Making Sense of Place: Place Anchors and Educational Potentials

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Abstract
Place is often seen as a location of meaning. But whose meaning fills the location? Who defines meaning? What kind of meaning do we seek? These questions inadvertently call on place-based education to reflect on the often-unexamined meaning of place prevailing in the field. This paper draws substantially on the work of critical feminist geographies and the author's own experience as a transient woman of colour to explore the diverse thoughts on and framing of place and to reveal how place is conceived, perceived, and lived through interrelated place anchors*. The paper proposes this framework of place anchors in hopes that educators will have an entry point to critically reflect on and understand place as they/we engage in various place pedagogies.*

Résumé
On considère souvent les lieux comme chargés de sens. Mais pour qui le sont-ils? Qui définit ce sens? Quel sens y cherche-t-on en particulier? Ces questions nous portent incidemment à pousser notre réflexion sur le sens à donner à la notion de « lieu » en éducation axée sur le lieu, une dimension souvent oubliée. Dans cet article, l'auteure, éclairée surtout par les travaux de géographes féministes critiques et par sa propre expérience de migrante et femme de couleur, explore différentes réflexions et conceptions concernant la notion de « lieu ». Elle explique également comment un lieu est créé, perçu et vécu à travers des points d'ancrage interreliés. Ce concept de points d'ancrage est proposé en vue d'offrir aux éducateurs un point de départ pour entreprendre une réflexion critique et mieux comprendre l'idée de « lieu » lorsqu'ils recourent à diverses approches pédagogiques axées sur le lieu.

Keywords: place, place-based education, place anchors, critical feminist geography, decolonization

Mots-clés : lieu, éducation axée sur le lieu, points d'ancrage, géographie féministe critique, décolonisation

> "I have been working to change the way I speak and write, to incorporate in the manner of telling a sense of place, of not just who I am in the present but where I am coming from, the multiple voices within me. I have confronted silence, inarticulateness. When I say, then, that these words emerge from suffering, I refer to that personal struggle to name that location from which I come to voice—that space of my theorizing."
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> bell hooks, *Yearning*, 1990

> "Just as none of us is beyond geography, none of us is completely free from the struggle over geography."
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> — Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, 1993

Introduction

Reflecting back, I seem to have searched for "place" my whole life as a transient body drifting from place to place. I struggle to "name the location from which I come to … the multiple voices within me" (hooks, 1990, p. 146). Like bell hooks, I continue to face and learn from the silences and inarticulateness of my sense of place. The presence of my deeply held emplaced experiences became clear to me when I returned to Belize, where I spent my teenage years and young adulthood, for the first time after living in Canada for two years. Waking up to the sunrise, I put on a tank top and shorts and roamed the sandy beach while shooing the iguanas, comfortably covered in sweat. When I came across a pier, I jumped without hesitation, knowing feelingly I would immediately float back on the salty Caribbean Sea.

Living in Belize is not always sunshine. I faced constant discrimination and potential harassment for being an East Asian woman, who is also privileged in many ways. But, I am used to that positionality—everything is so upfront, so "in your face" (sometimes literally). I know which neighbourhoods are not suitable for a *chiney gial* but also where I can get homemade Taiwanese noodles. I know which plants might kill me and which can get rid of diarrhea. At the same time, in returning, I also realized how unfamiliar I am with this place. As an immigrant, Belize was what my mother called "a jumping board" to the "American Dream." We had never consciously cultivated a connection with the place.

Therefore, in order to speak about "place," I must also articulate "placelessness"—not only in the sense of increased globalization, immigration, or ecological sadness, but also in terms of being "out of place" (McKittrick, 2006, p. xv), one of being on the "margins" (hooks, 1990; Smith, 1999). Here, I reject the "marginality … imposed by oppressive structures" (p. 153) and assert that the margins are a "place" of resistance and "radical openness and possibility" (p. 153). I speak both from the margins and from multiple levels of privileged status, such as mobility, academia, settler, and class.

I hope by the end of this paper we will come to realize that when we invoke "place," we also awaken a muddy and interwoven collection of phenomena, power, and deeply lived relations and experiences (Reid, 2008). In this time of social and ecological unrest enabled by the rapid globalization of Western hegemony, capitalism, and colonial mindsets, it is even more imperative for us to pay attention to "place" and its divergent meanings, implications, and educational opportunities. In her examination of globalization and uneven development through the perspectives of youths from Eastern Sudan and Harlem, Cindi Katz (2004) observes that global changes might be seen to have

homogenizing effects but the consequences are place-specific. Paying attention to place, to "situated knowledge" (Harraway, 1988), means rejecting the myth of the "single story" (Adichie, 2009).

"Place" is a tricky word. In Mandarin, we describe a word like "place" as *Wang wen zheng yi* (望文生義)—the meaning of the word emerges as you look upon it. It seems to speak for itself. This makes talking about place difficult. On one hand, we all have a sense of what place is, but on the other hand, we are confined by the feeling associated with this "common sense." Geographer Tim Cresswell (2004) points out that a common definition of place is "a meaningful location" (p.7)—a location full of meanings. But whose meaning fills the location? Who defines the meaning? What kind of meaning are we seeking? If there is no meaning for me, does the place cease to be a place? These questions inadvertently point out the trouble with place and place-based movements, and in this case, they specifically call on place-based education to reflect more deeply on the meaning of place.

Over the past two decades, place has garnered increased attention in education (see Smith, 2002; Sobel, 2004; Gruenewald & Smith, 2014; Wattchow & Brown, 2011; Simpson, 2014; Tuck et al., 2014). Place-based education has become an educational movement that responds to "the isolation of schooling's discourses and practices from the living world outside the increasingly placeless institution of schooling" (Gruenewald, 2003, p. 620). As a pedagogical and curricular approach, place-based education centres the local community and provides an open exploration of current social and ecological issues (Sugg, 2013). It can take on a variety of different forms (Sobel, 2004; Smith, 2002). A common thread in the theorizations of place-based education has been to address the alienating nature of a highly globalized and increasingly homogenized world that dilutes relationships to place or the "commons" (Theobald, 1997; Bowers, 2006). However, the sole focus on local community has been critiqued as forwarding a nostalgic and falsely positive notion of community (Nespor, 2008) and promoting a form of isolationism that prevents a critical understanding of larger regional and global issues (Derby et al., 2015; Nespor, 2008; Webber, 2017).

David Greunewald (now known as Greenwood) (2003) synthesizes the fields of critical pedagogy and place-based education, calling for a "critical pedagogy of place." In doing this, he recognizes that social justice and ecological justice are interconnected. Greunewald (2003) posits, "…the two most significant intersections between these traditions are place-based education's call for localized social action and critical pedagogy's recognition that experience…has a geographical dimension" (p. 317). In critical pedagogy of place, Greunewald proposes that decolonization and reinhabitation are two interrelated objectives for the purpose of connecting local and place-based experiences to the larger social, cultural, and ecological scene. Greunewald's critical pedagogy of place has stirred up different voices contesting and reaffirming his concepts surrounding issues

of de/colonization, reconciliation, revitalization, and reinhabitation of place.[1]

Although critical pedagogy of place has provided a ground to address the interconnected issues of environment, social justice, and education, many Indigenous scholars have critiqued the use of the word decolonization as a metaphor (Tuck & Yang, 2012; Tuck et al., 2014). Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2012) contend that there has been a trend in education to replace social justice discourse with decolonization discourse without acknowledging that decolonization wants something different than other forms of justice. When decolonization is used as a metaphor, it undermines the possibility of decolonial work. It also re-centres whiteness and settler colonialism, which requires a specific set of relations to place. As we engage with place in our pedagogy, we need to pay special attention to the "colonial apparatus that is assembled to re/order the relationships between particular peoples, lands, the natural world, and civilization" (Tuck & Yang, 2012, p. 21). Without the attempt to acknowledge the colonial past and present of particular places, "place-based and broader environmental education literature has replicated some of the very problematic assumptions and imperatives of settler colonialism" (Tuck et al., 2014, p. 15). Therefore, it is crucial to bring in the theorizations and perspectives of land pedagogies as they offer important parallels and critiques to place-based education (Tuck et al., 2014, Paperson, 2014; Bang et al., 2014; Simpson, 2014).

It is clear that there are contested conceptualizations and framings of place that are often shaped by different situatedness and positionalities. Although centring place in education poses a challenge to the current system of schooling—one which acts as an apparatus of dominant oppressive systems, without critical reflection on the meaning and existing conceptualizations of place, educators run the risk of turning place into another oppressive tool. In this paper, I follow the critical and feminist traditions as I explore the diverse thought and framing of place through various trajectories inside and outside of education to reveal how place is conceived, perceived, and lived through interrelated *place anchors* that define and are defined by our multiple situatedness, understandings, and relationships to place. My hope is that this framework of place anchors will open a conversation and provide educators entry points to reflect and engage with place and place pedagogies critically.

Place Anchors

Sitting on the freshly-cut grass, the hot June sun shines on my back like a warm hug. Settled under a luscious evergreen in "Clinton Park" on the unceded traditional land of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Se'líl,wetaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh), and Skwxwú7mesh Úxwumixw (Squamish) peoples, I hear birds chirping amidst the trees, groups of flies intertwined in each other's flight tracks, young folks challenging each other in basketball games, and children immersing themselves in worlds of imagination. To my right, a group of Chinese

Da Ma dance in unison to retro Chinese pop songs that are all too familiar to me. I can't help but remember dancing with my *Nai-Nai*, learning all the songs that were not completely appropriate for a 7-year-old at the time. I notice that a South Asian lady follows the group of *Da Ma*, remaining in the back. In the midst of the Chinese tunes, I hear a mandolin playing. Turning around, I watch as two South Asian kids sheepishly approach the mandolin player. As the player serenades them, they struggle to teach him their names. All of a sudden, a small furball of a puppy darts through my legs. Swooping in just before the puppy releases its bladder, its owner apologizes and whisks it away.

Just being in the park for an afternoon, this place seems to give me an informal introduction about itself—its colonial past and present, immigration and mobility, exclusion and inclusion, relationships to the other-than-human, and the provoked imaginations and memories. As Philosopher Edward Casey (2009a) explains, "Place is integral to the everyday life-world" (p. xxi). It is not only the "concrete basis of location, inhabitation, and orientation" (Casey, 2009a, p. xxi), but it is also made up of the social, cultural, historical, political, and ecological relations that humans and the more-than-human bring with them.

The following sections will discuss in-depth five distinct place anchors, namely space, land, mobility, power, and memory. They are what situate us in the intersecting identities of place, telling us more about ourselves and the world we inhabit. It is important not to equate "anchoring" to "belonging" or permanence. To be anchored in a place does not always mean belonging, but these anchors may help us understand how our relationship to place and our experiences and perceptions can be enabled, shaped, and/or limited. One should note that these anchors do not exist as discrete fragments. In fact, they exist and work contingently in tandem.

In each section, I hope to show that the anchors are necessary elements to be examined, understood, and explored in order to look beyond the normative or established notion of a place. These anchors can act as channels to the margin and the nuanced voices within it. Each section will highlight examples from activists, writers, and scholars of colour, all from different geographical locations and backgrounds, on how they themselves experience and are empowered by their own particular situatedness. Moreover, this list of place anchors is by no means exhaustive. Yet, I believe this preliminary list offers important considerations for our historical moment. Also, on a personal level, what I present here represents a predisposition I have as I try to make sense of my own relationship to place.

Place Anchor #1: Space

Grasping the relationship between space and place is quite a complex task. Traditionally in the social sciences and humanities, place has been relegated to the background (Basso, 1996; Casey, 2009a; Cresswell, 2004; Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). Edward Casey (2009a) points out, "Philosophers have acted … as if place were a mere annex of space or something subordinate to time or history"

(p. xxi). This “temporocentrist” reduction creates an illusion that there is only one linear narrative and that this is the trajectory all must follow. Challenging this view comes with a wave of new critical inquiry on place and space and its relation to social relations and meaning making—a spatial turn that has made a splash in various areas (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Casey, 1993; Soja, 2010). “At the heart of this turn has been a recognition of the formative presence of place in people’s lives and thoughts” (Casey, 1993, p.xxi) and a “diffusion of critical spatial thinking” (Soja, 2010, p. 13) that probes feminist geographer Doreen Massey’s questions: “What if we refuse to convene space into time? What if we open up the imagination of the single narrative to give space (literally) for a multiplicity of trajectories?” (1994, p. 5).

Space, conventionally, is thought of as a more abstract concept than place (Cresswell, 2004). Human geographer Yi-Fu Tuan equates space to movement and place to “pause” within the flow of movements (Tuan, 1977). However, this dichotomization of space and place presents a danger of reducing the dynamic and complex interconnection between the two and overlooks the never-ending, power-laced process that is spatialization (Massey, 1994). If space is only imagined as “something to be crossed and maybe conquered … [this] can lead us to conceive of other places, peoples, cultures simply as phenomena ‘on’ this surface … deprived of histories” (Massey, 2005, p. 4). Therefore, place is paradoxically a pause and simultaneously an ever-changing process. To consider place in this way, I now turn to critical and feminist geographies.

Massey explains that one result of modernity is the apparent separation of space and place. Therefore, instead of holding onto the view of place as stagnant, it is imperative to “rethink the unity of space and place in different terms, thereby conceptually confronting in a constructive way this changed state of the world” (p. 13). For Massey, space must be conceptualized with time, in “space-time” (p. 3). Space is not a completely independent entity but is “constructed out of social relations: that what is at issue is not social phenomena in space but both social phenomena and space as constituted out of social relations, that the spatial is social relations ‘stretched out’” (p. 4). As social relations are complex and dynamic, space-time as a composition of social relations is inherently dynamic and deeply lived. As a result, “the spatial organization of society, in other words, is integral to the production of the social, and not merely its result. It is fully implicated in both history and politics” (p. 4).

Similarly, Henri Lefebvre (1991) argues that space is not a *tabula rasa*. Rather, space is a “social morphology” that is both produced by and productive of social interaction and lived experience (Lefebvre, 1991; Ford, 2017). In this theorization, through the production and productivity of space, Lefebvre aims to unite its physical, mental, and social aspects (p. 11–12). In doing so, he demonstrates multiple trajectories of how space is conceived, and he contends that it is necessary to rethink our conception of space and our relationship to it as lived, practiced, and inhabited. He warns:

> To picture space as a "frame" or container into which nothing can be put unless it is smaller than the recipient, and to imagine that this container has no other purpose than to preserve what has been put in it—this is probably the initial error. But is it error, or is it ideology? The latter, more than likely. If so, who promotes it? Who exploits it? And why and how do they do so? (p. 94)

Building on this, Edward Soja (1996, 1999) develops "trialectics of spatiality"[2] to define what he calls "thirdspace." Thirdspace rejects the dualism of conceived (material) and perceived (mental) space, or what Soja refers to as firstspace and secondspace, in order to enter the lived space. He argues that thirdspace (lived space) is integral to the trialectics of spatiality, and that this truly accounts for the production and experience of space, serving as a meeting place for fostering collective political action.

bell hooks (2009) expands our understanding of thirdspace by sharing her own lived experiences as a black woman in the United States. Her stories are imbued with deeply emplaced experiences entangled with struggles, negotiations, celebrations, and radical political openings that deal with intersecting axes of oppression. For her, "Spaces can be real and imagined. Spaces can tell stories and unfold histories. Spaces can be interrupted, appropriated, and transformed through artistic and literary practice.... The appropriation and use of space are political acts" (p. 152–153). Her essay, "A Place the Soul Can Rest" (p. 143–152), presents a demonstration of thirdspace. In it, she describes the importance of porches to black women living in the South. The porch is a place of shelter from patriarchy and a place signifying living without shame in the segregated South, where racism works to make black people into objects. Gathering on the porch, the women care for and celebrate each other and continue to resist the dehumanizing impact of racism and sexism.

Understanding space as lived and formed out of interwoven relationships is useful not only because it gives a radical opening to marginalized voices and positionalities but also because it situates one's relationship to space and place in the profoundly embodied and emotional. In this way, educators can challenge the predominant conceptualization of place and look for meaning in spaces that are often overlooked. If space is seen as "a simultaneity of stories-so-far," then place becomes "collections of those stories, articulations within wider power-geometries of space" (Massey, 2005, p. 130). All the intersecting as well as the fragmented and disjointed characteristics add to the specificity of place.

Place Anchor #2: Land

As we journey deeper into place, I should clarify that when I say place, I do not mean only that which is situated in the abstraction of sociality but also that which is anchored in the physical and tangible *land*. Before venturing forth in our discussion of land as a place anchor, we must first recognize that to understand the relationship between place and land, it is crucial to take up the project

of decolonization (Smith, 2008 Tuck & McKenzie, 2015). For me, decolonization concerns multiple positionalities from the particular historicities and perspectives of Indigenous Peoples and people of colour. Decolonization is an active move away from the settler colonialism of nations such as Canada, the United States, and Australia, to name a few. It is also a rejection of colonialism as a mindset of globalization and Western hegemony.

Land is at the centre of the colonial narrative as *terra nullius* that is always up for grabs. La Paperson (2014) writes:

> Land is a predominant concern in settler colonialism, and thus, people are arranged—raced, classed, gendered, sexualized, dis/abled, il/legalized—into triadic relations to land: the settler whose power lies in shaping the land into his wealth, the Indigenous inhabitant whose claim to land must be extinguished, and the chattel slave who must be kept landless. (p. 116)

It is a complex and unsettling task to peel through the layers of the "colonialist consciousness" (Grande, 2004, p. 69); however, it is absolutely necessary as it is entangled with our understanding of place and land. I want to recognize that Indigenous perspectives need to be at the centre of the decolonial imagination. Simultaneously, this imagination must be informed by a "cartography of struggle" (Mohanty, 2003)[4] made up of subaltern voices. Here, I say decolonial "imagination" not because it is somehow "unreal" but rather because, borrowing from Mohanty (2003), the "imagined" suggests "potential alliances and collaborations across divisive boundaries, and community … a deep commitment to 'horizontal comradeship'" (p. 46)—it means breaking the borders of the Western colonial logic and enabling cross-struggle solidarity. Without taking this into account, our projects of decolonization are merely "metaphors" (Tuck & Yang, 2012) that run the danger of recentring whiteness and settler futurity (Tuck & Yang, 2012). Therefore, to talk about place, rather a decolonizing perspective of place, we must situate ourselves in the concrete understanding of the land.

Marking the differences between Western conceptualizations of place and Indigenous understandings of land, Eve Tuck and Marcia McKenzie (2015), writing alongside perspectives of Indigenous scholars, explain that land refers not to only its materiality but also to the relational, spiritual, intellectual, and emotional (p. 57). Therefore, land is "instructive" (Basso, 1996) in that it holds personal and intergenerational memory. Furthermore, a land-based paradigm also indicates a move away from the anthropocentric notion of place, which centres the individual human, and toward a prioritization of land that centres the natural whole—"Land is both people and place" (Paperson, 2014, p. 124). One should note, however, that Indigenous perspectives and relationships to land are diverse and cannot be generalized (Cajete, 1994; Lowan, 2009; Tuck et al., 2014).

Martinican scholar Eduardo Glissant (1989) demonstrates the inseparable relationship between people, place, and land within the struggle of the Caribbean

peoples against the insatiable hunger of colonialism. He remarks, "one of the most pernicious forms of colonization [is] the one by means of which a community becomes assimilated … making strangers out of people who are not" (p. 5). But through "poetics of landscape" (McKittrick, 2006), Glissant brings geographic expressions into life: Although within the landscape there is the painful past and present reality of colonialism and continuous assimilation, there is also incessant resistance. In this way "our landscape," he writes, "is its own monument: its meaning can only be traced on the underside" (p. 11).

Anchoring place in land anchors us in the lived. Land is not just a site upon which history is made, it is the existence of both human and the more-than-human. It is a "bearer of memory" and a "resistance to a conception of fixed space" (Paperson, 2014, p. 127). Pedagogically, centring land unseats the teacher as the sole knowledge holder and necessitates teaching on respect, responsibilities, and flourishing of all living beings.

Place Anchor #3: Mobility

We live in a world of ever-increasing connection across distances. This acceleration of "time-space compression" (Massey, 1999) has led to what some have perceived as the "erosion of place" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 43). Local places gradually detach from what is seen as the particularity of locality. The meanings that provide a sense of attachment to places are being erased.

Human geographer Edward Relph (1976) warned of the danger of the loss of place well before today's global homogenization. He argues that "mass culture" is marked by a creeping "placelessness" due to growing mobility, leading to a lack of authentic relationships to place and to the risk of becoming an "existential insider" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 44). Relph stresses "authenticity," following Heidegger's concept of "dwelling." Seen as a form of existence, "authenticity consists of a complete awareness and acceptance of responsibility for your own existence" (Relph, 1976, p. 78). To have an authentic relationship to place, one needs to be inside it. To identify more strongly with a place is to be more "profoundly inside" (p. 49).

Similarly, anthropologist Marc Augé (1995) contends that one of the extreme changes caused by "supermodernity" is the replacement of place by "non-places," locations "surrendered to solitary individuality, to the fleeting, the temporary and ephemeral" (p. 78). These are places of transience dominated by mobility. In these, flows of movement and transactions are made among anonymous individuals, often reduced to an "identification number'—a PIN or passport number. An obvious example is the airport. Such a location is an "unrooted place marked by mobility and travel" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 46). Travellers interact with airline staff and customs officials who do not see them as people but as an "anonymized flow-through" (McDowell, 1999, p. 6). Geographer, Linda McDowell (1999), takes up the idea of "non-place" and ponders that "in non-places, therefore, gendered attributes and perhaps even our sexed

bodies become unimportant, opening up a paradoxical space of control and liberation" (p. 6).

However, women and people of colour have constantly been victims of racial profiling and denial of access—this has been the case since before Trump's refugee ban. In "non-places," people do not cease to be "sexed bodies" and racialized beings. To suggest that one might be able to peel away the categorizations imposed by a system of control in a "non-place" is to commit to the reductionist "white feminist" mindset, thus revealing the danger of assigning place the status of "non-place." It is important when we take up the issue of "place" that we use a lens of intersectionality and hold that our intersectional identities intermingle with place and cannot be separated. There is a danger in seeing increased mobility as merely eating up places and spitting out non-places with no consideration of how global flows of people and capital are shaped by local histories of exclusion and marginalization. Place is created mutually by dynamics of race, gender, class, sexuality, and ability. Dolores Hayden posits, "speaking critically of bad places is more effective than dismissing them as places" (Hayden, 1997, p. 18, as cited in Nespor, 2008, p. 481). This is not to dismiss Relph and Augé's critiques but rather to point out the danger of reducing place to a dichotomy of place and non-place/placelessness. This binary "turns complex, changing relations into discrete states, chops gradients into well-bounded regions, and obscures the critical questions of how places are constituted and connected to one another" (Nespor, 2008, p. 481).

Massey (1994) probes the possibility of a different sense of place, one she calls "a global sense of place," proposing a conceptualization of place as open, fluid, and interconnected. Asserting that mobility is an integral part of place, Massey challenges the seemingly neutral meaning of place that tends to get clung onto in the era of time-space compression, of rapid globalization. Time-space compression describes a speeding and spreading of movement, communication, and sociality, and it can be argued that local communities and places are increasingly "homogenizing" or arguably, for some places, "diversifying," generating feelings of panic and vulnerability over losing a sense of locality. Consequently, this feeling of vulnerability has led to seeking for a sense of place that is necessarily reactionary (Massey, 1994, p. 147). On one hand, people turn to a reductionist view of history to establish a "rootedness," based on the "authentic" (using Relph's word) meaning of place, in order to secure a strong sense of place and locality of fixed identity. In this reading, place becomes exclusive, creating "us" and "them." On the other hand, many reject the idea of place and spatiality. In their view, place represents an escape from the "great" progress of the world. In both cases, place and space are seen as static, fixed, and reactionary, hierarchizing time as flow and progress.

Massey strongly condemns this notion as it assigns place a single essentialized identity, asserting that place derives from internalized and exclusionary origins. This understanding easily leads to a "problematical sense of place, from

reactionary nationalism, to competitive localisms, to introverted obsession with 'heritage'" (p. 151). Instead, Massey argues that what gives place its uniqueness is "the fact that it is constructed out of a particular constellation of social relations.... It is, indeed, a meeting place" (p. 154). Therefore, place can be imagined as different moments in an interwoven net of social relations. And this is what allows a sense of place that is "extroverted, which includes a consciousness of its links with the wider world, which integrates in a positive way the global and the local" (p. 154).

Nevertheless, with this view of place as "routes rather than roots" (Cresswell, 2004, p. 53) comes the question of what rootedness and authenticity are, especially for those who experience the global flow of movement as an oppressive force. Here I challenge the fluid and open view of place advocated by Massey. Who can afford to embrace this fluidity and uprootedness? Whose sense of or relationship to place is marginalized and denied? To engage in this important discussion, I will problematize the idea of mobility and its entanglements with privilege. In fact, Massey herself has done such a reflection. She reveals that the current characterization of time-space compression represents a Western and colonial perspective. Through the colonial apparatus, hierarchized power is integral to the movement and flow of people. It is crucial that when we think of mobility in this era of time-space compression, we examine the intricately layered power and privilege present in one's ability to move or not move around places. In considering this question, we should take into account theorizations from various situated subjectivities. bell hooks (2009) uses "journeying" to represent mobility and to challenge "the hegemony of one experience of travel" (p. 101). She urges that there is a need to theorize divergent ways of "journeying" that is "associated with different headings—rites of passage, immigration, enforced migration, relocation, enslavement, and homelessness" (p. 100)—in order to understand "politics of location" (p. 100). In many cases, for people of colour "to travel is to encounter the terrorizing force of white supremacy" (p. 101).

More, queer travel writer and activist Bani Amor (2017) points out that the mainstream understanding (obsession) of travelling/tourism is a form of colonial and patriarchal destruction through continuous exploitation and exotification of people and women of colour's bodies, cultures, and lands. Western travel narrative is born of European colonization (Lipsitz, 2011). In this narrative, the place the "traveller" goes tends to be gendered and seen as "virgin" or "wild" (namely, Indigenous), to be "explored" and "conquered." The traveller then is the brave "male do-er" while the land and its people are passive subjects to be swept away.

The devastating effect of exploitive tourism on women of colour's bodies and lands has been the displacement of local people as well as tremendous damage on local ecosystems. For instance, in Belize one can observe the slow death of the world's second largest coral reef. In coastal areas, such as Caye

Caulker, where local industry has been historically based on fisheries, the loss of livelihood and displacement has led many to homelessness, alcoholism, or exploitative labour in businesses owned by Western and/or wealthy investors.

In sum, mobility or disparate ways of journeying is fundamental to place and the construction of place. It is an essential anchor to the understanding of place as not stagnant but ever-changing. In the face of rapid flows of people, capital, and the more-than-human, places are shaped by constant social, cultural, and ecological exchanges, as well as by global and local systems of power that lead to continuous exploitation, marginalization, and colonization. It is important to acknowledge that "the production of space [and place] is caught up in, but does not guarantee, longstanding geographic frameworks that materially and philosophically arrange the planet according to a seemingly stable white, heterosexual, classed vantage point" (McKittrick, 2006, p. xv), rendering people of colour, LGBTQ2S, the differently abled, and the other-than-human as "out of place."

Place Anchor #4: Power / Out-of-placeness

Power plays an important part in the construction of place, often manifesting in an emplaced form. Power and place are co-constructed, enforcing one another. Prevailing conceptualizations of place and many current spatial distributions naturalize unbalanced power relations. Scholars in many fields have theorized the relationship between place and power. Here I will mention just a few, specifically drawing on critical theory, feminist and feminist of colour geography, and Indigenous theories. But more importantly I will explore the axis of "out-of-placeness" as an important place anchor for us to understand the spatial manifestation of power.

David Harvey (2007) sees the process of unbalanced spatial organization as "accumulation by dispossession" (p. 159). In his analysis, capitalism, now in the form of neoliberalism, requires the displacement and placelessness of many for the accumulation of others (capitalists). This includes, for example: the continuous exploitation, commodification, and privatization of land; the displacement of rural populations into cramped sweatshops; the creation of private property by appropriating more collective and communal resources; and the suppression of rights to the commons, just to name a few (Harvey, 2007, p. 159).

Eve Tuck (2013) points out that the current oppressive paradigm of neoliberalism is the "latest configuration of colonial imperialism" (p. 325). In fact, Indigenous scholars and scholars of colour have long pointed out that the colonial way of (re)naming and mapping of places not only dispossesses and perpetuates landlessness for Indigenous people but also appropriates and claims ownership of Indigenous knowledge, fortifying colonial logic (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015; Smith, 1999; Glissant, 1989; Lipsitz, 2011). Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999) reveals this logic through its vocabulary. She argues that the spatial organization of colonialism is assembled around three concepts—the line, the centre, and the

outside. The line maps territories, sets up boundaries, and establishes parameters of colonial power. The centre guides the direction of that system of power. The outside signifies the dispossessed, the powerless, and the non-existential (p. 53).

Moreover, Katherine McKittrick shows that dominant geographic structures are organized around hierarchies of race, gender, and class and are repeatedly reinforced by a process of spatializing difference. This spatial arrangement of difference naturalizes identity and place, assigning non-dominant groups to where they "naturally" belong. The spatialization of difference is coupled with an ideological view of place as neutral, knowable, and outside of critique. Through this neutral narrative, the displacement of difference rationalizes spatial boundaries that see many bodies as "out of place" (p. xv). McKitrrick suggests that "geographies of domination be understood as the displacement of difference" (p. xv). But, it should be understood that "this displacement of difference does not describe human hierarchies but rather demonstrates the ways in which these hierarchies are critical categories of social and spatial struggle" (p. xv). Since the displacement of difference often manifests in being "out of place," paying attention to this "out-of-placeness" can give us clues into existing oppressions and how those who assume the position of "out of place" negotiate their identities and lived experiences. We should ask: Who is "out of place"? To launch us into critical reflection about our relation to the natural world, such a consideration should include the more-than-human others, such as "unruly" urban raccoons (Pacini-Ketchabaw & Nxumalo, 2015).

To enter into the world of "out-of-placeness" and counter-narrate colonial spatial logic, let us consider Mohanty's (2003) notion of "cartographies of struggle." These cartographies intend to defy the singular and divisive borders of colonial mapping and containment of power organized around race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability by attending to the intersecting multiplicity of oppression, power, and resistance of the marginalized, thus providing a "complex ground for the emergence and consolidation of Third World[2] women's feminist politics" (p. 44). Building upon Benedict Anderson (1983), Monhanty's concept is a powerful re-mapping and re-grounding of "imagined communities of women with divergent histories and social locations, woven together by the political thread of opposition to forms of domination that are not only pervasive but also systemic" (p. 47). McKitrrick demonstrates cartographies of struggle by drawing out black feminist geography and spatial imaginaries. She disallows the separation of power, identity, and place to renegotiate and challenge existing geographic arrangements. McKittrick proclaims:

> Geographic domination is a powerful process. However, if we pursue the links between practices of domination and black women's experiences in place, we see that black women's geographies are lived, possible, and imaginable. Black women's geographies open up a meaningful way to approach both the power and possibilities of geographic inquiry. (2006, p. xii)

This is reclamation of the "margin," of "out-of-placeness," as a site of abundance, resistance, and solidarity (hooks, 2000). To invoke this, one might need to travel to the past—into personal or collective memories that offer possibilities of place. As educators, it is important to pay attention to how power manifests in our place-based pedagogies and honour students', and our own, experiences of "out-of-placeness." Articulating those experiences many times pushes us to question how a place is organized, understood, and remembered.

Place Anchor #5: Memory

Place evokes and creates memory, and memory influences how one constructs and experiences place. As mentioned, notions of memory, history, and heritage have been essential parts of creating a sense of place for many, and they continue to be at the centre of the debate of a "global sense of place" (Massey, 1994). Here I do not equate memory to history or heritage but instead recognize memory's historicity. Memory is, as oral historian Lynn Abrams (2010) explains, "a process of remembering: the calling up of images, stories and emotions from our past life, ordering them, placing them within a narrative or story and then telling them in a way that is shaped at least in part by our social and cultural context" (p. 78). This process of remembering is often called into life by place's ability to bring the past into the present; some might even argue that memory is naturally place-oriented or place-supported (Casey, 2009b).

In fact, anthropologist Keith Basso emphasizes the importance of memory in the act of "place-making," or making of a "place-world" (Basso, 1996). The past is an instructive place that gives clues to where one has been and connects to "*what happened here*" (p. 4). Drawing on his many years of work with the Western Apache people, Basso emphasizes that within Indigenous world views, "the where of the event matters as much as the what and the consequences of the events themselves" (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 132). For Basso, place-making is a "universal tool of the historical imagination" (p. 5). It is profoundly human. However, the construction of a place-world is highly complex and allows an opening to understand diverse ways of being and relating to the world. Place-worlds are history with authority (p. 32). Basso puts,"…for what people make of their places is closely connected to what they make of themselves as members of society and inhabitants of the earth … place-making is a way of constructing the past, a venerable means of *doing* human history…." (p. 7).

Nevertheless, memory is not only personal; it lies in the heart of a collective and exists "in a symbiotic relationship with the public memorialization of the past" (Tuck & McKenzie, 2015, p. 110). Many places are intentionally or inexplicitly constructed as "sites of memory," where formal memories are constituted, negotiated, and rooted through their production (Sarmento, 2012; Cresswell, 2004). However, these sites of memory often serve to

commemorate one particular dominant history, adding to the making of a national identity while excluding perspectives of the marginalized.

Evidently, place is a contested zone of memories, but some are actively erased. The construction of memory in this case becomes a form of control that has led to "a deep silence which must be continually broken" (hooks, 2009, p. 176). In a panel discussing the role of Vancouver's Punjabi Market and Chinatown in the construction and erasure of civic memory, activist Puneet Singh explained that if one visits the neighbourhood of Kitsilano today, they find no trace of the once vibrant South Asian community there, and to mention it is often to solicit anger and denial amongst its predominantly white residents. Historic neighbourhoods such as the Punjabi Market and Chinatown in Vancouver, once designated for people of colour, are rapidly being gentrified and reconstructed. For people of colour, it is not only place of dwelling that is under threat but memory, and by extension existence (Singh et al., 2017).

Just as memory can be an apparatus of control in the production of place, it also can be a site of resistance (hooks, 2009). Following Foucault's (1980) notion of "counter-memory," hooks contends that the process of remembering is a practice of transgressing the dominant notion of history. She sees that history does not need to serve as a judgement of the past controlled by the present, but is a "counter-memory" that pushes against the dominant notion of "truth." Counter-memory can act as a source for renewed relationships to the past, and thus the present and future (hooks, 2009; Arac, 1986). It is through this potential of revisioning, rememory (Basso, 1996), and reinhabiting (Ahmed, 2017) that tapping into place-memory offers an empowering and counter-hegemonic sense of place. For Basso, the building and sharing of place-worlds provide a powerful means not only to travel through what has happened but also to explore how the past has been different for different positionalities (Basso, 1996).

Along with hooks, Sara Ahmed (2017) points out that "feminist work is often memory work" (p. 22) that allows us[5] to reinhabit our bodies and give ourselves permission to take up more space and stretch out into place (p. 30). However, it is important to point out that the work of invoking issues of space and place comes with pain and discomfort, as one "bear[s] the burden of memory … [to] willingly journey to places long uninhabited, searching the debris of history for traces of unforgettable, all knowledge of which has been supressed" (hooks, 2006, p. 98; also see hooks, 1990; McKittrick, 2006; Walcott, 2003; Ahmed, 2017). In exploring places where voices have long been silenced, hooks returns to the phrase used in the movement against racial apartheid in South Africa: "*our struggle is also a struggle of memory against forgetting*" (hooks, 1990, p. 147). In our place-based pedagogy, we must create space that allows one to reclaim the past, including legacies of pain and suffering in addition to the celebratory and the mundane.

Conclusion

It is easy to lose sight of place's intricateness and complexity because we are so immersed and entangled within it. Therefore, it is all the more important to foreground place in our pedagogical practices so we are not just learning about place, but with place. To be involved in this kind of cultural shift, one must be willing to assume what Foucault calls a "hyperactive pessimism," a commitment not only to constantly question the status quo but also to find ways of examining and adjusting educational and pedagogical practices while developing critical understanding (Blenkinsop, 2012). We must be able to critically assess whether our place pedagogy is reactionary or exclusive. We need to theorize further how systems of oppression around race, class, gender, sexuality, and ability influence, manifest, and produce educational spaces and places (Ford, 2017; Miller, 2017; Russel et al., 2013; Haluza-DeLay, 2013). Educators can find ways to legitimize attachments to different places; this might include giving students opportunities to highlight their own places, urban or otherwise. Educators can actively challenge narratives that centre one imagination of place. The task of decolonization requires the dismantling of naturalized values and ingrained attitudes and the centring of Indigenous leadership.

By exploring place through place anchors, we can begin to conceptualize place with the following considerations:

- Place is not static and fixed. It is dynamic and mobile in itself.
- Place is not neutral but entangled in complex social and power relations.
- Place is specific and situated in the lived. There are diverse ways of relating to place that might not even be described with the word "place."[6]
- Place holds deeply personal, cultural, and ecological memories.
- Place does not only exist in the abstract. It must be situated in the concrete. It holds its own agency and meanings beyond human understanding.

We should consider place anchors in terms of how they might limit the way educators approach students' diverse relationships to place, taking into account who is excluded in our understanding. Although beyond the scope of this paper, to further this discussion, we need to problematize conceptions of belonging and the making of home (Pratt, 1999; hooks, 1990; Massey, 1994), especially for diverse cultural and diasporic populations (Awan, 2017; Chawla & Jones, 2005). We also need to find ways to de-centre anthropocentric conceptualizations of place and ask what it means to learn *with* place. In this way, place has the potential to provide radical educational ground for us to re-examine and to reflect on our relationship with ourselves, other humans, and more-than-human others.

Notes

1. See *Environmental Education Research* Volume 14, 2008.
2. The trialectics of spatiality include the perceived space, conceived space, and the lived space that parallel Lefebvre's physical, mental, and social. See Soja, E. W. (1996). *Thirdspace: Expanding the geographical imagination*. Blackwell. P. 71
3. This will be discussed in more detail in the section entitled Place Anchor #4: Power/Out-of-Placeness.
4. Here Mohanty does not refer to the geographically bounded definition of the Third World, but those who are marginalized and disenfranchised by the global dominant system of oppression. It is through a "political link" (p. 46) that the women of the Third World are connected and come into community.
5. Here "we/us/our" refers to those who are marginalized under white supremacist patriarchy.
6. For example, the Taiwanese place/spatial imaginary alludes to the word *xiang tu* instead of *di fun* (the translation of place) to describe their/our situatedness. *Xiang tu* refers to *xiang*, the people, community, a township and *tu*, the soil and the land. *Xiang tu* is a united concept. It implies the interconnectedness of people and land and the non-generalizable nature of land. *Xiang tu* is not just an idea—it intricately involves people's emotional and sensorial experiences and relationships to their land, thus embodying the diverse and complex relationships between land and the people (Ho & Chang, forthcoming).

Notes on Contributor

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