JENNIFER ADAMS

20. PLACE AND IDENTITY: GROWING UP BRICOLEUR

Abstract In this chapter I present an emerging theoretical framework for thinking about and enacting place-based education for people who have a sense of place that may not be connected to a specific locale or is connected solely to the locale in which they currently live. I use a sense of *multi*place that describes a sense of place that may be connected to multiple places at once through history, memories, identity, and lived experiences. Using autobiographical and phenomenological hermeneutic methods I address the questions of place and identity through an examination of my own experiences my transnational community. I demonstrate the complexity of sense of place for people with transnational identities and describe implications for teaching using place-relevant methodologies.

With increasing concerns about environmental issues, sustainability science, and sustainability science education, place-based education is moving towards the center of creating science programs and curricula that are responsive to local environmental knowledges and needs. In the U.S., place-based science education is often discussed in relation to students of Native American and Native Hawaiian descent using the local environmental ethos as a means of connecting indigenous students to school science (Chinn 2006). It has been also considered in urban contexts with African-American youth (Lim and Calabrese Barton 2006). Researchers in these contexts consider the understandings of science that occur in students' lifeworlds and how those understandings can be used as resources for teaching and learning science in the classroom context. While this is germane for students who are a) indigenous or b) have lived in an area for multiple generations, the question for me arises concerning the relevance (or redefinition) of place-based science education for a community that is neither indigenous nor has generational connections to their place of schooling. Perhaps the question could and should be rephrased to ask how immigrants and first generation people re/create a sense of place in an adopted environment and how this is relevant to their understanding of science as integrated with maintenance of an ethnic identity. Since science education research has identified that in order to connect students to science and afford them opportunities to develop positive identities around science, it is important to understand how members of a community construct their sense of place.

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In this chapter I present an emerging theoretical framework for thinking about and enacting place-based education for people (children and adults) who have a sense of place that may not be connected to a specific locale or is connected solely to the locale in which they currently live. I describe what I believe is a sense of *multi*place – a notion that describes a sense of place that may be connected to multiple places at once through history, memories, identity, and lived experiences. Using my own autobiography and analysis of some of my lived experiences, I describe how people may recreate this sense of multiplace in the environment in which they currently live. As I am dealing with the broader question of "what is it like to be a person with a Caribbean ancestry and identity living in Brooklyn?" I employ phenomenologically sensitive methods (Kincheloe, McKinley, Lim, and Calabrese Barton 2006) to bring to consciousness unconscious actions and notions. I use phenomenological hermeneutic methods described as "a continual dialectic between phenomenological notions conceptually understood versus their concreteness as known directly in [one's] own lived experience" (Seamon 2002 ¶ 72). From a first-person perspective I investigate how my lived experiences and being part of an ethnic collective constructs my sense of place and notions about science and the environment. I extend my lens to my collective by inviting co-researchers – members of my ethnic/local community, including family and friends – to see what meanings of place emerge for us as individuals with different histories of coming to be-in our current place and a collective who identifies with a common culture. "Emergent meanings are co-constituted by the description of the experiences from [the collective] and in the interpretive process of the [researcher/individual]" (Seamon 2002, ¶ 84). Place can be "read" as a text (Kincheloe et al. 2006), urban spatial semiotics, which examines visual signs that people produce in a space to mark it with a particular identity (Shortell and Krase 2009). Visual signs can include gardens, visual art, and entire communities – each providing information about peoples' sense of place.

AUTO/BIOGRAPHICAL MEMOIR

Beginning with the question of "who is the self that teaches science?" (Adams, Luitel, Afonso and Taylor 2008), this inquiry into place stems from my reflexive examination of my experience of growing up in a Caribbean household/community in Brooklyn, NY and how this influenced my identity in science and science world view. What also becomes increasingly important is my ethnic identity – as a second generation Caribbean American and how I utilize structures in my life and community to maintain an ethnic-Caribbean identity (Waters 2001). In this respect, I begin with bringing my own history – familial, cultural, ideological and educational – to my research (Lightfoot and Davis 1997).

Although I grew up in a very urban environment I never felt that I was far removed from the natural world. Even when we lived in an apartment that was situated 12 stories above the ground, I always felt a connection to nature and this was because my mother brought nature into the home. Our living room window was slightly

angled towards the rising sun. In this window, my mother placed many hanging plants that wildly grew until much of the sun was blocked. Hanging vines, stems twisting though the safety bars, and broad leaves pressed against the window in their efforts at photosynthesis, the living room window was more reminiscent of a tropical jungle than the urban cold concrete far below. This window was my connection to nature in the apartment. While the leaves changed color outside of the window, inside, I began to construct a sense of place that was always green and a sense of home that was tropical because of the way my mother used these plants to re/create her sense of place; her sense of "home."

During the summertime, with the windows open, June beetles flew in to the apartment. My mother readily cupped them in her hands and placed them in ours. In her lived experiences in the Caribbean there was a fluid connection between the indoor and outdoor spaces and she re/created this expansive sense of place by allowing "friendly" insects to freely enter and leave our home. Summer was also the time when we were able to take family trips to local state parks, extending our urban jungle to the outdoors. It was in these spaces that I saw how my mother connected with the land in her Caribbean way. Her favorite thing to do in these places was to "climb and swing on the trees." There is a picture of her wearing a red bandana and swinging from a tree at Lake Welch in a family album. "The woods remind me of going up Palm and John *Guine* Gully with the stream running down…" she recounted while looking at the picture. These were specific places in Jamaica where she spent much of her time "roaming the woods." Her favorite places in the northeast are places that allow her to relive those moments. My siblings and I would run after her when she disappeared into the woods. We saw the woods through her eyes as she pointed out familiar-looking plants and told stories of her youth. To me, these woods were Caribbean-like places as they coalesced with my mother's stories and memories.

Lake Welch and similar wooded State Parks were places that allowed my mother to enact her identity – her connection to growing up in a tropical rural place. She brought that place to the apartment with the way she allowed plants to brilliantly grow out-of-control in the living room and the way she welcomed the outdoors into our apartment. My mother even allowed a large green bug that stowed away on a head of cabbage to live in a Tropicana cup on our dining table for a couple of days until it eventually disappeared through an open window. My family eventually moved into our single-family home with a backyard. I remember my mother being thrilled at the idea of being able to have her own garden, like the ones she had while growing up in Jamaica.

My mother still lives in this house and through the decades, she has created a backyard that is a verdant urban oasis with a variety of plants – fruits, vegetables, herbs and perennials – for ornamentation and eating. My mother says she enjoys gardening because she loves to dig in the dirt. "It is relaxing!" she says with sweat running down her brow. She uses a small shovel and her bare hands to till the earth and plant her seeds. In her garden she has tomatoes and basil as is found in many northeastern backyard gardens, but the callaloo (*Amaranthus L.*) and scotch bonnet

peppers (*Capsicum chinense*) make her garden distinctly Caribbean. A neighbor noted, "you can tell we're from the islands…we like to cook the food spicy" in response to a comment about the number of gardens in their community that had the hot "scotch bonnet" peppers (Shelby 2008, ¶ 9). In her use of "we" she ties her individual identity to the collective community of Caribbean immigrants. In her "we" she is saying "I belong" to this community – a community that is connected to multiple places at once. These peppers are an integral part of Caribbean cuisine and naturally grow in tropical environments, so people grow them outdoors during the summer in Brooklyn. These peppers in a garden are resources for enacting a Caribbean identity, both in their real manifestation and their connection to a distant land. As the gardener noted, their presence marks a Caribbean place in a northeastern urban context. For my mother and her neighbor, the peppers marked their identities as Caribbean and their gardens represented a place that is at once Caribbean and Brooklyn.

Growing up in rural Jamaica, any given place could provide a source of food. From deliberately cultivated gardens and plantations to randomly grown fruits, ground vegetables and herbs, my mother grew up in an environment where she was poor in material resources but rich in her access to seemingly endless plant-based food sources. She spent much of her free time "roaming the bush" during her childhood and eating fruits she found along the way. As a child, I imagined her in the lush environment she described to me. While eating avocados, mangoes, yams and sugar cane brought from the green grocers, I imagined myself picking and eating these same foods from the land in the same way that my mother did. My mother's sense of place includes the notion that land provides food. This also deeply connected to an ethos that the abundance/richness of the land is of a spiritual origin, as evident in the lyrics of Bob Marley's song *Is this love?* "Jah provide the bread" with bread referring to food in general. Plants, both cultivated and wild are equally valuable in my mother's sense of place since they are spiritually constituted and provide life.

In her urban environment my mother holds no lesser view of plants. My mother often encounters plants that in the northeastern context would be considered weeds. She pointed out to me a succulent plant growing through cracks in the parking lot asphalt. "This is *pusley,"* she said while breaking off a piece, rinsing it with bottled water and giving me a small branch to chew on. "We eat this in Jamaica, *it grow wild*!" Years later I saw it for sale in the farm market as purslane (*Portulaca oleracea*). On another occasion, I remembered her bringing home a bag of greens she "found" in a local urban park. Excited, she cooked up the plants with onion and spices and brought a sample over for her aunt to taste. This was pokeweed (*Phytolacca americana)*, a plant that grows wild in urban parks and is often considered a nuisance. To my mother these wasteland plants were no less valuable than the plants she cultivated in her backyard.

As an Outward Bound instructor I *felt* my mother's sense of place while walking through the woods with students. In the same way that she pointed out plants to

me and told stories of them in relation to her youth, I told my students stories of plants in relation to my youth – my memories of my mother's memories. For me, her stories were/are the connection to my Caribbean ancestry/identity; so being able to retell these stories was a means of enacting/reinforcing that identity. To me, the northeastern woods are a *multi*place; it is a place that is traversed by my multiple roots (Knepper 2008) that connect me to both Brooklyn and Jamaica. I have a solid scientific understanding of the ecology and geology of the northeastern woodlands, however how I enact that knowledge is connected to my Caribbean sense of place that views the woods as a spiritual place of abundance.

My brother now lives on a Caribbean Island. Not the one of my mother's birthplace, but the one of his current work as a restaurateur. On a recent trip, my brother walked us through his garden, "Mom, this garden is because of you! In his garden, he has bananas, plantains, green *gungo* peas, papaya and even a couple of staffs of sugar cane. My brother has no prior experience with cultivating tropical plants (other than potted plants); he began his gardens based on my mother's recollection of the kinds of plants that she grew/experienced while growing up in Jamaica. Through trial, error and conversations with my mother he has been able to successfully tend a garden of tropical fruits and vegetables. He not only wanted to grow foods for his restaurant, he wanted to re/create home – a *place* for my mother that was similar to her stories from "back home." As place is associated with a multiplicity of memories (Knepper 2008), my brother re/created a place that is a bricolage of my mother's memories and his imagination.

As first/second generation Caribbean Americans, our ecological sense of place has been structured by my mother's sense of place and understanding of the natural world. She transferred her image of "home" to us (Schmdit 2008) through her stories and recollections of growing up in Jamaica. Although we grew up in Brooklyn and did not travel to the Caribbean as often as some of our other relatives, we were the children of a mother who immigrated to New York (my father was also a child of Caribbean immigrants, but was born in NY) and, as Carola Suarez-Orozco and Marcelo Suarez-Orozco put it, are said to be "at once "here" and "there"' (2001, p. 58). In my experience of living in a Caribbean community, I have also found the *place* to be both here and there at once.

The "polyphonic bricolage" of place

What does it mean to live in a place? Is it just a matter of being situated in a specific locale at a specific point in time or does this notion of living in a place transcend the boundaries of the immediate to include one's history, memories, and emotional connections with multiple places? Do these internal constitutions of places influence how one interacts with a place in which one currently lives? These are questions that I have been thinking about in relation to the notion of place and place-based education for our increasingly diverse and transnational communities. With these questions in mind, I have begun to observe my own community – a

transnational community that is predominantly inhabited by people from diverse Caribbean nations. I have been noticing how people in my community interact with and create place where they currently live, Brooklyn NY, and how these interactions are reflective of their connections to multiple places. I am ultimately interested in learning more about how one's sense of place in a transnational context constructs/mediates relationships with science and the natural world. However, my immediate work aims to capture how people enact their understandings of the natural world through their interactions with place. I am finding that I have to sift through understandings of home, identity and ethnicity as constituted through both memories and lived experiences because it is within those aspects that one can find how one develops a sense of place.

Joe Kincheloe, Elizabeth McKinley, Miyoun Lim and Angela Calabrese Barton (2006) mention, "the often-tacit nature of the way one leverages her sense of place makes it especially difficult to document in any final empirical way." (p. 144) In order to study one's relationship to place it is necessary to utilize methodologies that mirror how one develops a sense of place. In my desire to understand more about what I believe about a variegated sense of place, I employ a bricolage of theoretical frameworks and corresponding methodologies to elucidate the sense of place that I believe exists in transnational individuals/communities. Engaging in bricolage as a theoretical frame and research methodology means using the tools at hand and many different tools, collecting different parts from different sources with no blueprint on how to build/construct the knowledge and not knowing in advance what form the text/knowledge/research will take (Berry 2006).

Concepts from postcolonial theory challenge science educators to reexamine issues of cultural diversity, identity, globalization and inclusivity (Carter 2007). Wendy Knepper (2006) describes bricolage as a postcolonial strategy where one selects and uses resources at hand (including memories) in a deliberate yet improvisational way, "a bricoleur is always in the process of fashioning her various locales" (p. 79). The concept of bricolage is especially useful when studying the Caribbean community, as bricolage has been a term that has been used to describe the ongoing development of Caribbean or Creole culture (Schmidt 2008). Anthropologist Bettina Schmidt coined the term "*polyphonic bricolage*" to describe the continuous creation of "new" culture as Caribbeans interact with new environments and new resources, including people from other Caribbean and non-Caribbean nations. She describes bricolage as more of a rearrangement of elements rather than a mixing of culture as implied by creolization and hybridization. In the process of bricolage, people bring their cultural resources to bear as they select new resources in their new environment to use in very intentional ways, "even by altering the original meaning" thus creating new cultural forms (Schmidt 2008, p. 29). This is especially relevant in a multi/transnational Caribbean community (like Brooklyn NY) where cultures and languages from different islands have intermingled to create new culture, as evident in the way people have given places very Caribbean meanings albeit in a way that is local to Brooklyn.

THE DIALECTIC OF SENSE OF PLACE AND IDENTITY

Strategies like hybridization and creolization have been used to describe how people reproduce cultures in new places – whether through a forced or voluntary migration. The process of creolization in the Western Hemisphere began during slavery/colonial times as the slaves, indentured servants, Native Americans and European settlers negotiated space, resources and cultures in this new/different common space. Although there were aspects of the subjugated cultures that remained strong in the new creolized space, much of the cultural adaptations were to meet the norms of the dominant culture; that of Western Europe. For example, Creole languages were lexified with the European languages (hence English Creole and French Creole) rather than being dominated by African and Native American words and phrases. While the subjugated were inventive and found ways to resist the European dominated creolization, it had to be done in ways that fell within the given constraints so as not to challenge European dominance. In our current globalized context, there is an ongoing mixing of cultures that create hybrid spaces and practices. While West Indian cultures are still described in terms of being creolized, polyphonic bricolage as presented by Schmidt, offers a more postcolonial strategy because it ascribes a greater sense of agency to the bricoleurs in creation of their own culture.

Identity development also mirrors the process of polyphonic bricolage as the bricoleur picks and chooses the resources she will use to develop, confirm and maintain a chosen identity. For example, a person may choose a style of clothing, musical tastes and use of language to signify identification with the Caribbean. While there is a passivity of being "born into" a particular culture and therefore adopting those cultural norms, one can still choose to either embrace or reject that culture, or recreate a personal culture that reflects their individual bricolage. Teenage *Radio Rookie* Rayon Wright (2010) was born Jamaican but aspires to be a Korean Pop music producer. Upon meeting JYP, his "role model…the hottest music producer in Korea," Rayon asked, "how does someone like me who comes from a Caribbean American background be able to bring that to the Korean market?" (¶ 78). While he has embraced Korean culture to the extent of choosing Asian dominated schools and joining a Korean church, Rayon still identifies himself as a Caribbean-American person – a person with a particular place identity. As a bricoleur, he uses his Caribbeanness and his affinity for "everything Korean" to create a new identity and cultural niche for himself. He is an active creator of the polyphony of culture that is Caribbean/Korean with evidence of his interactions and identity with place and a diverse group of people.

Like Rayon, I developed an identity that represents my polyphonic bricolage of place. I went from a Caribbean-American neighborhood and high school to a college in the Midwest. In this new place, being Caribbean was novel and being a New Yorker (from Brooklyn none-the-less) was a thing to be feared. I had to *place* myself within this culture that mirrored the sense of unfamiliarity that was

reflected on me. In the Midwest, I asserted my identity as both Caribbean and New Yorker/Brooklynite and sought out resources to confirm those identities, including a prominently placed picture of Bob Marley in my dorm room (at an evangelical school) and I sought out associations with other Caribbean students. This was the first time in my life where I had multiple groups of friends and thus began an identity differentiation that was largely associated with place and my activity with others (Stetsenko 2008). In different contexts, I developed the identity of a science student, athlete, and new wave (because of my choices in music and style of dress), however my friends always ascribed my Caribbean Brooklyn identity on me (Jen Jen Jamaica-head) as I was merging this identity with the others. Upon returning to New York, I found that certain aspects of living in the Midwest became interwoven into my sense of place, including features of the natural landscape: a particular color of a late autumn sunset, places in my local park that give me the illusion of big sky and my affinity for cowboy boots and chicken-fried steak. One creates an identity by finding one's *place* amongst others (Stetsenko 2008). For me the term place not only refers to situating oneself amongst others, but finding that place within that is associated with the geographical places where one learns her *place*; her role within a community. Place both shapes and is shaped by people's activities and creates a dialectic with identity.

Artifacts of a transnational community

In the Brooklyn Caribbean community, one will find representatives from each and every Caribbean nation, thus creating a transnational community. In this community you can find a sameness|difference dialectic where solidarity is built around those elements that members of this community have in common but are at the same time different. Languages, history, food and ecology are some aspects that demonstrate this sameness|difference dialectic. For example, people in a market will recognize the same fruit (chayote or *Sechium edule*) but may call it by different common names (chocho or christophine) and/or prepare it differently depending on their country of origin, but recognize the commonality of being intimately familiar with the same fruit, and use this fruit as a marker of Caribbean identity. The multiple origins (Africa, Asia, the Americas, Europe) of the people and cultural elements that create Caribbean culture are also similar; however, how they are enacted in different locales depends on the collective ethnic origins of people, the geology of the locale, and even different configurations of colonial plantation life (Benitez-Rojo 1996). People bring these similarities and differences when they immigrate to a new place and interact with a new locale with different resources enabling them to re/create a new cultural polyphonic bricolage. These similarities and differences also extend to notions of place and sense of place as all are working to re/create a sense of place in/with a new locale.

In her work entitled "(Up)rooted," Barbadian artist Annalee Davis situates a small "purple heart" wooden house atop a mass of tangled *Cuccinia grandes* and *Smilax oblongata* roots. Her oeuvre is described as follows:

> …(up)rooted refers to the constantly shifting notions of "home," reconfigured with every move as human beings navigate their way between longings and belonging. Increasingly, "home" becomes a place carried within, as opposed to a fixed physical locale" (Davis 1997, ¶ 1).

Geographer Yi-Fu Tuan (1976) noted, "In artworks people's experiences of life and the world are vividly objectified" (p. 267), therefore Davis's work serves as a visual text with which to interpret her experiences with and meanings of home and place. While the term "uprooted" may connote a forceful disconnection between the past and present, it is the notion of home or sense of place that is carried within that shapes one's identity and connections to place. Davis's piece incorporates two plants commonly found in the Caribbean, one (*S. oblongata*) seemingly endemic and the other (*C. grandes*) an invasive from the Eastern Hemisphere. One of the roots has its place in the Caribbean and the other could be from multiple places – Africa, Asia and/or Europe. Many Caribbeans have a Caribbean place identity of "back home" as being tied to identity and to a notion of "knowing one's history" (Sutton 2008). For first generation immigrants, it refers a place of birth, family and memories while for their children, it means a connection to ancestry and/or identity and is often constituted from the memories of the first generation (Schmidt 2008) and their own visits "home." As Davis's work and description implies home, as a place, is more of an internally constituted *process* rather than fixed notion related to one specific locale. Wendy Knepper (2008) describes the notion of place as "a mode of diversity, transversal memory and relation to the network of other places in the global imagery" (p. 163). In alignment with the notion of identity as an ongoing re/creative process (Roth 2008), one's notion of place or sense of place is also an ongoing process that changes as one travels through/lives in/connects with places during a lifetime. Knepper's (2008) re/reading of Martinican Creolist Patrick Chamoiseau's work situates the concept of place or *Lieu* as a means "to constitute ourselves in networks of solidarity, of cultures, of exchanges, that traverse nations and territories …" (p. 164). Similar to Davis' work, Chamoiseau's Lieu emphasizes a more internal and fluid notion of place with roots/networks that spread out/reach out to embrace/infiltrate/exchange with other places or notions of place. This rhizomatic notion of place is described by Jeff Malpas (1999) where he notes place is "internally differentiated and interconnected in terms of elements that appear within them" (p. 34). He continues to describe the interconnection, intersection, juxtaposition and nesting of places, thus within one place one can find elements of other places – place becomes a borderless and fluid entity. Malpas goes on to describe this nesting of places as a connecting point between place and memory, the "elements" within become

resources for the bricoleur to re/produce a sense of place that is tied to identity. Thus, identity is constructed in relation to place and to others (as the elements that appear within place).

There are visual signs that people create/inscribe a particular identity related to place (Shortell and Krase 2009). When I walk down the main commercial street in my community, I encounter storefront signs painted in pan-African (red, gold, black and green) colors and numerous flags representing the different Caribbean nations. Although these are obvious signs, these are important in marking the community as a Caribbean place. The more subtle visual signs include objects that move through the community, like the "dolla vans," a grassroots means of transportation that harkens back to the 80s when public transportation service to this community was unreliable. These vans often carry flags, posters and business advertisements that are of relevance to the community. These visual signs structure the community and structure the social interactions that take place in relation to these signs. A Haitian youth with whom I shared a dialogue described such a place that was marked by a Haitian flag. In this place, he felt comfortable speaking Kreyol, eating *djon-djon*, and learning about/discussing sports and politics in Haiti.

While people use objects and signs to re/create places, people also use their bodies to do the same. As people move through space to create places, they carry their sense of place within and on their bodies. The visual signs they carry are means to restructure places for particular identity maintaining and confirming activities. Thus, sense of place is embodied as visual text is carried on human bodies that are moving in a way that enacts an association with place (Leander, Phillips and Headrick Taylor 2010). This is clearly evident in the Caribbean community during the annual West Indian Day Parade. A large boulevard is transformed into a Caribbean place by objects and moving bodies. As the main activity of the parade is movement (dancing, walking, *chipping*) down the "parkway," people carry their visual signs of their Caribbean identities on their bodies. T-shirts, jewelry, flag color-themed clothing and most importantly, bandanas are worn to signal an identity with a place/a particular group of people. The young people with whom I share dialogues about place note the importance of wearing a flag bandana to symbolize one's connection to a place of birth or ancestry. In these examples, place is a social artifact that is created (whether temporarily as a day's parade or in the form of a relatively permanent business establishment) to maintain and confirm an identity associated with the Caribbean. Youth participate in activities in these places and this is where they learn much about their Caribbean identity, this is especially of note for first and second-generation youth whose experience in the geographic Caribbean may be minimal, if at all. The place-as-social-artifact contributes to a sense of place that is based on a re/creation of a place that is a central part of one's ethnic identity.

Mangoes and shoes: A sense of multiplace

A shoe salesman was putting men's shoes on the clearance rack and some of them kept dropping off the rack onto the carpeted floor below. "They sound like

mangoes!" he said with a frustrated chuckle. I overheard him and laughed. "Yeah, then we would stop the car and pick up all of the mangoes, you know they're sweet when they fall from the tree"! He was from Puerto Rico and the sound of the falling shoes put him back in his tropical environment where things that made such a "thud" were fruits laden with sweet juices. For that instance, he was in two places at once, in the very tangible and present Upper West Side shoe store and in his ethereal past of Puerto Rico.

Although this event was not necessarily scientific in nature, it provides a wealth of information about Jorge's sense of place. His sense of place is what I would call a sense of *multi*place, adapting Miyoun Lim and Angela Calabrese Barton's (2006) definition, I describe this as having a "living ecological relationship" between a person and several places at once. Jorge has a relationship to his urban space because it is a part of his day-to-day lived experience. However his lifeplace extends to include a place that is a significant part of his identity and memory, but is not necessarily one in which he currently resides. Rhoades scholar Marsha Pearce notes, "a person can respond or use what is available in any environment in a specifically Caribbean way and therefore she can always find herself in a Caribbean region" (2003, ¶ 8). For Jorge, the falling shoes became the resource that enabled him to enact his Caribbean identity – his identity as a person from a tropical place. Haitian writer Edwidge Danticat describes herself as having two homes, one in Haiti and the other in the United States, "so like most immigrants, I live and breathe through both prisms, both perspectives" (Bass 2010, p. 88). Like Jorge, Danticat's sense of place is strongly influenced by his lived experiences in two places.

However there are others who may not have lived in a place and yet have a strong identity and corresponding sense of place that is influenced by their place of identity. Rosanna Rosado, the publisher of a New York Spanish-language newspaper relates her experience to a Willy Colon song, "it says that on the sidewalks of New York I learned for the first time the traditions of my grandparents, of my *abuelos*" (Tallo and Wertheimer 2010, ¶ 14). She notes that many people like her have a strong ethnic identity although they may have never visited the place, "it's a place that lives in our hearts [more] than in our memories" (¶ 15). A child develops a sense of place based on the meanings her family ascribes to a place or several places (Derr 2002) as well as from her experiences in the community in which she lives. Thus a child growing up in a transnational community will develop an identity and sense of place that has a strong relationship to that re/created place that is Caribbean and New York at once.

Educating for a multiplace

As I described there are many factors that influence how sense of place gets constructed. In a transnational community, ethnic-identified youth might construct their identity around a Caribbean place, whether they visited or not. Their notions of place and identity are largely based on stories from their parents and their lived experiences in the home and in an ethnic-identified community. It is also important

to note that for Caribbean youth, many of whom are visibly of African descent, their sense of place is further complicated by their ascription and identity of being black in America. This creates a conflict in place because although a community may be a safe place to enact a Caribbean identity, it may also be a place of surveillance and interrogation by police, especially for young black males (Foner 2001). In a large urban park, a common site of place-based education for local schools, young black males are often stopped by police and grilled, especially if they are not "on their side" (read: middle to upper-income predominantly white side) of the park. While these youth may participate in a Caribbean festival or soccer games and other athletic activities when the park becomes a Caribbean *place*, they may not feel welcome in all areas of the park at other times, and thus may not feel a sense of ownership of and incentive to care for the park. To them, the park may be viewed as a place to enact an identity associated with the activity – a temporary place that is rented but not owned.

Place-based education that does not consider how youth construct their identities and sense of place runs the risk of being as disconnected and irrelevant as is often the critique of standards-based education. One cannot assume that everyone relates to the same places – communities and natural areas – in the same ways; one relates to place largely through the lens of identity. Educators desiring to create place-based experiences should learn more about what place means to the students for whom they are creating the experiences. Place-based educators should strive to connect youths' lived experiences with learning activities and even allow youth to construct their own activities. This means affording youths opportunities to learn more about themselves as members of an ethnic group and of urban communities, in which they are positioned vis-à-vis policies and practices that govern the larger urbanscape. This is especially important for environmental science where the connection to and care for place is central in enabling youth to participate in and even assume leadership roles in improving the quality of life of their communities (Tzou, Scalone and Bell 2010). Affording opportunities for youth to express and explore their experiences with place facilitates youth developing a sense of ownership of public spaces that could potentially lead to a greater interest in larger environmental and quality-of-life issues in their communities and common public greenspaces.

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AUTHOR BIOGRAPHY

Jennifer D. Adams is an associate professor of science education at Brooklyn College, the City University of New York. Prior to this she was a classroom teacher of biology, field instructor for New York City Outward Bound and then a manager of professional development and curriculum initiatives at the American Museum of Natural History. Her current research interests lie in place-based science education and informal science education in urban contexts and pre-service teacher education in settings beyond the traditional classroom. Her recent work examines sense of place and identity of diverse youth, especially those from immigrant backgrounds, in urban contexts, and youth identity development and motivation through science participation in informal science education settings.