Fugitive Black spaces in environmental education: Black feminism, Blues Geographies, and

relationality

by

Brittiny Moore

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Committee Members:

Dr. Eric Sarmiento

Dr. Ronald Hagelman III

Introduction

Working for the Texas Children in Nature movement was the job I had been dreaming of. This was a real opportunity to radically enmesh my admiration for the environment with my passion for education. Although the main duties for the position were administrative – completing data entry and maintaining websites and social media platforms – I had the opportunity to help build a coalition of environmental educators and network to spread our mission to ensure equitable access and connection to nature for children in Texas. The movement was an extension of a larger, international movement occurring under the ideology of Richard Louv and his conception of No Child Left Inside. The movement was sparked by Louv's 2005 book*, Last Child in the Woods: Saving our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder,* and led a charge to teach children how to connect with a nature that allowed for them to escape the hustle and bustle of human life and the technology that drives it*.*

After some time of planning and attending meetings, of plugging environmental education (EE) programs into our database, and of creating campaign after campaign to urge children to get outside, I started to wonder – *who exactly are we trying to connect to what nature?* We dramatically lacked diversity both on staff and within our partnerships. We were promoting programs delivered by large nature centers with pricey workshops and summer camps. We were advocating for programs that idolized a pristine nature – even the city parks were often in the "good" neighborhoods – and for programs that taught about nature and our duty to the environment. I had a hunch that if we truly wanted to create equitable access to nature, we were going about it all wrong. I would be completely disheartened to learn that my questions and concerns would fall on deaf ears, and after a stressful three months of fighting for real equitable actions I would prematurely end my time with Texas Children in Nature.

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It was a cool spring morning at the Becker Elementary School's Green Classroom. As environmental educators for the City of Austin in Texas, we used this classroom garden – filled with fruits, vegetables, and native wildflowers – to provide lessons in green gardening and other sustainable practices. Becker Elementary School sits in a white neighborhood on the west

side of the city, and we would wait patiently each morning for the bright yellow of a school bus to indicate that the students bussed from the east side of the city have arrived. On this morning, we had a classroom of Black students, fully energized – singing and dancing as they stepped off the bus. The students rapped together and danced together as they learned to turn and sift compost, as they planted vegetable seeds, and even as they watered garden beds. The beat of choice was a popular Hip-Hop song, Roddy Ricch's "The Box," that I myself had listened to on my way in to work. The students seemed to be enjoying their experience, but I was soon asked by a fellow educator to help keep them on task and to advocate they use proper garden etiquette. At this request, I noticed the "looks" our students were receiving from the white teachers and students of Becker Elementary.

Here, I found myself asking a similar question as before – *what nature are we trying to "connect" our students to?* We were providing an EE program that only advocated for the preservation and conservation of one side of the city – the west side. Our curriculum blatantly ignored the histories and genealogies of our land and the differentiated cultural traditions and practices that were and are in relation to nature. Our curriculum failed to question the association of "damaged" East Austin nature(s) with the low-income communities of color that called these areas home. And, as a Black queer woman – used to being the "other" in the room – I could have never guessed that my difference would be used to leverage the concept of diversity within our EE practices, where it didn't authentically exist.

These were tough experiences to work to understand and to cope with, and as I began to ask questions that would unsettle place within my own consciousness, I began to recognize that these EE programs were failing our youth of color by dissociating Black and Brown bodies from the personal and communal relationships that are held with nature and the environment. We were telling youth of color how to act in nature and how to make connections with the environment, rather than helping the youth understand the nature(s) they lived in and experienced. We were pushing youth of color to the margins of EE spaces, telling them that their realities and lived experiences had no place in nature and environmental knowledge, and stripping them of agency in their relations to the worlds that lay outside of their own bodies. Wanting to challenge the notions of these popular EE pedagogies and practices, I situate myself

here in this research. As I began to contemplate this research, I did not wish to spend ample time examining specific practices or establishing specific practices or frameworks for EE pedagogies, nor did I wish to further entrench the essentialization of Black bodies as victims of a system by only exploring the ills of current EE pedagogies and practices. Rather, I have chosen to engage with Black feminism and Blues geographies to contend with Black radical thought as providing foundational ideas and concepts upon which to explore EE pedagogies and practices. By engaging with these ideas and concepts, I hope to contribute to the mobilization of Black radical thought as key in a rethinking of agency in space production and a rethinking of who and what makes place. This research seeks to conceptualize the intentional production of racialized space that centers knowledges normally kept at the margins, and that recognizes agency in space relations. In an attempt to imagine these radically differentiated spaces, I will engage with EE literature that works to story place and centers the genealogy of spaces to mobilize thought that situates Black radical knowledges and traditions.

My argument proceeds in three main sections. In the first, I illustrate how education has historically reduced Black bodies to being uneducable while removing Black spaces from the education system. By tracing the genealogy of Black relations with the education system extending from the plantation, I present literature to demonstrate how these relations have devalued the innocence of Black childhoods, excluded Black children from environmental education spaces, and used nature as an instrument to fix the humanness of Black children while also repairing their non-human worlds. In the second section, I discuss how dominant environmental education practices uphold Eurocentric constructions of space and white supremacist ideologies by focusing on an anthropocentric environmental education pedagogy. This EE pedagogy is most effective in perpetuating the distinction between human and more-than-human worlds and heavily deteriorates human relationality to place and space. Having traced the imbrication of EE with the colonizing drives of white supremacy and anthropocentrism, I contend for a conceptualization of a decolonized, relational EE pedagogy by engaging with Black feminist work of Katherine McKittrick, bell hooks, Fikile Nxumalo, Kihana Miraya Ross, and Kishi Animashaun Ducre. To expand this approach, I draw on the Blues geographic thought of Clyde Woods to demonstrate that a relational approach to EE is key to

creating mindful and just EE for youth of color. This in turn raises the question of how to integrate the ideas and concepts of Black radical thought into the existing hegemonic and Eurocentric EE spaces. In response to this concern, I suggest mobilizing *fugitive spaces* and *racial counterspaces* to re-envision EE spaces that actively resist anti-Black and colonial pedagogies and practices and aid in the production of radical Black spaces in EE for youth of color.

Black spaces in environmental education: colonization, collision, and innocence

Thinking through the complexities of race and educational spaces makes visible how throughout American history education has been utilized as an instrument of suppression of Black freedom. Literatures tracing the genealogies of American education systems reveal colonialist and anti-Black roots that have grown, developed, and persisted as political, economic, social, and cultural formations have changed over time. In this section, I engage with these literatures to trace the long genealogy of anti-Blackness in American education systems, focusing on how environmental education blossomed from those same roots.

Historians and critical geographers have demonstrated that during chattel slavery in the United States, white landowners feared that academic learning of any form would provide a knowledge to enslaved Africans that would enable them to actively subvert their subordination and take back control of their bodies, minds, and futures (Warren and Coles 2020). The ability of the enslaved African to read and write was viewed by many white Americans as an attack on the whiteness and coloniality that characterized mid-nineteenth century America. If discovered to be "educated," enslaved Africans were severely punished, sometimes with death. Planters would stop at nothing to impose and sustain the slaves' willingness to be subservient (Warren and Coles 2020; McKittrick 2011; Du Bois 1935; Robinson 1983). Upholding the American system of production and social reproduction resting on enslaved laborers required the construction and maintenance of *anti-Blackness* – "the socially constructed rendering of Black bodies as inhuman, disposable, and inherently problematic" (Warren and Coles 2020, p.2). This pervasive *anti-Blackness* – blackness as the thing to be feared and hated, Nakagawa (2012)

argues, was necessary for the white supremacist power structure's survival. And its legacy in American society continued within educational spaces after slavery, educating Black bodies to use their hands and not their intellect during the Reconstruction Era. Racist conceptions of Black people as innately inferior, partly from the education that had been stripped from them, halted Black bodies from encompassing human values and further reduced Black bodies to commodities (Warren and Coles 2020; McKittrick 2011; Woods 2007; Nxumalo and Ross 2019; Barra 2020).

Black educators in years past, such as Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver, assert education as key to the racial advancement and economic liberation of Black bodies. Washington believed agricultural education and skills development would provide an economic source for African American self-sufficiency and community building, ultimately creating the Tuskegee institution that was committed to Black education that attended to the well-being of the whole – physical and metaphysical – human (White 2018). The curriculum of Tuskegee was developed to complement the lived experiences of its students and fostered collective community development and the recognition of Black agency in educational spaces. Washington would go on to hire Carver to provide education that promoted achieving economic autonomy using agriculture as a strategy of self-sufficiency and community sustainability. Carver considered this curriculum as an instrument for Black farmers to survive in racially hostile and economically oppressive environments. Carver contended that this education for survival was most effective when connected to the conditions on the ground. Both Washington and Carver approached Black education as a means to meet the needs of those who needed it most (White 2018).

Givens (2016) explains the modern U.S. schooling system as spaces where Black people are flooded with Eurocentric ideologies that inhibit their economic, political, and social progress, ultimately furthering white dominance and supporting the agenda of white supremacy. Other scholars have described the U.S. schooling system as formal spaces of Black suppression that depress the "genius of the Negro," making Black people feel that their race is not meant for greatness and will never live up to the socially constructed standards of success (Sojoyner 2016; Woodson 1933). This extension of slavery to educational spaces is integral in understanding the

schooling of Black childhoods in the context of what Ross (2020) has coined the afterlife of school segregation, "where Black students remain systematically dehumanized and positioned as uneducable"(Nxumalo and Ross 2019, p. 505). Ross (2020) uses Hartman's (2007) concept of the afterlife of slavery and the transcended subjugations to create a framework for the afterlife of school segregation. "Despite the end of legal segregation of schooling, education for Black children remains marked by the impossibility of Black childhoods and manifests in the form of dehumanization, surveillance, deficit perspectives, and punitive discipline" (Nxumalo and Ross 2019, p. 505).

Environmental education (EE) spaces are most often instrumentalized as systems to uphold the political and personal agenda of these hegemonic power structures and have historically been used as agents to support anti-Black projects. EE has effectively institutionalized the Eurocentric understanding of human's agency in the world that ignores the knowledges and experiences of marginalized, low-income communities of color. Anti-Blackness in childhood EE practices has strong and ancient roots deeply embedded in colonial constructions of space and place and Eurocentric idealizations and romanticizations of nature and childhood (McKittrick 2011, Nxumalo and Ross 2019). Katherine McKittrick (2011) claims colonialized spaces as spaces of encounter within place. Colonialization creates encounters of differentiated spaces and collisions of distinct knowledges and lived experiences that become entangled and drive conflicts within place. These conflicts largely arise from the objectification of specific bodies by a dominant, "emancipated" group and accompany a universal system of knowledge that claims absolute truths for that space. When absolute truths are absorbed and mobilized to create societal normatives and standards, colonialization becomes an effective tool to be employed in the process of commodifying bodies – positing bodies that do not express these normatives and standards as less-than-human and subjects of exploitation. Here, spaces are used as weapons to create "others" and to push these "others" who do not "belong" to the margins of society, thus, creating racial hierarchies within space. It is the mobilization of these Eurocentric claims to absolute truths that identify how spaces can be conceptualized into a singular cultural, material, and social space. These conceptualizations are crafted, with heavy guide from the

universal system of knowledge, as a means of reworking space with institutional realignment and embedding socially constructed narratives that are systematically upheld.

It is no surprise then that the understandings of nature, childhoods, and EE have been underpinned by the pervasiveness of white supremacy that permeates colonial knowledges. Anti-Blackness in childhood EE spaces is most visible in the practice of the exclusion of Black children. While also a significant issue in EE practices for youth, the exclusion of Black children is not limited to the dispossession of agency to participate in EE spaces. Anti-Blackness as it functions in EE for the youth is largely marked by the exclusion of Black childhoods from the Eurocentric narrative of a natural connection of pure and innocent children with pure and romantic nature (Nxumalo and Ross 2019).

Current scholarship illustrates and interrogates historical and contemporary assumptions of the whiteness of childhood innocence and the exclusions of Black childhoods from the Eurocentric construction of innocence (Bernstein 2011; Nxumalo and Ross 2019). Bernstein (2011) explores historical entanglements of childhood innocence and the racial formations of the United States to demonstrate a transcendence in the ascription of childhood innocence as that belonging to the white race and the power that is privileged from that status. These entanglements are traced through racialized space collisions transcending the time of the United States and are connected to the racialization of the environment. The works of authors such as Carolyn Finney (2014) and Dianne D. Glave (2010) use powerful, oppositional narratives to trace historical space collisions and to explore the racialization of the environment emergent from racial violences and resistances in the United States. Through the erasure of Black childhood innocence, the Black bodies of youth of color have been reduced to a less-than-human status. Such a status has justified anti-Black violences in educational spaces and perpetuated the narrative of the uneducable Black mind. Eurocentrically constructed narratives of Black bodies has marked Black childhood in EE for the youth as inhibited by deficit disorders (Nxumalo and Ross 2019). This ideology has been given greater agency with emergent movements such as Richard Louv's Leave No Child Inside and its accompanying diagnosis of nature deficit disorder (Louv 2008). The movement is underpinned by the Eurocentric assumptions of childhood and nature and the romanticization of normative relationships with

the environment in that it claims childhoods as devoid of relationships with a pristine nature that can easily be found surrounding the homes of white neighborhoods. In his book, *Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature Deficit Disorder*, Louv claims a direct link between a lack of "natural" connections from a "wired generation" to a rise in childhood obesity, attention disorders, and depression. Louv continues by prescribing a romanticized version of nature as a "fix" to childhood disorders and key to the healthy development of children.

Colonial and Eurocentric visions of what constitutes nature imagine a pure and wild nature that sits in wait to be discovered for the learning of children. This vision of nature instills the ideology that nature(s) are distant, pristine places that are significantly untouched by anthropocentric forces – that is, "nature" is innocent and spaces for the innocent. Not only does this way of thinking about and practicing EE ignore the existing entanglements of youth of color and their lived experiences with the more-than-human worlds, but it also seeks to utilize EE as an instrument for fixing certain children and natures that are lacking innocence (Nxumalo and Ross 2019; Bellino and Adams 2017; Warren and Coles 2020). This type of EE forces youth of color to experience EE as obscure instruction that does not express their personal and complex relationships to their local places. This framework does not acknowledge the political, economic, and social production of spaces that is crucial in responding to the structural inequities and barriers that have historically shaped these relationships and spaces for youth of color. EE pedagogies that operate within the Eurocentric knowledge of what counts as nature and who can be innocent, further construct nature as spaces that ideally can fix the lack of innocence of Black childhood. Eurocentric constructions of Black bodies as less-than-human has positioned Black childhood and even the Black spaces that Black children experience as objects in need of repair. Nxumalo and Ross (2019) argue that the constructed narratives of Black childhood as that of being nature deficit, and the de-politicizing of space, has "enabled nature education to be positioned as a form of rescue, such as in improving the developmental trajectories for so-called 'at-risk' Black children" (p. 504).

Environmental educators play an active role in the normalization of anti-Blackness within EE spaces. As Eurocentric knowledges and constructed narratives take systematic root as absolute

truths, environmental educators are vulnerable to internalizing anti-Black messaging and easily become agents of anti-Black violences in educational spaces. This calls into question the intentionality of educators. Succumbing to the anti-Black messaging unconsciously shapes the professional decisions that lead educators to reproduce anti-Black curricula, policies, and practices that continuously dehumanize Black childhood (Warren and Coles 2020).

In sum, the anti-Black production of educational spaces permeates the field of environmental education and effectively perpetuates the erasure of Black spaces and Black agency in the relations that a body can encompass with the physical and metaphysical components of nature and the environment. This spatial production actively dehumanizes Black childhoods and commodifies Black bodies, – reducing Black bodies to the same non-human category as the Eurocentric ideology of nature – and significantly reduces the agency of Black youth in understanding their own truths to their relations with the physical and metaphysical realms that surround them. Current and dominant EE pedagogies and practices embrace these colonial ideologies that assiduously sever Black childhoods from their connections to relational place-making. This severance upholds the normalization of the dispossession of Black bodies and the naturalization of attempts to erase a difficult history of a plantation economy and exploitation of marginalized communities.

An anthropocentric production of environmental education spaces

Eurocentric constructions of Black childhoods as out-of-touch with nature has produced environmental education spaces that operate within the colonial bifurcation of the human and non-human worlds. In order to spatialize this bifurcation, geography has been successfully utilized in the imagining of boundaries between spaces of difference, their immediate surroundings, and the territory beyond. This weaponization of space has been recognized as a powerful instrument in distancing the "Others" to boundaries between belonging – pushing the "Others" to the margins of society – and an effective destabilizing governing technology in severing the "Others" relations to the land. The Eurocentric process of "othering" remains foundational to racialized social structures by constructing particular geographic places and

spaces that shape and uphold social hierarchies (Henderson 2020). This bifurcation has destructive and deadly power that is effective in the erasure of relational places and spaces. In what follows, I engage with literature and theories centering the human and non-human bifurcation to make visible race and place as inextricably linked and to reveal how this dualism functions in at least two key ways as extensions of colonial practices of domination and exploitation.

The first of these concepts is the normalization of the dispossession of Black bodies and consciousnesses from relations of both the physical and metaphysical associations of land and the environment. Katherine McKittrick (2011) powerfully explored the plantation economy as a system of inter-related production and consumption that normalized colonial geographies and naturalized racist workings in land exploitation. From this economy, a paradox emerged in the explanation of the relationships that Black bodies hold with land across space and time in the United States. Although Black bodies were expelled from being able to take ownership of the land under the plantation economy, their enslaved labor created a relationship between Black culture and that same land. While the plantation economy did not halt Black geographies from existing, it did transform how those geographies are perceived and understood. The plantation economy provided a historical foundation for racial modernity that continues to dispossess Black bodies from a sense of place and dissociate Black bodies and the non-human worlds. To erase a difficult history of a plantation economy, Eurocentric knowledges were mobilized to not only change the narratives of Blackness and Black spaces, but also to physically erase and make invisible Black relationships to places. Sylvia Wynter (2003) furthers this exploration by questioning the universality of what it is to be human under the guise of the colonial human and non-human bifurcation. Wynter (2003) argues that the world of non-human includes bodies that have been deemed less-than-human – dysselected from belonging to the human world. This perspective transfers agency to colonialism as a creator of hierarchal humanisms that racializes and dichotomizes the human and non-human and constructs a linear trajectory for all human futures toward civility and humanity (Nxumalo and Ross 2019).

Creating this separation in the human and non-human effectively renders marginalized communities invisible and claims racialized communities as natural resources that can be

controlled, exploited, and destroyed just as another non-human. Not only does this way of thinking about the non-human exacerbate the destruction of the environment, but it enables these dualistic conceptions to persist even under the guise of more sustainable futures (Nxumalo and Ross 2019). It is this ideology that is the second key to understanding the functioning of the human and non-human dualism. Eurocentric conceptions of human control over the non-human make Black spaces vulnerable to annihilation and erasure.

Monica Patrice Barra (2020) analyzes restoration histories in coastal Louisiana alongside colonial histories to demonstrate the corrosiveness of the dualism between the human and non-human worlds. Through an examination of insensitive restoration practices in coastal Louisiana, Barra illustrates the mobilization of environmental protection projects to take control of the Mississippi River and the surrounding land in ways that dispossess Black communities not only from their land, but also their means of subsistence, perpetuating the racist socioeconomic order of the region. These projects tend to cast disenfranchised communities as disposable obstacles to be sacrificed for the "greater good" of the environment. Black spaces have been so reduced – as Black bodies are continually dispossessed and Black agency made invisible – yet don't reap the privileges of other reduced spaces that are categorically called endangered.

McKittrick (2011) analyzes neoliberal policies and practices that have long been mobilized to halt the production of Black spaces through the annihilation and erasure of place and the relationships, culture, and even people within those spaces. McKittrick presents a robust examination of urbicide to demonstrate "empirical evidence [that] shows that the death of a black sense of place and the attendant descriptors of decay, incarceration, deportation, pollution, and displacement are reminiscent, but certainly do not twin, a plantation logic that spatialize[s] the complementary workings of modernity, land exploitation, and anti-Black violence" (p. 951). Although McKittrick urges caution around critical analyses of anti-Blackness and promotes critical analyses of anti-colonization (a point I return to below), it is evident that urbicide is a product of neoliberal policies and practices and exhibits the intentional death of a place and the willful annihilation of a space. This annihilation is highly effective when these policies and practices are created and implemented within the universal system of Eurocentric

knowledge that claims absolute truths. Eurocentric narratives and constructions are mobilized to conceptualize space as homogenous – erasing the physical and metaphysical make ups of space that exhibits difference and oppositional forms of knowledge.

These perspectives are utilized by dominant EE pedagogies as a means of normalizing colonial, anthropocentric, and exploitative relationships with Planet Earth through the creation of the children and nature dualism. Created here is an anthropocentric EE that focuses on solving environmental problems through individual behavior changes, rather than collective action and community-based approaches (Bellino and Adams 2017). This way of thinking concerns the production of space that focuses on individual consumption and the agency of capital and reduces complex environmental issues to simple fixes. In urban environments, this ideology to save the planet through individual actions is further complicated when coupled with the Eurocentric romanization of nature(s) as spaces with minimal human influence. Although there is greater recognition of the ecological complexities of urban spaces, when EE continues to emphasis romantic views of nature the ideology of the structural complexities of urban spaces is framed from a deteriorated-centered perspective that corresponds again to the concept of 'fixing' (Bellino and Adams 2017). Within this pedagogy little attention is paid to the critical analysis that situates urban ecology within the social and political complexities that produce its most pressing issues. The most tenacious concern with this EE pedagogy is that it fails to investigate associations of environmental degradation with low-income communities and communities of color. EE pedagogy that mobilizes the Eurocentric romanization of nature seeks to dissociate youth of color from the truths of their environment to allow youth to correctly connect with nature and escape the rough neighborhoods in which they live. This reduction in the agency of youth of color creates yet another linear trajectory within all human futures toward a universal understanding of human and non-human interactions.

As a field, EE has been resistant to critically engaging with anthropocentric EE pedagogy and fails to consider how, in practice, the deeply entrenched ideologies of Eurocentric knowledges are successful in dividing humans from nature (Taylor 2016). This dualism not only creates hierarchical humanisms, but systematically institutionalizes human exceptionalism. The very name, Anthropocene, validates human exceptionalism by naturalizing the 'reign of Man,'

and celebrates his intrinsic power as a human being. This perspective fails to acknowledge radically differentiated human-nature relationships between human cultures and fails to recognize that not all human cultures find themselves as radically differentiated worldly agents from their nature truths (Taylor 2016). Anthropocentric EE pedagogy disseminates a humanist understanding of agency and seeks to position youth as change agents known as environmental stewards. Taylor (2016) argues that while well-meaning, Anthropocentric EE pedagogy that seeks to create environmental stewards halts any rethinking of our agency in the world – humans as just one of the many agents that make and shape worlds together. Thus, Taylor calls for EE pedagogy that moves beyond human-centered stewardship and acknowledges the agency of the more-than-human (p.1450):

> It also requires us to radically rethink our agency in the world, to understand that we are just one agentic species amongst many, albeit a formidable and potentially destructive one, to refocus upon our mutually productive relations with others in this world and to recognize that a precarious and vulnerable environment simultaneously implicates our precarity and vulnerability as a species.

Fawcett (2002) challenges us to rethink human agency in the world by thinking of an EE pedagogy that provides an understanding of human agency in the world through interactions with animals and other more-than-humans. To dismantle the colonial and anthropocentric production of knowledge, Fawcett (2002) offers the notion of a collective learning EE pedagogy that allows for a rethinking of the human world as not just living in, but living with and becoming with the more-than-human world.

To conclude, the human and non-human bifurcation – the child and nature bifurcation – has been systematically embedded in the field of environmental education to create an instrument that effectively and institutionally entrenches racial hierarchies and the process of "othering" Black childhoods from belonging in and with the environment. Anthropocentric EE pedagogies center human domination of nature, invalidating radically differentiated human-nature relationships and are culturally incompetent. These types of pedagogies seek to fix what and who is broken and damaged in an attempt to rescue "at-risk" youth from their harsh and inhabitable neighborhoods by defining "healthy" and "normal" relationships with "nature." As

EE continues to essentialize Black childhoods, urban places and urban youth are claimed as victims – less-than-human objects – in need of saving. To reify McKittrick's (2011) conceptualization of anti-colonial analyses, it is imperative that we do not become complicit with the association of Black spaces and places with failure, victimhood, and death and in turn rethink the production of Black spaces and places as anti-essentialist and in resistance to colonial knowledges and practices. This requires us to conceptualize a decolonized EE pedagogy that embraces and expresses radically differentiated traditions and knowledges and realigns humans as inextricably in relation to the more-than-human world.

Conceptualizing a decolonized relational EE pedagogy

Posthumanist geographers have worked to trouble the human and non-human dualism that centers human productions of knowledge and separates humans from the more-than-human natures (Whatmore 2002, 2006; Haraway 1988, Massey 2005). These posthumanist ideologies engage with the more-than-human as active agents in the social and political making of worlds. In this perspective, posthumanists suggest mobilizing EE pedagogies that focus within the complexities of a child's entanglements with their human and more-than-human relations (Nxumalo and Cedillo 2017; Taylor and Pacini-Ketchabaw 2015). These posthumanist theories are problematic, however, due to a tendency to erase relational understanding of Indigenous onto-epistemologies by creating spaces of unsituatedness. With an absence in attention to space genealogy and location, a presumptive universalization of the human and non-human entanglements is consequent (Woods 2007; Sundberg 2014; Nxumalo and Cedillo 2017). Another challenge to posthumanist thought is its inability to contest what counts as human in the Eurocentric ideology of differential humanisms within the world of the "human," (Jackson 2015, Nxumalo and Cedillo 2017). In this section, I engage with Black feminist and Blues Geographies to conceptualize a rethinking in EE pedagogy that centers a particularly relational space and identifies signifiers of materialized and spatialized inequity, providing one way of addressing some of the issues identified in some strands of posthumanist thought (Nxumalo and Cedillo 2017).

Black Geographies

According to Tyner (2007) Black radical thought was and is geographical in its repudiation of both segregation and integration and its ability to imagine differentiated places and spaces. These Black geographies recognize Black agency in the production of space and have used Black geographic experiences to explore Black senses of place. A set of Black-oriented epistemologies emerges from Black geographic thought that calls for the creation of spaces "focused on black lives and beholden to their betterment" (Allen, Lawhon, and Pierce 2018, p. 1003). Black geographic scholars, such as Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods, center plantation histories and contemporaries to understand the spatial management of Blackness and racial difference and bring valuable insight to understanding the complexities of Black relations to place and space in the North American context. The perspectives added by these geographies bring about the possibility for creating new spaces that relate the human and more-than-human worlds and refute the ideology of Black dispossession from a sense of place. Importantly, Black feminist and Blues Geographies do not aim to erase the struggles and violences experienced within Black spaces that occur as extensions of plantation histories, but rather explore the possibilities of anti-colonial Black spaces through Black relations to place and the more-than-human as situated historical and contemporary geographies of anti-Blackness (McKittrick 2013; King 2016, Woods 2007; Nxumalo and Cedillo 2017; Nxumalo and Ross 2019).

Mobilizing these geographies can unsettle the Eurocentric trope of white innocent youth in untouched nature and begin to create imaginaries for Black childhoods in anti-colonial Black EE spaces. By tracing the genealogy of Black spaces and space entanglements, a decolonized and relational EE pedagogy can be developed that politicizes and questions spaces of inequities and dismantles the Eurocentric narrative of what it is to "be black in America." These pedagogies effectively situate uneven geographies and promote an ethos of radical relationality that centers, affirms, and values the capacity of Black life. I turn now to two modalities of thought which, in my view, are invaluable tools for constructing this ethos, Black feminist theorizations of space and Clyde Woods's blues geographies.

Black feminists' imaginaries of Black spaces

Given the multiplicity of oppressions, knowledges, and experiences borne at the intersection of race, class, and gender, the concept of a Black feminist spatial imagination as an intersectional framework to understand space allows for the re-cognition of agency within Black spaces. Black spatial imaginaries add understanding to the complexities of a Black sense of place by illustrating how Black bodies navigate their environment and find meaning and support in their respective communities (Durce 2018). McKittrick (2006) explores Black women's geographies in contestation with the geography of domination that is evidenced by the violences of transatlantic slavery and the racial and sexual displacement of Black women's bodies. McKittrick argues that Black humanness is bound within a geographic struggle from spatial domination that transcends the domination of the plantation (p. 54):

> I suggest that black feminism can, and in many cases has, contributed to geography through meaningful political practices and agendas. What I mean by this is that black women have an investment in space, and spatial politics, precisely because they have been relegated to the margins of knowledge and have therefore been imagined as outside the production of space…this position outside is just that, imagined and socially produced.

bell hooks (1981) explores the racial and sexual displacement of Black women's bodies by examining the civil rights movement and feminist movements extending from suffrage. hooks illustrates the tendency of white feminism to romanticize the experiences of the Black woman, equating the liberation of Black women in their strength, endurance, and ability to adapt and evolve. The false narrative of the matriarch was constructed as a Eurocentric trope to lend agency to Black women's bodies under the guise of continued racist and sexist ideologies. The narrative of the matriarch positions the agency of Black women as mere survivors complacent with the harsh and damaged places and spaces they must endure. Under this concept, Black women are revered for the liberation they could find in their resilience (p. 6):

> White feminists tended to romanticize the black female experience rather than discuss the negative impact of that

oppression. When feminists acknowledge in one breath that black women are victimized and in the same breath emphasize their strength, they imply that though black women are oppressed they manage to circumvent the damaging impact of oppression by being strong—and that is simply not the case. Usually, when people talk about the "strength" of black women they are referring to the way in which they perceive black women coping with oppression. They ignore the reality that to be strong in the face of oppression is not the same as overcoming oppression, that endurance is not to be confused with transformation. Frequently observers of the black female experience confuse these issues. The tendency to romanticize the black female experience that began in the feminist movement was reflected in the culture as a whole.

Ducre (2018) argues for a relationality of Black feminist spatial imagination to an intersectional environmental justice that gives agency to all Black bodies "not simply as victims, but as resilient agents that thrive and actively engage in placemaking despite multiple challenges" (p. 33). Ducre's theorization of Black feminist spatial imagination arose from their research exploring Black mothers' agency and spatiality within urban environments (p. 24):

This research demonstrated that they mother did not share the conventional definitions of environment nor did they convey environmental problems as those involving pollution. Instead, abandoned housing, urban decay, and sites of previous or potential violence were recurring themes of environmental problems. Related to this, their limited mobility outside the confines of their neighborhood meant that they engaged in daily strategy of maximizing gains while minimizing their exposure to these environmental risks. Understanding how they make sense of their environment and find meaning and support in their respective communities offer an alternative perspective.

This re-thinking of space production is a liberatory act from oppression and toward rights to clean air and water to ensure that all bodies, both human and more-than-human, have access to the same. McKittrick (2006) argues a similar sentiment for the integration of Black feminism and justice (p. 55-56):

If social displacements and reclamations help clarify the materiality of black lives, it follows that black feminism is also a

spatial project that works to rethink and spatialize structural inequalities…By insisting that black femininity is a location, their geographic politics reveal how racial-sexual displacements are experiential, historical, and specific to and among diverse black women…the 'where' of black femininity locates and demands all sorts of political positions and connections of spaces unheard, silenced, and erased.

Nxumalo and Cedillo (2017) mobilize Black feminist imaginaries to decolonize place-based education for youth of color. These authors argue for EE pedagogy that centers Indigenous space relations and stories of place that engages in "in-depth and non-appropriative ways, beyond consumptive relations with Indigenous knowledges, beyond static representations of Indigenous knowledges, and beyond understandings of Indigenous peoples as repositories of static forms of cultural knowledge" (p. 101). Many situated Indigenous knowledges are rooted in the intrinsic relationality of humans and more-than-humans within specific places. Karen Martin (2007) conceptualizes this relationality to encompass the complexities of relations to the Earth, cosmologies, living and non-living beings, and all other matter. This interconnectedness to spaces fosters ethical relationality with more-than-humans, where no hierarchical humanisms exist. This thinking of relationality to place creates spaces that are intrinsically storied and offer insights into re-thinking place-based education for the youth that decolonizes encounters with situated Indigenous place relations. These place relations are "diverse, specific, and un-generalizable," and seek to mobilize EE that is rooted in situated places. This decolonization of spaces in EE effectively dismantles the Eurocentric romanization of nature and childhood, and rather engages with situating, complicating, and politicizing spaces and allows for a critical investigation of places and place-based education (Nxumalo and Cedillo 2017).

Relational place-making and Blues geography

Within race and geography scholarship, place and material location are often conflated, obscuring the multiplicity of place-making and the simultaneously existing assemblages of spaces utilized in the construction of self. This way of thinking about place production views

place as a knowable location within which identity and spatial politics occur rather than a multitude of assemblages actively engaging in dialogue about place and racial identity (Allen, Lawhon, and Pierce 2018). Massey (2005) theorizes a socially constructed view of place that encompasses and embraces heterogeneity as it opens the possibility of the existence of multiplicity – of recognizing distinct trajectories. This conceptualization of place provides a foundation for understanding the politics of ever-changing place and identity formations. Allen, Lawhon, and Pierce (2018) mobilize this conceptualization which manifests place-making as the deep integration of the "social production of place and the social production of identity and involves this simultaneous production in a formal and informal politics" (p. 1010). Here, place-making is posited as a relational geographic process in which every body has the power and agency to participate in as they experience and become with the world (Country, et al. 2018).

A relational place-making approach to thinking about the production of place, can be utilized as an analytic of place and identity that centers Black radical geographic thought, visions, and practices to reclaim and remake space and society (Allen, Lawhon, and Pierce 2018). This relational place-making incorporates the physical and metaphysical elements of space and offers a spatial explanation that engages, enmeshes, and intertwines these two seeds to be planted within place production that can blossom into an understanding of how a multiplicity of modalities of "dissonant affective experiences and meaning-making simultaneously proceed in and with such spaces" (Allen, Lawhon, and Pierce 2018, p. 1011)

Clyde Woods (2007) makes an argument in the utmost importance of dismantling the human and non-human dualism under the understanding of a relational thought approach provided by Blues geography. Woods suggests that Blues geography demands an examination of distinct identities, relations, and knowledges based on the understanding of regional genealogies. Blues geographic thought explores place-based collective action that argues for a community-based production of place. This concept centers the creation and preservation of sacred communal places that is largely present in the production of Black space. These sacred communal places identify the relational ties that Black communities experience and hold across time and space and are significant in understanding Black bodies beyond their value as commodities or natural resources. The multiplicity of art forms of the Blues provides an

expression of Black genealogies and maps the social and physical relationships of Black bodies to nature and the environment (Woods 2007).

Leonard Henderson (2020) utilizes the Blues geographic thought to explore the social construction of race and nature and their entanglement with the process of ecological othering. As whiteness continually molds and shapes what counts as nature, and frames racialized others as producing space distinct from a "natural" innocence, a binary within imaginative geographies is created. At one end of this conception is the ideology of a white wilderness, untouched and pristine, and at the other end is the racialized urban spaces deemed by that same whiteness as dirty, corrupted, and dangerous. As a descendent of the Blues, the intersection of Hip-Hop and wilderness is utilized by Henderson to examine the assemblages of rhymes and beats that create the comfortable and seductive mnemonics of the white wilderness and the oppositional, resistant mnemonics of Hip-Hop and the urban city. Under the guide of white supremacy, these resistant mnemonics have been categorized as inappropriate in the white and innocent wilderness, effectively excluding Hip-Hop from "natural" spaces and ignoring the genealogy of the rhyme schemes of white supremacy and patriarchy that dominate a collective geographic imaginary. This exclusion of Hip-Hop has illuminated the social and governing technologies employed to sever relational ties that bodies experience in connection with nature within urban spaces. Henderson (2020) argues for a rethinking of the assemblages of rhymes and beats that create the mnemonics for a universal ecological knowledge and to consider being within a space as also being a part of a complex web of relations: "The city and the wilderness are different geographic spaces, but they are not antithetical or mutually exclusive, and our ecological ethics must reflect caring for both geographies" (p. 114). Giving agency to the mnemonics of Hip-Hop allows for the interrogation of each assemblage's modalities of power and how these differences in power modalities inform relationships between these two types of assemblages.

Woods (2007) often cites David Harvey in his discussion of new space creation as a means of achieving the production of Black radical space that centers a multiplicity of ecological knowledges and can dismantle hegemonic notions of space production and cultivate social relation changes. Woods frames the Blues tradition as a capturing of geographic wisdom and a

tool for analogic reasoning that, in the words of Harvey, provides an opportunity for geographic thought to function as a "Rosetta stone" within EE for youth of color. Black geographic wisdom not only strives to recognize Black agency, but also offers a transcriptive tool to rethink human and more-than-human relationships across time, space, and difference. Harvey's view of analogic reasoning is that of a tool to be made of use to mobilize Black geographic knowledges to humanistic and more-than-humanistic ends and away from purposes of domination, essentialism, and the human and non-human bifurcation and toward an understanding of a relational geographic process of producing space and place (Harvey 1996).

It may be concluded that a decolonized and relational approach to environmental education and place-based education cultivates imaginaries for Black childhoods in EE spaces. This possibility of radically differentiated space production centers Black and Indigenous radical traditions and space relations and recognizes Black and Indigenous agency in place-making. I have explored Black feminist geographic thought and Blues geographic thought to demonstrate the tight links between EE and relational values that advocate for dignity and equity and are resistant to the hegemonic notions of nature, human-nature relationships, and identity. Mobilizing this rethinking of space production allows for the imaginary of intentionally racialized spaces that counter essentialized and colonial imaginaries of racialized spaces and fosters resistant powers that are key to a Black sense of place.

Fugitivity and racial counterspaces

Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods both extensively discuss how colonial power has transcended time and space, but the use of Black geographic theory has demonstrated that colonial powers are limited when met with an oppositional power – the power of resistance. Resistant powers, and the experiences and knowledges they bring with them, are crucial in the creation of new spaces and space relations of both the physical and metaphysical kind. Ross (2020) describes this mode of producing Black space as *fugitive spaces* that promote the myriad of ways in which Black bodies practice "seeing one another, loving one another, and granting one another breathing room in a world where anti-Black racial violence is normalized and

asphyxiating" (Warren and Coles 2020). Fugitive spaces actively foster a multiplicity of trajectories and use resistance agency to create spaces that participate in a multiplicity of knowledge systems that effectively denounces the Eurocentric system of knowledge and dismantles the notion of Black placelessness. In this section, I engage with this emerging literature in the production of fugitive spaces to suggest a mobilization of these racial counterspaces that promote a rethinking of EE spaces as active participates in resisting anti-Black and colonial pedagogies and practices and cultivators of radical Black spaces that re-cognize Black agency in relational place-making.

The creation of resistant spaces lends agency to the dissociation of essentializing racial spaces and actively dismantles hegemonic knowledge systems. A pivotal example of this point can be found in W.E.B Du Bois's (1935) study of the Reconstruction period following the American Civil War. In this analysis, Du Bois proposes that this period be understood as an attempt at reconstruction of democracy, the democratic state, and the social relations of production and reproduction. As this unprecedented experiment in organizing human society revolved around the fulcrum of racialized economic formations in both the North and the South, Du Bois identifies this experiment as *Black Reconstruction*: "the true significance of slavery in the United States to the whole social development of America lay in the ultimate relation of slaves to democracy" (p. 13). The experiences held by Black bodies and the perspectives and knowledges they cultivate under enslavement and the transition to 'free labor', sharecropping, and the violent counter-attacks on reconstruction by white Southerners are integral parts – together composing a key piece – to creating new spaces that alleviate struggle and embrace social, political, and economic change. Under this development, Du Bois specifically calls for an examination of the experiences of the Black worker to provide the key to a revolution.

Cedric Robinson (1983) forms a similar argument in the creation of Black radical spaces. Robinson uses Black radical tradition as a power of resistance to dismantle hegemonic systems through "continuing development of a collective of consciousness informed by the historical struggles for liberation and motivated by the shared sense of obligation to preserve the collective being, the ontological totality" (p. 171). Robinson proposes the use of historical

traditions, tracing Black radical traditions – traditions that make visible the relations that exist between Black bodies and the physical and metaphysical worlds – to support the power that emanates from resistance and its ability to create new space with an open future of multiple trajectories.

When mobilized, this production of Black radical spaces not only makes visible Black agency in the production of space, but also makes evident the deeply entrenched past, present, and future relations between Black bodies and the physical and metaphysical worlds. This mode of producing space creates racial counterspaces of relationality that advocate for a socio-spatial imagining of oppressions that are non-linear and non-vertical and have agency as liberatory acts in the form of disobedience. Gilmore (2002) analyzes race, space, and power to conclude that "a geographic imperative lies at the heart of every struggle for social justice; if justice is embodied; it is then therefore always spatial, which is to say, part of a process of making a place" (p. 16).

McKittrick and Woods (2007) advocate for this practice of producing radical Black space (p. 5):

> Insert black geographies into our worldview and our understanding of spatial liberation and other emancipatory strategies can perhaps move us away from territoriality, the normative practices of staking claim to place…those who 'no one knows' might also be a map towards a new or different perspective on the production of space.

Fugitive geographic thought presents a conceptualization of space production that intentionally situates Black radical knowledges and radical traditions and recognizes Black agency in the production of space and relational place-making. These fugitive spaces actively realign power modalities and systems of place by limiting colonial control and centering Black space relations. Integrating fugitive spaces within educational spaces allows for differentiated social production of space that recognizes Black bodies' resistance power to "the gratuitous violence of the afterlife of school segregation" (Ross 2020). When fugitive geographic thought is mobilized to create radical racial counterspaces within EE pedagogies and practices Black radical educational spaces are created that humanize youth of color and give youth of color

power within that space to decenter traditional Eurocentric norms for what counts as knowledge.

Discussion

I have demonstrated here that engaging with Black feminist thought, Blues geographic thought, and relationality, we can begin to conceptualize a decolonized and relational environmental education pedagogy that centers Black and Indigenous radical knowledges and traditions, that humanizes Black and Indigenous bodies, that recognizes Black and Indigenous agency in place-making, that de-essentializes Black and Indigenous intellect, childhoods, and urban places, and that intentionally produces educational spaces with and for youth of color. These Black educational spaces (BES) – these fugitive spaces – reimagine the boundaries of race performance and are liberating in action. Warren and Coles (2020) theorize three dimensions of BES that facilitate self-determination, champion self-actualization, and encourages self-efficacy.

Self-determination

This dimension of BES centers on setting forth authority, or power, of space to youth of color, recognizing the agency of youth's autonomy in decision-making about who they might become (Warren and Coles 2020) and who or what they might become with in the future (Country et al. 2016). BES encourages youth of color to exercise this agency in determining their truths and their desired end. Love (2017) defined this utilization of agency as bestowing affordance to youth of color in redefining and reimaging space production away from Eurocentric ideologies, knowledges, and normatives. The mobilization of BES might inspire youth of color to "dream out loud, by participating in a meaning making process with others where they are free to practice exercising sovereignty over the direction(s) their lives will take" (Warren and Coles 2020, p. 8). It is critical within these Black radical spaces that the needs of youth of color are met with unconditional support by educators of color whose role is to stimulate students' critical thinking about relations between and among the human world and the more-than-human world and the agency of humans within those relations – effectively

teaching youth of color to imagine a world they want to live in more than simply fitting into a world already created for them (Warren and Coles 2020).

Self-actualization

This second dimension of BES centers on championing intersectionality and bold and unique self-expression. These Black radical spaces should provide and build capacity for youth of color to realize their desires, the possibilities of all things they can accomplish, and the possibilities of all identities they can encompass. Warren and Coles (2020) argues for BES that are radically inclusive and that foster free expression of all dimensions of a student's humanity (p. 9):

> This means, for example, shunning the tendency of black male educators and scholars to erase or undermine black women and girls' contributions to the learning environment or diminish the unique social needs of black queer and gender fluid youth. BES must make room for black, trans people to be unapologetically trans, or for black Muslims to be unapologetically Muslim, based primarily on the definitions of queerness and religion or spirituality that compliment visions of the future for which they strive.

Self-efficacy

This third dimension of BES centers on a mobilization of spaces that are unfaltering in the recognition that youth of color never need to dissociate from, or compromise, any aspects of their identities or relations to achieve success. These Black radical spaces should aid in the cultivation of confidence in youth of color of their inherent ability to overcome obstacles and to fulfill all desires for a life they want to live (Warren and Coles 2020). Booker T. Washington and George Washington Carver would here concur with an ideology of BES to function as liberatory acts that attend to the entire well-being of each student and inspire a positive self-concept (White 2018). "Self-efficacy is a necessary component of black freedom, and young people do not achieve self-efficacy without having a very positive self-concept, which centers on one's

deep conviction that they are, for example, beautiful, smart, and capable" (Warren and Coles 2020, p. 9).

The conceptualization of BES can, and should be, mobilized to create radical racial counterspaces within EE pedagogies and practices. In fact, attempts have been and are being made to enmesh these Black racial spaces with EE spaces. In what follows, I will explore two case studies that work to mobilize radically differentiated EE spaces. I do not here contend to delineate specifics of a decolonized relational EE pedagogy, but rather I contend to examine some foundational ideas and concepts upon which the practice of EE is being and can be explored.

A critical urban environmental pedagogy: using participatory methodologies to investigate local places

Bellino and Adams (2017) developed an EE practice framed by critical pedagogy and participatory methodologies that they term critical urban environmental pedagogy (CUEP). Within this EE practice, New York students were introduced to neoliberal rhetoric that influences current political, economic, and social context of lived experiences and were exposed to a variety of texts that would work to stimulate critical conversations concerning the connections between their personal life experiences and larger institutional and systemic issues. Groups of these students were charged with investigating their own neighborhoods through a photovoice participatory methodology to deepen their knowledge about their personal and unique political and economic identities, and their own social relations, in context to understanding the existence of differing political and economic identities and social relations. This CUEP practice effectively politicized and unsettled place, prompting students to question the distribution of power modalities across place. However, this pedagogy did little in the way of decolonizing and unsettling space production and failed to make relational connections to the physical and metaphysical roots of growing radically differentiated spaces. While the CUEP practice allowed students to locate their economic and political identities and social positions, it did so in a way that only supported those identities and relations that are

pre-determined, effectively objectifying and essentializing bodies within racialized places. Here, intentionality was lost in the absence of producing specific racialized spaces and students were stripped of the opportunity toward autonomy and to explore self-sovereignty over the direction(s) of their own lives. This practice effectively reduced the agency of youth of color in relational place-making. More intensely, the CUEP practice actively works against the caution of Katherine McKittrick (2011), by creating a pedagogy focused on "areas plagued by poverty and urban blight" (p. 279). Although students are able to construct a social nature concept, they are prevented from exploring the radical knowledges and traditions that humanize racial space production and inhibited from exploring communal spaces and collective action that Black feminist geographies and Blues geographies champion for in cultivating differentiated imaginaries of a world that bodies of color want to live in (Woods 2007; Martin 2007; Katherine McKittrick 2011; Nxumalo and Ross 2019; Ross 2020; Henderson 2020; Warren and Coles 2020). Bellino and Adams (2017) expose students to different lived experiences and create an educational space that recognizes youth agency by centering youth knowledge. Their CUEP is also effective in allowing students to think critically about place-making and the political and economic ethics that are involved. However, their argument fails to center specific racialized knowledges and traditions, thus effectively reducing the recognition of the agency of youth of color and ultimately halting the production of BES.

Grow Dat: Learning and healing from participating in an ongoing series of history of the land

Grow Dat Youth Farm offers an example of a radically differentiated space production and attempts to produce an intentionally intersectional – racialized, classed, gendered, and expressive – space to engage a diverse grouping of young people and staff in historical field trips, agricultural workshops, and exploration of the relational biography in New Orleans, Louisiana. Much like Washington's Tuskegee, at Grow Dat, students are educated in land histories, the genealogy of radical agricultural traditions, and are even educated in agricultural strategies of self-sufficiency and community sustainability. Brown et al. (2020) argues that this critical land histories pedagogical approach is essential in EE for youth of color to understand

the spatial and social configurations of places, particularly of foodscapes. This pedagogical lens is what Brown et al. (2020) calls History of the Land, and within this EE practice small groups of students are provided a collage of historical images of the land on which the farm is situated and are tasked with chronologically ordering the images to reveal the genealogy of lived experiences of a multiplicity of bodies and of collective communities in relation to the land. This land curriculum presents land as intrinsically storied and centers racial histories that unsettle place and challenge histories of settler colonialism, effectively recognizing Black and Indigenous agency in relational place-making. Students continue within the practice by touring the historical sites from the images on the farm, visiting a site that evokes each period of time that was previously identified. Students explore Black radical traditions, particularly Black agricultural traditions that are in relation with the history and becoming of the land at the same time they examine the racial violences of a plantation history and a history of dispossession of Indigenous land. In cooperation with Katherine McKittrick's caution, a History of the Land pedagogy avoids essentializing Black bodies by contextualizing contemporary racial violences among stories of traditions, racial knowledges, and resistance. This pedagogy effectively decolonizes places and intentionally produces racialized spaces – fugitive spaces – that situates Black and Indigenous radical knowledges and traditions. This EE practice ends with dialogue centered on youth imagination. Here students are asked to think of how the Grow Dat land should be used – providing students the opportunity to openly imagine a future they want to live and become in and who and what they want to become with. The History of the Land pedagogy recognizes youth autonomy in decision-making and youth agency in relational place-making. This radical rethinking of space production and place-making invokes inclusive knowledge participation that emphasizes that everyone deserves a seat at the table when we imagine new and intentional space production and when we mobilize this radical space production to recognize agency in knowledge and traditions that "count" in place-making (Brown et al. 2020).

Conclusion

To conceptualize a decolonized relational EE pedagogy, is to cultivate imaginaries of de-essentialized Black childhoods in anti-colonial and resistant EE spaces. I have explored Black feminism and Blues geographies to center Black and Indigenous radical knowledges, traditions, and other modes of resistance, making visible the power and agency that Black and Indigenous bodies hold in place-making through relations with the physical and metaphysical components of space. Mobilizing Black feminist thought and Blues geographic thought, an imaginary of radically differentiated space production is possible. There is real opportunity to produce these intentionally racialized spaces – fugitive spaces – to counter, resistant, and dismantle hegemonic, Eurocentric, and colonial knowledges, imaginaries, and absolute truths. In this perspective, fugitive spaces become modes of imagining Black EE futurities that respond to the realities of Eurocentric colonialism and anti-Blackness in the afterlife of school segregation (Nxumalo and Ross 2019). Black fugitive EE spaces explore the ways in which youth of color and environmental educators mobilize EE fugitivity through radical relationality that centers, affirms, and values Black life. In imagining these relational spaces that allow for the production of BES in EE for youth of color, youth knowledge and lived experience is centered – recognizing the multiplicity of agencies, the multiplicity of relations with the physical and metaphysical, and the multiplicity of identities that exist in and become with the world. This purposeful and vigorous decentering of Eurocentric, Anthropogenic, humanistic, and colonial envisions and narratives of Black spaces makes possible the re-envisioning of a world of collective spaces where youth of color and educators resist anti-Blackness and racial erasure in EE and center the historical, contemporary, and futuristic Black radical relationality to the environment (Nxumalo and Ross 2019).

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