textualized bodies of very young children.

**Power, Knowledge, and the Docile Bodies of Very Young Children**

An analysis of the interconnection between the child as a subject and the preschool as both space and place would be incomplete without a discussion of corporeality. The intermingling of the materiality of the body, the physicality of the landscapes the body is located by, and the psychic interiority of subjectivity are, I believe, at the heart of the effects of preschool space that I am calling the pedagogy of domestication. According to Foucault, space is commonly, but mistakenly, taken as inconsequential. In the interview “Questions on Geography,” Foucault observes that throughout the history of theory and critical thought “[s]pace was treated as the dead, the fixed, and the undialectical, the immobile. Time, on the contrary, was richness, fecundity, life, dialectical” (Gordon 1980; 70). Proposing the formative role that space has in sociality in his essay, “Of Other Spaces,” Foucault notes that, “space is fundamental in any form of communal life; space is fundamental in any exercise of power” (Rabinow 1984; 252). As a mechanism of power and discipline, space, for Foucault, shapes the body in ways that determine how one is able to constitute oneself as a subject within a social order. He writes, “the body is molded by a great many distinct regimes; it is broken down by the rhythms of work, rest, and holidays, it is poisoned by food or values, through eating habits of moral laws” (Foucault 1977; 153).

Foucault consistently reiterated his affirmation that schools are a social apparatus of discipline. In both "Discipline and Punish" and “The History of
Sexuality,” Foucault argues that the school, popularized and institutionalized during modernity, is a primary mechanism of power and discipline that exhibits the micro-regimentation of mechanisms of power. As circuits of power become more and more elaborate, and operate through finer and finer channels, they function to break down the body into whatever formation or constitution is required by a particular regime. Connecting school, sexuality, space, and place, Foucault suggests that, “one only has to glance over the architectural layout, the rules of discipline, and their whole internal organization: the question of sex was a constant preoccupation” (1978; 27). Although schools have been figured as innocent of, and immune to, anything sexual, Foucault suggests that “[i]t would be less than exact to say that the pedagogical institution has imposed a ponderous silence on the sex of children and adolescents. On the contrary...it has multiplied the forms of discourse on the subject” (1978; 29). Foucault was adamant that power writes itself on the body by various socio-cultural mechanisms of power. For him, school was a primary mechanism by which power circulated and reasserted itself (Foucault 1978; Foucault et al. 1980; Foucault and Rabinow 1984).

Foucault defines the body inscribed by mechanisms of power as docile. He explains that “a body is docile that may be subjected, used, transformed, and improved” (Foucault and Rabinow 1984; 180). Docile bodies are disciplined by various social practices. Social practices embody relations of power and open up a point of contact between the power circulating in sociality and the individual subject. The body is the surface of contact upon which power accesses the human being. When an individual is inflected by and subjugated to power, through social mechanisms of discipline embedded in social practice, she becomes a subject of whatever social order these mechanisms uphold (Foucault and Rabinow 1984). Foucault’s account of power, and the various matrices and mechanisms by which it circulates within and produces sociality proposed power to be, first and foremost, a corporeal force that calls upon the obedience of the physical body. The material landscapes of early learning, which are themselves generated from, and reflective of, a dominant ideo-cultural order [Figure 9-11], operate as a mechanism by which the power of a patriarchal order inscribes itself onto the docile bodies of very young
children. Taking up spatial analysis in suggesting that the preschool is a social apparatus by which the social relations of production are reinstated, and proposing that the reproduction of these relations is secured by the pedagogy of domestication, demonstrates this point.

In his spatial account of psychoanalytic identity-formation, Pile also notes the importance of corporeality to subjectivity, arguing that “bodies are spaces where multiple, interrelated meanings can be mapped” (Pile 1996; 185). The physical body of the subject who inhabits space is the meeting point between space and place and the psyche. It is a threshold surface through which the signifiers of spatiality must pass in order to be re-enacted as sociality. Resonating with Foucault, psychoanalysts such as Pile, along with many feminist and critical human geographers, note that the body is a facilitating ground upon which the current of power runs and is transformed into knowledge, affect, desire, and subjectivity (Duncan 1996; Grosz 2001; Hook 2005; McDowell and Sharp 1997; Moss and Falconer Al-Hindi 2008; Pile 1996). Two feminist theorists, Sandra Lee Bartky and Elizabeth Grosz, explain what happens during the encounter between the body, as a threshold surface through which power passes, and mechanisms of power that function of facilitate the circulation of power embodied by social practices. Their scholarship is focused on the corporeal inscription of power on the female body and the potential use of Foucault in feminist theory. The account of gendered mechanisms of power and discipline presented by Bartky, and Grosz’s argument about the “textualized body,” offer superlative explanatory frameworks for describing the psychic effects of preschool space and how the pedagogy of domestication operates.

Sandra Lee Bartky offers an excellent account of the potential feminist uses of Foucault’s theory of power and discipline in her chapter “Foucault, Femininity, and the Modernization of Patriarchal Power,” in “Foucault & Feminism” (Diamond and Quinby 1988). Quoting Foucault, Bartky notes:

...modern society has seen the emergence of increasingly invasive apparatuses of power: these exercise a far more restrictive social and psychological control than was heretofore possible. In modern societies, effects of power “circulate through progressively finer channels, gaining
access to individuals themselves, to their bodies, their gestures and all their daily actions (1988; 79).

Recalling Foucault’s account of the power, docility, and discipline that characterized Western modernity Bartky writes that “[m]ore is required of the body now than mere political allegiance of the appropriation of the products of its labor; the new discipline invades the body and seeks to regulate its very forces and operations, the economy and efficiency of its movements” (1988; 61). Bartky faults Foucault for failing to address gender as a regime of discipline and offers an account of what Foucault’s theory of power and discipline would entail had he considered gender. Gesturing to the scholarship of Judith Butler to note the relevancy of Foucault’s scholarship to feminist analysis, Bartky writes, “[w]e are born male or female, but not masculine or feminine. Femininity is an artifice, an achievement, ‘a mode of enacting and reenacting received gender norms which surface as so many styles of the flesh’” (1988; 64). Bartky suggests that enacting and performing our gender involves participating in an elaborate web of gendered mechanisms of discipline that, in their present configuration, include ritualized regimes of cleansing, plucking, shaping, cutting, dying, and applying the micro-technological devices of feminine health, beauty, and hygiene. Participating in the regiments of feminine maintenance described by Bartky is evidenced by both physical appearance and gestures of embodiment performed and presented by women. You can observe the results of patriarchal mechanisms of power in the polished appearance of a ‘dewy’ complexion from the use of facial products, to the confined and controlled style with which a woman must move about in and inhabits space, being careful to cross her legs and take up as little space as possible (Diamond and Quinby 1988).

Grosz’s chapter, “Inscriptions and Body Maps: Representations and the Corporeal” (1997), resonates with Bartky’s analysis. Grosz offers the metaphor of the “textualized body” to articulate the process whereby the corporeality of space and place contributes to the constitution of subjectivity. Her conceptualization of the “textualized body” gestures towards post-structuralist conceptions of a discursively bound process of subject construction. Grosz comments that “the body has figured in many recent texts as a writing surface on which messages can be inscribed”
(1997; 236). By utilizing the textualized body, Grosz affirms that the body is a blank and inscribable material upon which sociality carves itself:

Biology provides the bedrock for social inscription but it is not a fixed or static substratum: it interacts with and is overlaid by psychic, social, and signifying relations...[the body is] an active, productive, ‘whiteness’ that constitutes the writing surface...an active ingredient in the messages produced (1997; 244).

The process by which these messages are inscribed on docile, textualized bodies is what Grosz calls bodily engraving. She explains that “[t]he ‘messages’ or ‘texts’ produced by such procedures construct bodies as networks of social signification, meaningful and functional ‘subjects’ within assemblages composed with other subjects...Inscriptions of the corporeal differences between bodies can be seen to produce body subjects as living significations, social texts capable of being read or interpreted” (1997; 237).

Grosz presents several concise premises that I believe ought to be taken seriously by feminist, critical, and queer scholars of childhood and early education who are concerned with the psychic effects of preschool space. She writes:

...as a material series of processes, power actively marks or brands bodies as social, inscribing them with the attributes of subjectivity. (This is meant to challenge a prevailing model of power conceived as a system of ideas, concepts, values and beliefs, ideology, that primarily effect consciousness) (1997; 237. emphasis original).

Like Bartky, Grosz take a Foucauldian position and argues that subjectivity is constituted from the outside in, by way of the docile body, molded and disciplined by mechanism of power, which are in turn observable in the gestures, mobilizations, and self-stylizations involved in performing identity. Like Foucault, Grosz proposes that “[p]ower is a material force that does and makes things” (1997; 238. emphasis original). Consequently, “consciousness is an effect or result, rather than the cause of the inscription of flesh and its conversion into a (social) body” (1997; 237. emphasis original).

Power, by way of bodily engraving, manifests itself as “marks or brands” inscribed on the body that are visibly identifiable by the same gestures, postures,
ways of locating oneself in space, as well as the capacity to prevent oneself from seeming “out-of-place.” For Grosz, the mechanisms by which power writes itself on the body are figured as the tools of bodily engraving. Grosz describes the tools of bodily engraving as social, surgical, epistemic, and disciplinary and argues that they include clothing, makeup, bras, and stilettos similar to the micro-technologies of feminine hygiene identified by Bartky. According to Grosz these tools are operable in a multitude of ways and by various means:

Within our own culture...the inscription of bodies occurs both violently—in prisons, juvenile homes, hospitals, psychiatric institutions—keeping the body confined, constrained, supervised and regimented...and by less openly aggressive but no less coercive means, through cultural and personal values, norms, and commitments. The latter involve a psychic inscription of the body through its adornment, its rituals [...] all more or less ‘voluntary’ inscriptions by lifestyle, habits, and behaviors (1997; 238. emphasis original).

Grosz argues that “the ‘messages’ or ‘texts’ [that] construct bodies as networks of social signification” psychically insert social narratives through material practices (1997; 237). The inscription of the body by the tools of bodily engraving, writes the attributes of subjectivity onto the subject’s corporeal flesh. Where you locate yourself within, and how you use, a particular space is an important part of the rituals or adornment, habits, and behaviors “in which culturally specific grids of power, regulation and force condition and provide techniques for the formation of particular bodies” (1997; 239). Grosz elaborates on this point by arguing that tools of bodily engraving involve a kind of performativity that is provoked as an effect of the formation of textualized bodies:

...social narratives create their ‘characters’ and ‘plots’ through the tracing of the body’s biological contours and organic outlines by writing tools. Writing instruments confine corporeal capacities and values, proliferating the body’s reactions and capacities, stimulating and stifling social conformity (the acting out of these narrative roles as ‘live theatre’) (1997; 239).

Like Thorne’s argument about the ritualized nature of gender as it is commonly acted out by children in schools, Grosz evokes the rhetoric of theatricality and performativity in her corporeal analysis of power. The textualized body acts out the identity performances appropriate to its subject position within the social order organized by the regime of patriarchal truth and discipline. The textualized body is a
body engraved, corporeally, by the physical tools infused with social practices that are manifested in spatiality. I want to posit space as a tool of corporeal inscription and suggest that play becomes a ritual of identity performance by which heteronormative sexualities are inscribed on the docile bodies of very young children. The heteronormative texture of childhood geographies that symbolically mimic the patriarchal division of public and private spheres of sociality, is a mechanism of engraving by which gendered consciousness is inscribed on the flesh of the child’s docile body. The domestic landscapes of home areas in preschool classrooms are a tool of engraving the docile bodies of preschool children that, although less openly aggressive, are by no means less coercive than the examples give by Grosz in the analysis above. The iconography of domesticity present in home-space engraves the docile body of the little girl with the “voluntary” inscriptions of a lifestyle that is demarcated by patriarchy and involve stereotypically feminine habits, behaviors, and desires. Many of the anecdotes of Best’s research are an example of how the space of preschool stages the scenes of these “live theater” performances, the repetition of which creates a ritualistic way of performing gender that sediments these narratives as a foundation for a child’s sense of self. Grosz’s metaphorical account of the social processes of constructing oneself as a subject offers an explanatory frame capacious enough to articulate– or begin to– the psychosocial implications of the presence of the domestic landscapes in early learning.

Grosz’s account is useful in a way that is particularly relevant to educational theory. The boundaries that separate and juxtapose the home and block areas, enforcing and effecting the distinction between the public and private spheres of sociality, exude a heteronormative texture, the rub of which “marks or brands” the docile and explorative bodies of very young children. The domestic landscape of the preschool home-area acts as a resource of identity that theatrically stages the storylines of the monogamous patriarchal familial unit, writing the identity narratives of heteronormativity corporeally onto the flesh of very young children, thereby producing the subjectivity required of the patriarchal regime of truth and disciple. The tools of bodily engraving embedded in the architecture of early
learning generate childhood desires and sexual identities that are coherent to, and intelligible within, the heterosexual matrix. The spatial arrangement of early learning environments is foundation of the *pedagogy of domestication*, and the engraving of this pedagogy onto the docile bodies of children is the process by which this pedagogy is practiced.

Grosz’s use of the metaphor of the textualized body, her conception of bodily engraving, and the counter-intuitive Foucauldian figuring of subjectivity as something that is generated out of the materiality of corporeal mechanisms of power, are intended to disrupt the ideological master-narrative that dominates structuralist scholarship and critical theory. For both Grosz and Foucault power is material: it “functions directly on bodies by means of disciplinary practices, which, while relying on knowledges, operate without mediation of conceptual or intellectual processes—that is, without resort to a concept like ‘ideology’” (1997; 238). While I think that Grosz’s figuring of the interconnectivity between mechanisms of power, corporeality, and subjectivity is absolutely crucial for early childhood educational theorists concerned with gendered space, I am unwilling to dismiss ideology in the way she suggests: “If power is primarily *ideological*, that is, a system of conceptual distortion, if ideas, beliefs, ideologies, values—some kind of soul—are to be attributed to the human subject, this is an effect of a certain mode of corporeal inscription” (1997; 238). Here, Grosz takes a strong position affirming the Foucaudian conception of power and the subject and argues that if ideology exists, it exists, like subjectivity, as *only* the result of corporeal inscription. I am willing to grant that, indeed, power is a material force that *does things* and *makes things*, but I also believe that the tools of inscription identified in Grosz’s argument, the mechanisms by which power circulates, and the social practices that embody the circulation of power, are themselves socially produced in ways that are inexorably bound to an ideological informed order of sociality. So while Grosz figures ideology as the psychic effect of corporeal inscription, I wish to propose that the tools of engraving that inscribe subjectivity in the preschool onto the flesh of very young children are socially produced according to an ideologically bound order of relations of production. To demonstrate how the apparatuses of bodily engraving present in
the domestic landscape of the home area are socially produced in ways that are bound by ideology, I now turn to critical human geography.

**Critical Human Geography and the Social Production of Space**

Critical human geography can be easily graphed onto early childhood education since spatial forms of pedagogy are not only accepted but also presumed by pedagogues in the North American context. I believe that the scholarship available in this field has much to offer early childhood educational theorists concerned with the socio-psychic relationship between the spatial enactments present in the architecture of early learning and young, child subjects. Taking up critical human geography in analyses of early childhood education can assist in establishing a theoretical framework capacious enough to address the relationship between these preschool landscapes and the child subjects who both inhabit and constitute themselves as social subjects in, through, and by them. This section takes up spatial theory as an explanatory frame and applies it to the analysis of gender, sexuality, race, and class dynamics I have thus far presented as operable in the preschools of today.

There are two prevalent modes of theorizing space and place in critical human geography that prove very useful for an analysis of preschool space. The first mode addresses the social production of space and posits space and place as inexorably bound to the reproduction of the social relations of production (Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1980, 1989). The dialectical conception of space posits it as a medium that both produces and is produced by social relations of production. This conception of space, offered in the work of both Henri Lefebvre and Edward W. Soja provides an insightful frame through which to view the significance of why and how we organize preschool space the way we do. The second mode of theorizing space that I explore engages more intimately with the psychic effects of space at the intersection of subjectivity, sociality, and space (Hook 2005). These two accounts offer an excellent framework for articulating the socio-psychic significance of space and place, what happens during what I believe is the inter-subjective encounter
between a subject and space, and what consequences such encounters have for subjectivity and sociality. I believe that feminist, queer, and critical interventions that seek to disrupt the heteronormativity and gendered power dynamics of child sociality can be reinforced in important ways by using these modes of theorizing space and place, making critical human geography and the psychoanalysis of space important allies to scholars dedicated to the discovery of liberatory pedagogies transformative enough to supercede the pedagogy of domestication.

Critical human geography is concerned, above all, with exploring the relationship between space and the subjects that occupy it. There has been an important spatial turn in recent critical theory instigated by the scholarship of critical human geographers who sought to address the interconnection between space, place, and human beings (Bachelard and Jolas 1994; Certeau 1984; Duncan 1996; Lefebvre 1991; Massey 1994; McDowell 1999; Pile 1996; Soja 1980, 1989; Tuan 1977). As a discipline, critical human geography assumes a geo-ontological proposition that suggests that one becomes a subject according to where one is physically located and that space and place play a determining role in identity formation (Adams et al. 2001; Duncan 1996; Kirby 1996; McDowell 1999; Pile 1996; Tuan 1977). The geo-ontological premise is a position that assists in explaining what this inter-relationship between space and the subject entails. Gesturing toward his own allegiance to the geo-ontological presupposition, Edward W. Soja writes, “[t]his ontological spatiality situates the human subject in a formative geography once and for all, and provokes the need for a radical reconceptualization of epistemology, theory construction, and empirical analysis” (Soja 1989: 8).

Theorists of critical human geography such as Henri Lefebvre and Edward W. Soja explore the ways that spaces are socially produced and how occupying a space bound by power and sociality can influence identity and subjectivity (Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1980, 1989). The geo-ontological position implies that what and who you are is largely determined by where you are, a contention that is shared both by myself, and the theorists of early childhood and development discussed in the first chapter. Though a geo-ontological stance involves affirming that space and place influence being and existence, there are various geo-ontological positions available
within critical human geography that offer different accounts of the nature of the relationship between space and the subject. These positions vary according to the particular account given regarding way that location influences identity. Though there are others, there are three major conceptualizations of the interplay between space, sociality, and subject formation. These are the dialectical approach, the discursive approach, and the psychoanalytic approach. Each of these approaches, I believe, can be usefully applied to early childhood education in order to engage with various aspects of the psychic affects of space.

Psychologists Dixon and Durrhiem take a discursive approach for conceiving geo-ontology in “Dis-Placing Place-Identity: A Discursive Approach to Locating the Self and the Other” (2000). The description they offer of the relationship between the physical environment and the human subject assumes a psychological ‘place-identity’ position where space and place are figured as a resource of identity. For them, space and place are an important contributing factor in producing a coherent sense of self. Drawing from the work of the psychologist Kalevi Kropela in defining their conception of place-identity, they define play-identity in the following way:

...place-identity is a psychological structure that arises out of individuals’ attempts to regulate their environments. Through practices of environmental usage [...] we are able to create and sustain a coherent sense of self and to reveal our selves to others. At the heart of this psychological structure is a sense of belonging, for ‘place-belongingness is not only one aspect of place identity, but a necessary basis for it’ (Dixon 2000; 29. emphasis original).

This approach casts identity as a fundamentally cognitive phenomenon and explains, in constructivist terms similar to those assumed in early childhood educational theory, that self-identity, though anchored by the physical environment in determining ways, is of an inwardly fixed, mental, and relatively solitary nature. In other words, while the physical environment, being-in-the-world, and space and place each contribute to the deeply influential context within which self-identity is crafted, the self remains the kind of psychic structure that is ultimately the product of cognition (Dixon 2000).

Dixon and Durrhiem attempt, however, to avoid the standard conceptions of place-identity that oversimplify and individualize the process of constituting
identity in too rigidly subscribing to a cognitive account of the self. The argue that previous place-identity positions proved too “individualistic, mentalistic, uncontested and apolitical” (2000; 31). In being too cognitively grounded, these place-identity theories fail to attend to the ways that place-identity is mediated by larger social and political dynamics. Dixon and Durrhiem propose that the established social hierarchies of power and oppression influence geo-ontological processes in determining ways. By being wary of the ways that socio-political dynamics both underwrite and organize the environmental contexts within which selves are constituted, they displace themselves from environmental psychology’s standard place-identity account. For them, a discursive approach to place-identity concerned with redressing conceptions of selfhood as “a predominantly cognitive structure to be discovered in the heads of individuals” is better able to incorporate the “flux of human dialogue” and its influence on processes of crafting particularly located self-identities (2000; 32). Taking a the discursive approach to place-identity recommended by Dixon and Durrhiem retains the primary geo-ontological concern for the relationship between subject, space, and place anchored in psychology, but figures the inter-subjective space of dialogue as a crucial environmental dynamic that is incredibly influential to constituting the self (Dixon 2000).

Making room for the inter-subjectivity of the discursive context of within which environments exist, opens up a space for Dixon and Durrhiem to address “the rhetorical traditions through which people locate their selves and others [which are] also ideological traditions that sustain relations of domination” (2000; 33). They argue that their suggested discursive conception of place-identity is able to supplement previous versions that were both oversimplified and apolitical by attending to the ideological content of particular discourse formations. The ideological contents of a particular discourse formation has an important role in not only the social production of space and place but also in who belongs in given place within a space and who does not. They suggest that paying attention to the ideological contents of discourse reveals the ways that discourse functions to locate bodies in particular ways within space, which in turn determines the kinds of self-identities that can be intelligibly constituted there (Dixon 2000).
This discursive approach to defining geo-ontology is quite similar to what is assumed by developmental theorists and early childhood pedagogues. The place-identity argument considers interaction between an individual and her environment as the fundamental process by which identity is formed. As noted in the first chapter, the constructivist premise assumed by most pedagogies figures that, “[a]s children acquire new information their schemes become more and more complex” (Papailia et. al., 2002; 29). Noting role that object relations plays in the process of cognitive development, Piaget argues that “knowledge arises neither from objects nor the child, but from interactions between the child and those objects” (quoted in Hohmann et. al., 1995; 15). Like so many early educational theorists, Dixon and Durrhiem figure the constitution of identity and the relationship between space, place, and the subject, as a strictly cognitive process that occurs in the constructivist fashion discussed in chapter one. These accounts similarly propose that space functions as an important psychic backdrop, which provides a resource of identity, exuding an influential force that shapes who a subject will become when located in space and place.

While I do think that environmental psychology’s place-identity conception of constituting the self would be a useful tool for early childhood educators interested in probing deeper into the nature of the spatial pedagogy occurring in open-ended preschool settings, the place-identity approach remains too pragmatic for my purposes. It is worth noting that Dixon and Durrhiem are concerned with ideology and social hierarchies of oppression, which they argue are internalized as young children constitute themselves as selves within a given environmental context. They suggest that if the inter-subjectivity of dialogue is mediated by an ideologically bound discourse that underwrites and organizes environment, so too will the selves constituted there (Dixon 2000). This makes them important allies for feminist, queer, and critical scholars of early childhood education who are concerned with the ways that a dominant social discourse can affect child sociality in preschool settings, but places them in tension with Grosz, who sees ideology as the product of, rather than the logic that underwrites, the psychic effects of space.
For the purposes of my analysis, the work of Dixon and Durrheim is simply not spatial enough because it is concerned more with the psychic constitution of selves within an environmental context propped up by discourse, than with the ways that subject positions are inscribed in, and enforced by, the organization of space. These two scholars are engaging with the “humanistic approach that [explores] how people construct a sense of locatedness through a symbolic process ‘emplotment’” (31), in order to discover “the rhetorical traditions through which people locate their selves and others” (2000; 33). I appreciate the merits of this psychological geo-ontology but the place-identity approach, whether discursive or not, remains unable to fully explain the ways that the physical landscapes of early childhood preschool geographies insert ideo-cultural narratives of identity into the psyches of young children. True, the figuring of place-identity suggested by Dixon and Durrheim allows us to see that an ideologically bound environmental context, as a resource of identity, informs the constitution of selves as to the appropriate subject positions demarowed by social hierarchies of power. It does not, however, demonstrate how.

Using a cognitive oriented discursive framework like the one offered by Dixon and Durrheim to address ideology, heteronormativity, and the reproduction of the social relations of production in preschool settings, lacks the affective and symbolic elements necessary to probe deeper into these visceral phenomena. I am interested in the ideological contents of space itself, rather than the ideologically bound inter-subjective space created by the discourse communities, which bind environmental contexts discussed by these two scholars. While I do not wish to dismiss the ways that discourse does, indeed, inform how bodies are located in space, I suspect that there are much more commanding unconscious, visceral, and affective registers than cognition involved in the reinstatement of the dominant social relations of production in the case of the socializing apparatus of preschooling children. Despite its similarities— and even applicability— to the available scholarship of educational and developmental theory described in chapter one, I do not see this model as a very useful candidate for the purposes of my analysis, because it does not probe deeply enough into the psychic effects of spaces I wish to address.
Another major position available within critical human geography regarding the relationship between space, sociality, and the subject is the popular socio-spatial dialectic famously purposed by Edward W. Soja, who was inspired by the work of Henri Lefebvre. Lefebvre’s “The Production of Space” (1974), is an elaborate account of the interconnection between sociality, spatiality, psychology, and power. Soja recalls Lefebvre’s position concerning space and Marxist analysis, arguing that he “criticized Marxism for its persistent failure to see the material and ideological spatialization associated with the development and survival of capitalism, a spatialization intimately bound up with the social division of labor, the institutional materiality of the state, and the expressions of economic, political, and ideological power” (Soja 1989; 119). The historical materialism characteristic of Marxism presumes that insightful social analysis can be carried out by tracking the developments and shifts of practices of production over time. According to historical materialism, relations of economic production generate social relations and determine the formation and organization of sociality. As a method of theoretical analysis, historical materialism affirms that the particular organization of an ideocultural order can be inferred from the relations of economic production that produce it. Lefebvre and Soja each express an urgent concern for the lack of attention given to how the relations of production are manifested in space and how an analysis of space can therefore offer important insights to Marxist theory (Lefebvre 1991; Soja 1980; 1989).

Lefebvre proposes that space is a social product produced in order to reproduce and sustain hegemonic relations of production (Lefebvre 1991). Soja is similarly emphatic that social analysis requires an analysis of socially produced spaces in order to truly engage with the ways that capitalism sustains itself in the face of recurring moments of crisis that threaten its survival (Soja 1980; 1989). Taking Lefebvre’s arguments as a point of departure, Soja argues that Marxist thought and critical theory have so pervasively privileged the historical narrative and time as the key to theoretical analysis, that space has been both silenced in and excluded from social theory (Soja 1980; 1989). Soja claims that spatial analysis has been pervasively absent and at times even met with strong resistance within the
various schools of Marxist critical social theory. Of this he writes, “the possibility of a
critical human geography was made to appear inconceivable if not absurdly
anachronistic to generations of Western Marxists and critical social scientists”
(1989; 31). The absence of and resistance to spatial considerations in Marxist
theory denies what Soja sees as the most reliable route available to explain the
dominance of the capitalist order, namely, an analysis of the spaces socially
produced by the capitalist relations of production (Soja 1980; 1989).

Marxist analysis that only considers social relationships as they exist and
shift over time fail to attend to the most literal forms of historical materialism: the
physical materiality of everyday life. According to Soja, space and social relations
both originate from the same economic superstructure. He explains:

The vertical and horizontal expressions of the relations of production under
capitalism (i.e., relations of class)...[are] dialectically linked, in that each
shapes and is simultaneously shaped by the other in a complex
interrelationship which may vary in different social formations and at
different historical conjunctures...until the production of space is rooted
more deeply into historical materialism, into the basic definitions of the
relations and forces production, into the mode of production itself, and
especially into praxis, it will tend to remain as more apparent that ‘real,’ as
epiphenomenal rather than transformational (Soja 1980; 225).

Because social relations of production, and the material spaces generated by these
relations, are intimately bound together by a shared point of origin, they are
mutually sustaining to one another. Consequently, without considering the spatial
aspects of the relations of production, social analysis will never be complete. Soja
argues that because sociality is inseparable from spatiality, a dialectical
understanding of the socio-spatial relationship is required. At the core of the socio-
spatial dialectic is the contention that “social and spatial relationships are
dialectically inter-reactive, interdependent; that social relations of production are
both space-forming and space contingent” (Soja 1980; 211). He defines the
dialectical relationship between space and sociality that has been neglected by
many Marxist critical theorists as follows:

The structure of organized space is not a separate structure with its own
autonomous laws of construction and transformation, nor is it simply an
expression of the class structure emerging form the social (i.e. aspatial)
relations of production. It represents, instead, a dialectically defined component of the general relations of production, relations which are simultaneously social and spatial...Marxism has evolved without a pertinent spatial perspective, dwelling primarily in a predominantly sociological-historical—as opposed to what [David] Harvey perceptively called geographical—‘imagination’ that fails to capture a dialectical materialism that is simultaneously historical and spatial (Soja 1980; 208-209).

It is clear, then, that for Soja, interrogating the spatial relations of social reproduction is just as important as examining the historical shifts in social relations of production, and their reproduction over time. Soja’s intention was to resurrect the lost lens of space in critical and Marxist social theory. Recognizing the dialectical relationship between social relations and spatial organization is of urgent concern, because, Soja warns, “it is now space more than time that hides things from us, the demystification of spatiality and its veiled instrumentality of power is key to making practical, political, and theoretical sense of the contemporary era” (Soja 1989; 61).

In resonance with Iris Marion Young’s concern, that patriarchy has “gone underground, dwelling in everyday habits and cultural meanings of which people are for the most part unaware” (quoted in McDowell and Sharp 1997; 220), Soja warns us that space, more than any other element of sociality, is a medium by which social relations are able to hide themselves and remain largely unidentifiable (1980; 1989). Similar to Foucault’s suggestion, that historically, space has been treated as a dead and inconsequential medium, Soja claims that the social, political, and ideological significance of space is invisible to us. He writes that “the term spatial typically evokes the image of something physical and external to the social context and to social action, as a part of the ‘environment,’ a context for society—its container—rather than a structure created by society” (Soja1980; 210). Under this Marxist conception of critical human geography, space and place, social organization, and the spatial practices developed in order to facilitate their continued functioning, cannot be untangled from one another. There is a simultaneous reciprocity between space and sociality such that each is mutually constituting and sustaining of the other.
With space and sociality so grounded in one another—space being the fundamental medium of sociality and sociality operating as the hidden logic that underwrites the organization and design of space—the literal, tangible, and concrete materiality of everyday life, though socially constructed and therefore contingent, is collapsed by an optics of truth that mandates what one can see, touch, and feel as real. The social relations that space is infused with, therefore, become immutably, and inevitably true. This proposition has radical implications for the enactments of space and place in preschool classrooms. Space institutes, in a literalized, material, and seemingly immutable fashion, the order of things, the tangibility of which makes resistance incredibly difficult. According to Soja, the consequences of space and place are incredibly important because they are simultaneously existential and ontological in nature.

Spatiality, temporality, and social being can be seen as the abstract dimensions of which together compromise all facets of human existence. More concretely specified, each of these abstract existential dimensions comes to life as a social construct which shapes empirical reality and is simultaneously shaped by it. Thus, the spatial order of human existence arises from the (social) production of space, the construction of human geographies that both reflect and configure being in the world (Soja 1989; 25).

Thinking of space as a neutral, inactive, or dead medium institutes the invisibility of “how relations of power and discipline are inscribed into the apparently innocent spatiality of social life, how human geographies become filled with politics and ideologies” (Soja 1989; 6). The genealogy of domestic space I offer in chapter two, demonstrates Soja’s proposition about how social relations produce and are reflected in space. The domestic landscape historically emerged as a spatial practice that simultaneously produced and sustained the social relations of colonial and imperial production, concretizing and literalizing the dominant imaginary of the ideo-cultural order of empire. The historical emergence of the domestic landscape exhibits a dialectically reciprocal interconnectivity to the social relations of production organized by and represented in the dominant social imaginary of nationalism and empire, emerging from, while simultaneously generating and
sustaining, the narratives of imperial bourgeois identity organized according to the logic of patriarchy. Directly addressing the interconnection between economics, industry, sociality, and space Soja observes:

Industrial capitalism survived its predicted demise through a radical social and spatial restructuring which both intensified (or deepened, as in the rise of corporate monopolies and mergers) and extensified (or widened, as in the global expansion of imperialism) its definitive production relations and divisions of labor. Accompanying the rise of this new political economy of capitalism was an altered culture of time and space (1989; 26).

If one grants the propositions Soja offers in his Marxist spatiality, then domestic space, although seemingly innocent and politically irrelevant, is rendered but one material manifestation of the social relations of power bound by the hierarchies of domination and regulation characteristic of white, Western, capitalistic patriarchy. This dialectic offers an insightful frame for understanding the significance of the historical emergence of domestic space discussed in chapter two– for example, the ways that the imperial relations of production facilitated by colonialism produced domestic space, which, in turn, *inter-acted* back onto the relations of production by psychically and symbolically sustaining their validity.

Soja's analysis is pertinent to the marco-practices of power manifested by space and place, whereas the accounts of Foucault, Bartky, and Grosz help to address the micro-practices of power and discipline inflected by the enactments space and place in preschools, upon which the pedagogy of domestication relies. The socio-spatial dialectic proposed by Soja helps explain the social, political, and economic significance of stubborn landscapes like domestic space that resurface everywhere, even in the architecture of early learning. Soja posits the social production of space as a primary mechanism by which hegemonic relations of production are reproduced. Consequently, re-enactments of particularly ideological landscapes, like the landscape of domesticity that signifies a traditional bound division of labor, in preschool settings, works to subjugate very young children to the systemic and systematic modes of social organization of patriarchy.
Monumental Space

I would like, finally, to consider critical human geographies of monumental space. There are some interesting claims regarding the psychic influence of monuments that I think are quite illuminating when considered with reference to domestic space in preschools. As artifacts that are usually commissioned by government agencies to commemorate some aspect or event relating to the state, monuments are the most overtly and explicitly political spaces. But as some critical human geographers propose, monuments are not necessarily the overbearing structures erected for commemoration in a public space that we might assume them to be. Lefebvre defines a monument as an object that distinctly demarcates power. A monument is any privileged object charged with the power to signify or evoke the social schema of power according to which it has been constructed (Lefebvre 1991). Given this definition, a thing can be properly regarded as monumental provided it conjures up either the ideological or socio-symbolic order from which its status as a signifier is derived, and provided it communicates the relations of power, as they are organized within that order.

Lefebvre argues that the spatiality of monuments shifted in important ways during the socio-historical transformation of modernity. Before modernity, “monumentality”– the psychic influence of a monumental space– and the commemorative implications of monuments, enjoyed a relatively stable position within the unified identity of a town. In small rural areas, like towns or city states, clear and distinct divisions between those with social power and those without were easily identifiable and known. As a socially produced object, “[m]onumental space offered each member of a society an image of that membership, an image of his or her social visage. It thus constituted a collective mirror more faithful than any personal one” (1991; 220). The historical emergence of a middling bourgeois class, where once there were only peasants and the aristocracy, along with the mass movement of people from the town to the modern metropolis, shattered the unity of collective identities bound only by geographical proximity, and the ease with which
social relations of power were previously known. Socio-cultural identity was 
fragmented while people intermingled with their unknown Others in the metropolis.

The emergence of the metropolis effected a shift in "the balance of forces 
between monuments and buildings" (Lefebvre 1991; 223). Where once 
monumentality was localized within an overt and explicit public structure in the 
center of a country town, it dispersed and was disseminated as a aesthetic code of 
signification, communicated in the design of everyday buildings by established 
markers of social status. Lefebvre explains:

Under this dispensation, buildings and dwelling-places have been dressed up 
in monumental signs: first their facades, and later their interiors. The homes 
of the moneyed classes have undergone a superficial ‘socialization’ with the 
introduction of reception areas, bars, books and furniture (divans, for 
instance) which bespeak of some erotic life. Pale echoes, in short, of the 
aristocratic palace or town house (1991; 223).

Lefebvre proposes that monumentality diffused itself as an aesthetic code into the 
spatiality of everyday life, weaving its signifiers insidiously into the fabric of the 
everyday world. Monuments can be, perhaps, the mundane, insidious objects of 
everyday life. Monumental are any objects that evoke a historical narrative of 
tradition, social practice, or ritual, commemorated through repetition; a spatial 
metaphor for the social relations of production, and hierarchies of power 
demarcated by those relations. Everyday objects, Lefebvre implies, have become 
circuits of monumentality.

An iconic or monumental object can be any privileged object charged with the 
power to signify or evoke the social schema of power according to which it has been 
constructed. Surely the iconography of domesticity, the objects and spaces whose 
original design and historical emergence sustained and concretized the social 
imaginary of the patriarchal order, can be figured the way Lefebvre suggests. Within 
the social schema of power that maintained the patriarchal order of British 
imperialism, all visible signs of a white woman’s labor conflicted with the imagined 
purity of white civility. As spectacular icons of degeneracy, “the theatrical 
paraphernalia of domesticity: brooms, pails, soap, water, dirt– mundane household 
objects became invested with profound fetish power” and signified class
degradation within the ideo-cultural, socio-symbolic order (McClintock 1995; 147). The fetish power that was attached to paraphernalia of domesticity imbued these objects with a sexual charge strong enough that they became privileged with eroticism. These objects evoke the feminine domain of the patriarchal social relations of power and production. McClintock argues that domestic objects were rendered artifacts of degeneracy, a taboo of class-status that consequently infused them with this profound fetish power. The lowly status of these objects, which were necessary to maintaining the clean and idealized haven of the home, betrayed “the public evidence of women’s domestic dirt, banished by Victorian decree to the kitchen and back-corridor, cellar and garret—the architecture of the unseen” (1995; 149).

The cliché objects categorized as belonging to the domestic landscape of the home area in open-ended preschool classrooms make easy candidates as privileged objects which evoke the power relations of a distinctly white, Western, and Victorian domesticity. They are privileged insofar as they were imbued with the profound fetish power McClintock suggests, and monumental insofar as they signify the social relations of gender power deeply rooted in tradition and bound by an aura of patriarchal regulation. The objects were— and, as I see, it still are— charged with the power to signify and evoke the imperial social schema according to which they were constituted. This schema categorized them as the abject paraphernalia that betrayed the constant necessity of labor, despite conflicting with class-narratives about the essential cleanliness of white embodiment. The legacy of these deeply significant iconic objects haunts them to this day. So what are they doing in our preschools?
Conclusion

Uncanny Landscapes

Figure 12. Uncanny Landscapes

*Whether the new modes of control have charge of correction, production, education, or the provision of welfare, they resemble one another: they exercise power in a bureaucratic mode–faceless, centralized, and pervasive...power has now become anonymous.*

~ Sandra Lee Bartky

While I remain unsure of the extent to which the domestic landscapes of home-space in preschool classrooms can be plausibly figured as monumental when it comes to their psychic effects, I do think that a discussion of monumentality, like the one offered in chapter three, is a useful and interesting way to think about space and place in the usual geographies that make up the material culture of Western childhoods. Paying attention to the ways that mundane forms of monumentality are woven, as an aesthetic code, into the architecture of ordinary buildings, dwellings, and even in educational spaces like open-ended preschool classrooms, illuminates the ways that political power becomes inscribed into, and signified by, architecture, space, and place. Although I am unsure as to what extent the home area exists in preschools as a monument to the ideo-cultural order of patriarchy, I am certain that how, and to what extent, the iconic signifiers embedded in the domestic landscape
exhibit monumentality will remain invisible without further attempts to analyze them. The fact is that analyzing the psychic effects of spaces that have been cast as natural, inconsequential, and inevitable— as is the case for landscapes and iconographies of domesticity— is difficult, particularly in early childhood educational theory, because the usual explanatory frameworks used to theorize children and childhood are simply not able to account for such concerns.

According to social psychologist Derek Hook, the “troubling question of ideology, space and subjectivity seems to exceed the explanatory bounds of many discursive approaches to space and identity” (Hook 2005; 693). As I demonstrate in this analysis, the discursive approach to conceiving identity, while grounded in conceptions of space and place, is more topographical and descriptive than engaging and analytic. The Marxist socio-spatial dialectic is likewise lacking when it comes to more particular and micro-political encounters between the individual subject and space, though it is an excellent lens with which to understand the broader social significance of the presence of particular spaces and how they function to support the reproduction of hegemonic social relations of production. And Lefebvre’s thoughts on monumentality, while interesting and insightful, need a level of refinement and elaboration that I am unable to provide within the confines of this thesis. These accounts, while very useful in certain ways, cannot give the kind of robust account of the psychic affects of space that Hook and I seem to both be looking for. I do believe, however, that thinking of the landscapes of home-space in preschool classrooms as a monument to white, colonial forms of domesticity, that are bound by narratives of civility, cleanliness, and class elitism, which enforce the regulation of heteronormativity and patriarchal control, opens up exciting new directions that I hope will be explored further by other scholars of early childhood education.

Hook, explaining the difficulty involved in articulating the psychic effects of space using more “mainstream” geo-ontological positions, notes that “[t]he actions of a social practice...‘are expressible but not explicable through discourse’” (Hook 2005; 693. emphasis original). Lefebvre was adamant that discursive frames will never be capacious enough to account for what occurs when a human subject
encounters a socially produced space, since “space commands bodies, prescribing or proscribing gestures, routes and distances to be covered. It is produced with this purpose in mind; this is its raison d’être” (Lefebvre 1991; 143). Heeding Lefebvre’s suggestion, Hook advises that “we must be acutely aware of the level of affective, bodily, live experience” when engaging in analyses of space, place, and subjectivity (Hook 2005; 693). Suggesting that spatial theory has much to gain by applying psychoanalysis to examinations of space concerned with the corporeal, affective registers of being, Hook proclaims that, “surely we must involve the unconscious in explaining the inter-relationship of power, space and identity, particularly so if these three are mediated by the force of ideology” (Hook 2005; 694).

The iconography of domesticity described throughout this thesis evokes a very specific moment during the British Victorian era within which domesticity, as a psychic trope of both sociality and culture, historically emerged. The cult of domesticity, the image of “true womanhood,” and the psychically dominating narratives of the moral purity, civility, and general superiority of Victorian culture are infused with a profound sense of nostalgia that imports a level emotional attachment to these modes of social being, making them incredibly hard to resist or subvert. To this day, the iconography of domesticity continues to evoke a patriarchal mode social organization, the supposed inviolability of an idealized conception of heterosexual monogamy, and an ideologically reinforced status quo. The iconic objects, or paraphernalia, of domesticity— the kitchenette, baby dolls, brooms, vacuumums, and cribs— present in preschool home corners, are marked by both the residual layer of these nostalgic forms of commemoration, and the identity narratives that were constructed in, through, and by, their historical emergence.

The nostalgia evoked by icons of domesticity recast the objects of household labour as signifiers of some fictitious and obscure utopian past that is presumed lost. Taylor and Richardson suggest that “[t]he semiotic function of this miniature home, with its decidedly straight, white, middle class aesthetic, is to reproduce a universalized ideal of utopian domestic space and normative family relations that are suitable for children to emulate” (Taylor 2005; 166). The ideal utopian vision projected by the presence of home-space in the architecture of early learning, draws
from distinctly white, Western, and colonial social practices of the past, projecting the circulations of power that these practices originally facilitated into the future, using the psyches of very young children in order to reproduce and reinstate hegemonic patriarchal relations of ideo-cultural production. The archetypical figures of “Mommy” and “Daddy” linger in the domestic landscape, implied by the staging surfaces of the home corner and the ritualized gender performances elicited by this space. The idealized heterosexual, monogamous family unit remains hauntingly present in the preschool landscape of home-space.

I do not mean to imply that early childhood educators intentionally aim to seduce young children into oppressive social hierarchies of power that are mediated and internalized in early childhood through performative identities reliant on stereotypical conceptions of gender. These landscapes, and the objects they contain, communicate who we are and what we value in ways that are, perhaps, not intended by the early childhood educators who furnish their learning environments this way. Their presence, despite the liberalist rhetoric with which we justify them in educational theory, is indicative of their commemorative use. They hearken back to “the good old days,” when things were simple, uncontested, and decidedly straightforward. By emotionally hearkening back to a lost utopian past, nostalgically cast as a characterization of uncontested heteronormative, white, Western, capitalist patriarchy, the landscape and pedagogy of domesticity imports the same social, sexual, and psychic narratives of that ideo-cultural regime to children, making these spaces, to a certain extent, monumental in their psychic effects.

As already noted, Braun and Edwards observe that “the conservative trends as manifested by the emphasis on perpetuating the skills, knowledge, and values of the past,” are still incredibly prevalent in educational theory (1972; 147 emphasis added). Perhaps it is the case that the iconographies of domesticity which resurface in the landscapes of today’s preschools gesture towards some collective and unconsciously occurring compulsion toward cultural repition. A compulsion to repeat ourselves that is unconsciously mediated, manifested in the built spaces of sociality without thought. The compulsion toward repition and reproduction compels the white, Western, capitalist, culture, predicated upon patriarchy, to repeat and
reinstate itself by way of the ritualized performances of gender involved in the typical storylines that make up the imaginative play of very young children while inhabiting the home area [Figure 12]. As remnants and traces of the Victorian cult of domesticity, the inclusion of these landscapes in the architecture of early learning ideologically secures the repetitious enactment of feminine docility and the conventions of white homely domesticity. Insofar as the landscapes of domesticity, reenacted as a central spatial practice of early childhood education’s home-space, hail little girls back into social relations of power reminiscent of the cult of domesticity, there is an uncanny aura about them.

Derek Hook urges us to “think of monuments as instruments of the uncanny, as exploiting the uncanniness of their ideological and indeed, interpellative efficacy” (Hook 2005; 698). What is most uncanny about monuments that have a distinctly ideological nature is that they are infused with an aura of surveillance. Hook argues that monuments of this sort are “technologies of the uncanny,” and the aura exuded from them implies a “‘supernaturalism of power’ [that] is the result of uncanny affect of presence” (2005; 698). Encountering ideologically monumental space, you feel as though something is present and watching you, when there is, in fact, nothing. The interpellative force of ideological monuments begs the participation of the human subjects who encounter them:

A monumental space [is] something akin to a ‘field of the uncanny’ which requires the role of the human subject—both the physical body and the subjective presence— to complete the circuit of power...The design, the technology, of the monuments seems, in other words, to beg a subject to fill its ontological gap (Hook 2005; 700).

Calling forth the participation of human beings to complete the circuit of power initiated by the presence of ideological monuments, turns these spaces into a mechanism of power whose effects, Hook argues, are a form of domestication. Ideological space hails subjects to particular modes of presence. Being called forth to present oneself in a particular way by space, is a form of domestication that requires both corporeal and psychic participation in the regime of power and discipline the monumental object signifies.
In her analysis of the patriarchal regime of disciplining the female body, Bartky notes that what is historically unique about the modernization of patriarchal power is that there it has no identifiable locus of circulation:

The disciplining power that is increasingly charged with the production of a properly embodied femininity is dispersed and anonymous; there are no individuals formally empowered to wield it; it is, as we have seen, invested in everyone and no one in particular (Diamond and Quinby 1988; 78).

The modernization of patriarchal power described by Bartky is inherently uncanny—it is absolutely present, but we can identify only absence. Patriarchy is in everyone and no one in particular. There are many different definitions of the Uncanny, one of which is an absent presence (Freud and Freud 1986). Patriarchy, as it exists today, is an uncanny phenomenon; it is an absent presence. It exists in everyone and no one in particular. We know it is there, and can observe the effects that its existence produces, in cultural artifacts like the ideologically bound iconography that makes up the landscape of domesticity. Although we know it is there, can see its results, and can feel its existence everywhere, we can see only absence. We are unable to point to anyone or anything and say, “There. See? That is the patriarch.”

The childhood geographies I am describing are an expression of a collective, ideologically-oriented, compulsion to repeat ourselves— a concentrated and symbolic representation of a legacy of various and varying identifications that involve whiteness, the patriarchal order, and compulsory heterosexuality. The repetition involved in disciplining the docile bodies of young children according to the mechanisms of a patriarchal regime of power, is bound by the collective need to consistently communicate to one another this is who we are and what we value.

The domestic landscapes of the home corner in preschools may not arouse uncanny affects in children. It is quite unlikely that children who are playing in the home corner actually feel an eerie sense of haunting, an uncanny presence where in fact there is nothing. But children do, indeed, experience the feeling of being watched by their peers while in open-ended classrooms, as the accounts of child-on-child surveillance discussed in the first chapter, imply. But the space, home corner, when seen the way I suggest— as a landscape bound by the ideo-cultural
significations attached to its historical emergence, and an apparatus by which
patriarchal relations of production are reproduced – is itself an uncanny locale on
several levels. Explaining his own conception of the uncanny Hook writes, “the
uncanny is that class of the frightening in which something repressed makes its
return... an unsettling sense of familiarity that appears when repressed material slip
into consciousness” (Hook 1995 p.697).

So often, people claim that we are “post-feminist,” and yet we usher our
children into the patriarchal order when we fashion their earliest experiences
according to domesticity and binaristic definitions of gender. We think we are post-
feminist because women are supposedly liberated, but repressed material – that
women continue to be oppressed by the patriarchal order – slips into consciousness
every now and then. When clear evidence of patriarchy’s continued reign surfaces,
an unsettling – and disheartening – sense of familiarity ensues. Historically speaking,
home-space exists as a physical manifestation of compulsive repetition that
reinstates we identities and we values in the minds of children. As such, these
landscapes function as a tool or an apparatus, that reinstate a historically dominant
way of life. Ideologically, culturally, and politically, home-space can be seen as an
uncanny surface in our Western “post-feminist” society. Women are emancipated,
yet the pervasive presence of home-space in preschools, and its consequent spatial
pedagogy of domestication, elicits the continued relegation of women to the private
sphere of the home. The home area evokes images of housewifery and motherhood
that feature the anachronistic figure of the domesticated, historically white, female.
When little girls inhabit these spaces, “[n]ot only is [their] corporeality ‘hailed’; so is
their subjectivity [and] their consciousness” (Hook 1995 p.700).

The suggestions I am offering in this analysis of preschool space are
unfortunately only a starting point. There are many questions that need to be
addressed in order to interrogate the psychic effects of domestic space in
preschools. For instance, how, exactly, has the architecture of early learning been
socially produced? Can scholars from other global contexts similarly trace the
historical emergence of social landscapes? If so, have the socially produced spaces of
other global contexts historically emerged in ways that are similar to our own white,
Western, patriarchal landscapes? And, as for the corporeal embodiment involved in the geographies of early childhood education, my analysis offers exciting new considerations that, I think, would be reinforced by a participant-observer mode of researching children in schools. Though these questions are large in scope, I believe that they are deserving of scholarly attention.

Space in preschools is considered the third teacher. We accept this teacher without ever questioning if this teacher is good at what he does. He isn’t. And the first step towards crafting a third teacher that is not bound by an incredible potential to oppress and coerce the psyches of very young children, like the teacher we have now, is becoming politically realistic about the implications of home-space in early learning. Transforming a the spatial pedagogy of the learning environment must include shifting the vantage point from which we interpret space. This means seeing space as a social product that has the power to reinstate social hierarchies of power and oppression. If we get real about space, it can no longer hide behind its socially constructed veil of neutrality and immutability. The domestic landscape, when posed as a cultural artifact in the preschool classroom, will no longer be conceived as psychically, ideologically, and culturally innocent in any justifiable way. The home area in today’s preschool serves a specific function in child socialization that constructs and maintains a shared collective identity predicated on power and control. It physically communicates oppressive patriarchal values to children who come to know themselves in, through, and by preschool space and place.
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