

Freedom Dreaming in a Broken World: The Black Radical Imagination in Black Girls' Science Fiction Stories

S. R. Toliver

University of Colorado, Boulder

All activism is science fiction, for envisioning a world without oppression requires the active creation of socially just societies formed from innovative ideas and visionary possibilities. Black girls have historically engaged in science fiction by using their voices and written words to construct socially just worlds in hopes that their dreams of the future can become realities. Still, there is scant research centering how Black girls use fiction writing, generally, and science fiction writing, specifically, as a social justice practice. Drawing from a larger narrative inquiry project with the objective of determining how Black girls might use written and oral storytelling to discuss, critique, and subvert experiences with social in/justice, this article connects the Black Radical Imagination and Critical Race English Education to consider the science fiction short stories of three Black girls. In focusing on these stories, I explore how Black girls' science fiction writing is grounded in their ways of being and knowing, but also how this writing foregrounds their freedom dreams. Further, I provide insight into how English teachers and literacy researchers can alter pedagogical practices to make space for Black girls' dreams.

In the introduction to her coedited book, *Octavia's Brood: Science Fiction Stories from Social Justice Movements*, Walidah Imarisha (2015) stated that "all organizing is science fiction" (p. 3). Although most commonly acknowledged as a genre of literature, science fiction is integral to activist work because every time a person envisions a world without oppression, without state-sanctioned violence, without anti-Blackness, they are engaging in the active creation of alternative, socially just societies that offer new ways of life for historically excluded populations. Imarisha's premise aligns with hooks (2000), who argued that "to be truly visionary we have to root our imagination in our concrete reality while simultaneously imagining possibilities beyond that reality" (p. 110). That is, to make societal changes, we must engage in imaginative processes that are tethered to our realities, but not confined by them. Science fiction allows for this form of imagination, as it asks people to ground themselves in reality while also creating realities that do not yet exist.

Black girls have historically engaged in science fiction. When Zyahna Bryant was 15, she wrote a petition to the City of Charlottesville, Virginia, that called for the removal of its Robert E. Lee statue and a renaming of Robert E. Lee Park.

After being bullied for her dark skin, 10-year-old Kheris Rogers started a clothing line, Flexin' in My Complexion, to inspire Black girls to be comfortable in their skin. At 15, Thandiwe Abdullah cofounded the Black Lives Matter Youth Vanguard and helped create and launch the Black Lives Matter at School campaign. These Black girls, as well as many others, see the injustices of the world and dream of changes they want to make. They dream of worlds where racist statues and gun violence will be eradicated. They imagine worlds where Black girls are celebrated and Black youth matter.

As Black girls' imaginations have laid the groundwork for various activist movements, English educators who are dedicated to a pedagogy of freedom must engage in instruction and research that centers Black girls' dreams. We must acknowledge how Black girls engage in science fiction. Thus, in this article, I ask the following questions: (1) What can Black girls' science fiction writing show readers about Black girls' ways of being, knowing, and dreaming? (2) How might secondary English teachers alter pedagogical practices in response to the radical imaginations of Black girls?

To respond to these questions, I examine how three Black girls who participated in an Afrofuturist writing workshop wrote science fiction stories that challenged oppression, focalized activism, and generated hopeful futuristic possibilities. I begin by providing a theoretical framework combining the Black Radical Imagination (Kelley, 2002) with Critical Race English Education (Johnson, 2018), or CREE, as a way to decenter whiteness and emphasize Black imaginations and activism. Then, I situate this article within scholarship centering the social justice writing practices of Black girls to highlight how Black girls analyze social issues in their writing. I continue by describing my methods of data collection and analysis and sharing findings of a thematic analysis of the girls' science fiction writing and workshop interviews. Lastly, I offer a discussion of my findings, including implications for both teaching and research.

The Black Radical Imagination

The Black Radical Imagination is a reconnaissance mission to recover the ideas of Black activists who have recommended diverse ways of countering social, economic, and political oppression (Kelley, 2002). Through an investigation of the history of Black diasporic freedom struggles and how those battles showcased the dreams of Black people, Kelley acknowledged that social transformation requires us to be aware of the world, but it also implores us to break from our current reality. In this way, the Black Radical Imagination is not a thing, but a theoretically situated process located within the ideas of Black revolutionaries who envisioned a liberated future. It is a method of examining the historical legacy of Black revolutionary action and thought in order to grasp at the roots (Davis, 1989) of freedom.

The Black Radical Imagination necessitates a break from realism, and it positions imagination as a means to liberate the unconscious (Carrington, 2016; Dache, 2019). To center the imagination, Kelley (2002) focused on surrealism, which he defined as a global revolutionary movement that places emancipatory thought at

its center. For this article, I focus on Afrosurrealism because it positions imagination as an integral component of Black liberation (Francis, 2013). Specifically, both Miller (2013) and Spencer (2020) described Afrosurrealism as an explicit way for Black artists to depart from realistic methods of seeing and thinking and move toward the construction of new realities based on Black cultural memory and Black futuristic imagination. Afrosurrealism places Black freedom at the center of the surreal. Ultimately, by highlighting Afrosurrealism as a critical part of the Black Radical Imagination, I situate Black imaginations and Black memories as foundational in social justice work, and I honor the dreams “buried in the rich, black soil of Afrodiasporic culture” (Kelley, 2002, p. 18).

As education scholars are continuously trying to reimagine education, it is not surprising that surrealist thinking has made its way into education research. For example, Dache (2019) argued that surrealist thinking foregrounded the actions of community student activists in Ferguson who protested against police brutality and fought for “a place in the world where freedom becomes a decolonized duality existing in opposition to harm, danger, and death at the hands of the state” (p. 80). Love (2019) maintained that dreaming gives teachers a space to dismantle traditional education methods and rebuild school systems that truly love all students. She argued that abolitionist teaching is developed through the radical imagination, as dreams can provide educators with a blueprint for justice. Green (2020) asserted that creativity and imagination can help education researchers envision new pathways for scholarship that extend beyond the realistic limitations of traditional data collection, analysis, and representation. From youth activist work to pedagogical strategies and research methods, the surreal makes space to acknowledge what is and imagine what can be. In this way, the Black Radical Imagination can be a powerful weapon against injustice, especially within the field of English education.

Critical Race English Education

CREE is a theory and a pedagogy meant to center Black life and expand racial justice discussions in English education. CREE builds on Critical Race Theory (CRT; Ladson-Billings & Tate, 1995) and BlackCrit (Dumas & ross, 2016) through its cognizance of race as a salient feature of US society. Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) introduced CRT to the field of education and argued that although race was undertheorized, it was vital for educational researchers to investigate the social, structural, and cultural significance of race within the context of schools and schooling. Decades later, Dumas and ross (2016) stated that due to the endemic nature of anti-Blackness and the tension between Black existence and the neoliberal-multicultural imagination, a CRT lens specifically focused on Black people and Black freedom was essential. Grounded in these frameworks, CREE asks English educators to recognize the salience of race and racism in English classrooms, to stand in opposition to the anti-Black violence that permeates English education spaces, and to include pedagogical practices that affirm the humanity of Black youth.

CREE is also grounded in critical English education (Morrell, 2005), which centers the role of literacy in transferring meaning, reifying or dismantling op-

pressive power relations, deconstructing dominant texts, and creating critical texts. Building on this work, CREE examines how literacy conveys meaning about race, how anti-Blackness is promoted or disrupted in English classrooms, and how educators can help students deconstruct anti-Black texts and create critical texts that affirm Black lives. Focusing on how racism is uplifted or disrupted in English classrooms is essential, because the same anti-Blackness that exists across the United States shows up in school spaces, and this violence symbolically murders the spirits of Black youth (Johnson & Bryan, 2017; Love, 2019). In other words, spirit-murder is a cultural cancer that attaches itself to our institutions (Williams, 1991) and feeds on the oppression of Black students, but CREE attempts to counter this violence by acknowledging and elevating the literacy practices that Black youth bring to classrooms.

Several literacy scholars have used CREE to disrupt racism through literature instruction with students (Borsheim-Black & Sarigianides, 2019; Polleck & Spence-Davis, 2020; Rebellino et al., 2019). Others have applied CREE by challenging narrowed conceptions of Black identity in the preparation of white preservice teachers (Neville, 2020) and assisting students in critiquing and responding to racist discourses (Sarigianides, 2019). Although disrupting anti-Blackness is foundational to CREE, so is the radical imagination. Dumas and Ross (2016) reported the need for a Black liberatory fantasy that enables Black people to create new worlds for themselves, and Johnson (2018) argued that educators cannot engage with CREE without the radical imagination. Thus, my contribution to the burgeoning work of CREE is to acknowledge the anti-Blackness Black girls face in schools while also centering their radical imaginations and highlighting the Black liberatory worlds they create in science fiction stories.

Black Girls, Writing, and Social Justice

Research on Black girls, writing, and activism is limited, but there are several scholars who center how Black girls use their words to combat injustice for themselves, for other Black girls, and for the world. For example, Haas Dyson (1995) conducted a case study focused on Tina, a Black girl in the third grade. Haas Dyson found that Tina's superhero fiction was grounded in her desire to rewrite stories that excluded her from certain identity roles. Brown et al. (2015) centered Black girls' creative writing as a means to show their complexity—their complications, contradictions, and beauty. They honored Black girls' writing as a celebration of resistance and hope. In a study focusing on Black girls' digital storytelling, Hall (2011) found that the girls' stories highlighted their pain but also illuminated ways of countering pain and promoting transformation through communal healing. Each of these researchers highlighted the intricacy of Black girls' storytelling and positioned creativity as a critical aspect of Black women's and girls' theorizing.

In summer literacy collaboratives, Muhammad (2012, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c) taught the writing of poetry, personal narratives, essays, short stories, and letters, and she found that Black girls used writing to express themselves and to empower themselves and each other. Within their writings, Muhammad noticed that the

girls emphasized their ethnic and gender identities; their need to eschew self-doubt and hone their intellectual capabilities; and the prominence of Black girls' collectivity and kinship. Relatedly, Winn (2010a, 2010b, 2012, 2015) conducted out-of-school writing workshops where formerly incarcerated Black girls used playwriting and performance to "invoke change in themselves and others" (Winn, 2010a, p. 427). In the plays, the girls centered various topics that were important to them, like family and the reasons they were incarcerated (Winn, 2010b); their unfair treatment in and out of schools (Winn, 2010a); and their need to speak against hegemonic institutions (Winn, 2012). The workshops enabled the girls to reintroduce themselves to those who limited them to stereotypical labels (Winn, 2015) and to rewrite their lives and perform possible futures.

In each of these articles, the researchers highlighted Black girls, writing, and activism. They centered Black girls' creative productions as truth-telling works that articulate the varied and intricate experiences of Black girls in the United States (Brown et al., 2015). Through the use of literary mentors, they helped Black girls hone their activist voices and use their writing to inspire themselves and other Black girls to speak their truths (Muhammad, 2015a, 2015b, 2015c). They made space for Black girls to create narratives that counter dominant ideologies that attempt to confine them (Hall, 2011; Winn, 2012). However, even though the studies emphasized the connection between writing and social justice, fiction writing was noticeably absent. Haas Dyson (1995) explored a Black girl's superhero fiction, Winn (2010a, 2012, 2015) assisted Black girls in writing and producing fictional plays, and Muhammad (2012, 2015c) used short stories within the Black girl literacy collaboratives. Still, fiction assumes a minor role in research on Black girls' writing, and science fiction is almost nonexistent. Rooks (1989) argued, however, that personal narratives, scholarly writing, and fictional stories are essential in the examination of Black women's lives, so it is important to center Black girls' fiction writing alongside these other writing formats.

Method

This article draws from a larger narrative inquiry project with the objective of determining how Black girls might use written and oral storytelling to discuss, critique, and subvert experiences with social in/justice. In this article, I feature the short stories and interviews of three girls to determine how Black girls' science fiction writing showcases their ways of being, knowing, and dreaming, and how English educators can alter our pedagogical practices in response to their radical imaginations.

Research Context

The writing workshop took place at the Harbor, a nonprofit writing program in the southeastern United States. The research site was chosen because of the relationship I had established with the Harbor and because the Black girls who agreed to participate in this study were already a part of the Harbor community. Having a Black communal space is essential for Black women's and girls' self-affirmation

and growth (Muhammad & Haddix, 2016) and for developing strategies of resistance (Collins, 2000). So, it was vital to have a space in which the girls could feel comfortable enough to have important but possibly difficult discussions, and it was necessary for the girls to have a space where they felt safe enough to share their dreams.

Research Partners

For the larger study, I recruited six Black middle school girls. The girls chose to participate in the workshop for various reasons, but the most common reason was that they loved writing and reading speculative fiction. In this article, I focus on three girls who wrote science fiction stories because, as Imarisha (2015) argued, all organizing is science fiction, so analyzing Black girls’ creative writing can alert us to the changes they wish to make in the world. Demographics of the research partners, as well as a short summary of their stories, are included in Table 1. Of course, I understand gender as socially constructed and influenced by an individual’s context, so rather than presuming identity, I asked each of the research partners to self-identify through the use of a social identity wheel (University of Michigan, 2020).

TABLE 1. Research Partner Demographics and Stories

Research Partner	Age	Grade	Pronouns	Short-Story Synopsis
Amber	14	8	She/her	Set in 2120 after another world war splits America in two, “World War 3’s Effect on Society” centers Maya, a young Black girl who detests violence after her mother is killed during a peaceful protest. However, Maya may have to reconsider her stance if she wants to stand up to classmates who bully her and a father who wishes to forcefully control the country.
Avenae’J	13	8	She/her	“Dystopia” is set in 2070 in a police state where everyone is forced to be the same because difference resulted in the disproportionate murders of those who were different. Love and connection to others are forbidden, but when Avenae’J, the main character, falls in love, she, her boyfriend, and her brother decide to start an uprising to free everyone from governmental oppression.
Terrah	13	8	She/her	In 2190, the United States of America is divided into two sections, with one side housing all people who are marginalized based on race, gender identity, and sexuality (Miaeni) and the other housing mostly white people (Idonikoes). In “I’m Fine,” Zorella must make a difficult choice: leave her family and all she has ever known in Miaeni to attend a school in Idonikoes, or stay home and never realize her dreams.

Researcher's Positionality

I have always loved reading, writing, and watching speculative fiction. I've found freedom in imagining new futures and worlds. I've found joy in dreaming of planets, new species, and new ways of thinking that extended beyond my everyday existence. When I was younger, I mostly read speculative fiction written by white authors, but I yearned for representations of Black girls. Those stories were few and far between, however, and it was not until college that I found more speculative books written by and about Black people. Now that I have located these books, I have centered my research on better understanding the inner workings of Black speculative texts—how they are written, how they tell new/different stories, how they disrupt oppressionist views, and how they represent Black joy.

Before I began the larger study from which this paper is drawn, my work focused on speculative stories featuring Black girls, but they were always written by Black adult women. To broaden my research, I wanted to know what speculative fiction stories Black girls would write if they were given more opportunities to do so. I wanted to know if there were Black girls who used or wanted to use writing to imagine new worlds and new futures, just like I did when I was younger. My history as an avid reader and periodic writer of science fiction and fantasy has greatly influenced my research, and it is what leads me to further examine the implications of speculative fiction for English classrooms.

Curricular Context

The research partners and I met eight times for approximately four hours each meeting. The first six workshops began with a discussion that focused on narrative elements like plot, characterization, and conflict. Rather than telling the girls definitions of these terms, I asked them questions like: "What draws you to a story's characters?" or "What elements are needed for you to feel immersed in a story's setting?" In this way, I centered the girls' thinking rather than focusing on how I interpreted the terms. The mini-lesson was followed by the reading of a speculative fiction text. The mentor texts included excerpts from *The Jumbies* by Tracey Baptiste, *Akata Witch* and *Binti* by Nnedi Okorafor, *Parable of the Sower* by Octavia Butler, *Orleans* by Sherri Smith, *Mother of the Sea* by Zetta Elliott, and "Sera" by Nicola Yoon. We read passages from these texts to investigate how these narratives aligned with or differed from our earlier conversation about plot elements. After reading, we engaged in a short writing task grounded in exercises from Rhodes's (1999) book on fiction writing for Black authors, focusing explicitly on how we can move from the known world to the imagined (see Table 2). At the end of each workshop, we engaged in collective writing and sharing time, where we took insights from our group discussion, mentor text, and writing exercise to outline important aspects of our short stories: *Who is the main character? What will the world look like? What conflict will guide the story? What message is the story trying to convey? How will the story events get us to that message?*

TABLE 2. Example Activities

Focusing on Reality	Focusing on Imagination
Find a family story/teller (family is broadly construed; it can be anyone—friend, parent, sibling, online friend, etc.).	Revisit the family story, find gaps, and fill them in with your imagination.
Based on your stories and the stories you were told, what problems/issues do you see in your community or world?	If we don't fix the problem(s), what could happen tomorrow? 10 years from now? 100 years from now?

During the final two meetings, we spent less time focusing on the literary mentors and more time on our own speculative stories. Unlike traditional writing workshops that include uninterrupted writing time, however, the girls and I consistently interrupted each other to bounce ideas off one another, ask each other to read sections of our writing, or clarify whether our world-building made sense. I say *we* because I wrote alongside the girls; I believe that freedom dreaming requires intergenerational imagining. Black liberatory fantasy and the radical imagination are formed within a collective dreaming space, not in isolation.

Data Collection and Analysis

I focus on Amber’s, Avenae’J’s, and Terrah’s stories, as well as their second and third interviews. Interviews 2 and 3 were conducted during and immediately after the girls finished writing their short stories and centered the girls’ writing processes and story foci, while the other interviews focused on their reading and science fiction histories (Interview 1) and their feelings about the workshop overall (Interview 4). Insulating these specific interviews allowed me to focus on the girls’ science fiction storytelling as well as the inspiration for their stories. Data were examined using thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006), and in the following sections, I outline my analytic process.

Phase 1

The first phase of analysis began during the workshops. As I worked with the girls, I noticed the numerous stories they told about their lives and how they wanted to connect these lived experiences to their science fiction stories. I took copious notes while we worked together and wrote a journal entry after each meeting. For example, I wrote the following after hearing Amber’s story:

It may not have been all about her, but parts of the personal stories she’s told me keep popping into my mind. Being bullied is a major part of her life. She was bullied for her teeth and for the length of her hair. Rather than wanting to cut her hair like Amber wanted to, Maya’s hair flows freely. . . . It may not be Amber’s story, exactly, but I see how it could be.

(June 8, 2019)

Further, as I transcribed the data, I noticed how workshop conversations often led to the inclusion of specific story details. From this process of familiarizing myself with the data, I generated an initial list of ideas about the data content. These ideas included concepts like *connections between the girls’ lived experience and their imaginative worlds*, *social justice issues in society*, and *finding community*.

Phase 2

Coding was theory-driven, so the first part of my coding process required me to search for data relating to the Black Radical Imagination and CREE. With these theories in mind, I focused on data sections that related to topics like imagination, social justice, activism, dreaming, oppression, and community. Next, I engaged in a line-by-line analysis of the data, creating codes as I read and reread each text (see Table 3). A total of 81 codes were generated after several readings, and I conducted a final review of the data to ensure that I did not miss sections that could be grouped under codes added later in the analytic process.

After I created the initial codes, I crafted a thematic mind map (Braun & Clarke, 2006) to help me visualize the connections (see Figure 1). To create the map, I looked through the codes to identify which ones could be combined, refined, or discarded. I represented this process in the mind map by using large bubbles to show an overarching connection between codes, and I used arrows to signal codes underneath the larger categories. The arrows between the large bubbles helped me to create code networks and determine possible themes and subthemes that attend to the connecting strands.

Phases 3 and 4

In Phase 3, I checked the analytic categories against the workshop data, my journal entries and field notes, and my theoretical framework. Triangulating my data in this way assisted me in combining and collapsing the analytic categories into larger themes (see Figure 2) that cohered with the overall data corpus and aligned with my theoretical framework. In Phase 4, I further substantiated my findings by conducting a final interview with each girl to see if my interpretations aligned with or differed from their understandings. Specifically, I asked questions about why others outside of our workshop should read their stories, whether it is important to center Black girls’ stories (and why or why not), and whether their stories mirror anything from their own lives. These questions elucidated how the girls perceived

TABLE 3. Coding Example

Data Extract	Coded for:
Terrah Interview 3: I wanted to think about what the country would be like if all the people who felt like they were being oppressed just were done and kind of fought against it and started their own country where everyone was equal, which, for the most part, ended up well, but there’s always going to be people who hate other people for no reason.	1. Uprising 2. Separation 3. Oppression 4. Reality to story

the impact of their stories, and helped me to ensure that my interpretation of their stories aligned with how they viewed their work. This process also granted me a robust understanding of the themes and the connections between the girls’ stories and their lives.

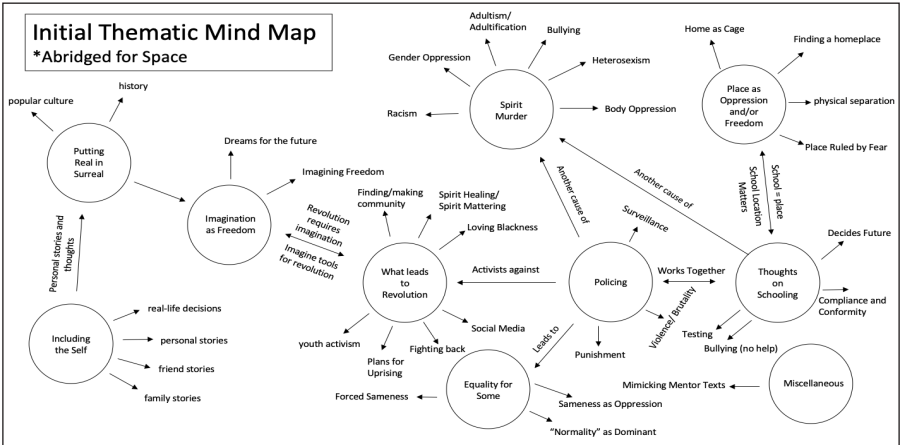


FIGURE 1. Initial thematic mind map (abridged for space)

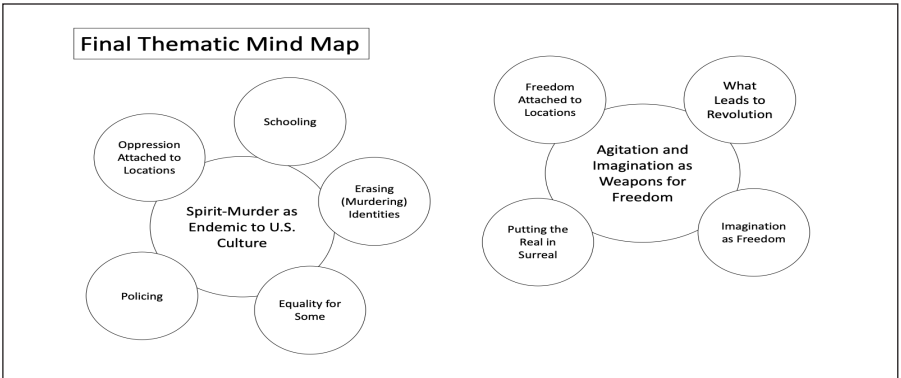


FIGURE 2. Final thematic mind map

Findings

In this section, I contextualize the girls’ writing across two themes: *spirit-murder as endemic to US culture* and *agitation and imagination as weapons for freedom*. These themes show how Black girls see and know the current world while also highlighting their dreams for a better one.

Spirit-Murder as Endemic to US Culture

The rootedness of spirit-murder in the United States is integral to each of the girls' stories, even though they are set decades into the future. For example, in Amber's story, the United States has eliminated the union, turned to anarchy, and become the States of America. Chaos and violence run rampant throughout the country, and even though there are "many outbreaks of protests for gaining peace," one of which results in the murder of the main character's mother, none of the protests are successful. When I asked Amber how we ended up in this future, she said, "The violence that's already going on now, mainly toward Black people. It's everywhere now." When I asked about what happened to the main character's mother, she stated that Maya's mom "was protesting for their rights . . . to stop the violence. The government came out and basically shut it down by shooting everyone. Everyone saw that. . . . Even Maya saw that."

Even though the country is on fire and protestors are being shot in the streets, students are still forced to go to school, but the schooling system differs slightly from ours. In a letter to her friend, Maya describes how school has changed:

The students have individual desks with holograms to do classwork at their own pace. Talking is very limited. Interactions are also limited. These precautions are to make sure that no violence or chaos is brought into the school environment. Since you left, so much has changed. The air tastes of defeat and no feelings.

Although the holographic teachers highlight the futuristic landscape of Amber's story, the other schooling aspects mirror the oppressive features of our current schooling model. Baker-Bell et al. (2017) stated that educators invoke racial violence when we force Black students to sit in classrooms while viral footage of Black death surrounds them. We invoke racial violence when we fail to provide "opportunities for young people to speak back, to, and against racial oppression" (p. 124). Amber's futuristic portrayal of schooling is an example of racial violence, as students are restricted from talking about what is happening and from having interactions with peers, even though violence rages all around them.

Amber extrapolates on our current reality, as she discusses the chaos that could ensue in a country that continues to sanction violence against Black people. Even though she uses her story as a declaration for peace and democracy, the fact that a peaceful protest results in the murder of all protestors suggests that Amber sees the rootedness of police brutality in our society. She sees the way in which police in the United States put physical bullets into those who fight for their freedom. In this case, the metaphorical bullets of silence that kill the spirit and humanity of Black people (Johnson & Bryan, 2017) become real as the government rejects calls for peace, physically silences dissenters, and restricts dialogue among the living.

Like Amber's story, Terrah's narrative also includes a schism between the states. In the story, she writes: "Long ago, due to racism, sexism, and homophobia, the country that used to be called the United States of America split into Miaeni and Idonikoes. If you were oppressed, you lived in Miaeni, and those who were in

control lived in Idonikoës.” When I asked Terrah how she created the names for both sides, she stated the following:

For the “ideal” or “perfect” side, I chose Greek because Greece is in Europe, and so I had the idea that that side would be predominantly white. And then for the other side, the invisible side, I chose a Japanese word because it’s a different race. They would be predominantly Black, or Asian, or you know.

Terrah’s writing and explanation suggest an awareness of how locations deemed perfect or more ideal are often those predominately inhabited by white people. In contrast, spaces occupied by Black people and other people of color are often considered invisible and flawed.

Terrah’s argument is clear in the plot, as the main character leaves her home and family in Miaeni to attend a school in Idonikoës. In the story, Zorella says, “I’d stayed in Miaeni since the day I was born. It never really felt like home, so that’s why I left. It meant I could go to an amazing college and escape the cage I was in.” In describing the need for Zorella to leave her homeplace, Terrah said:

After America split, all the colleges on her side of the country kind of crashed, but the colleges on the other side . . . they crashed too, but eventually they got better. So it’s like the college over there is better than any of the colleges on her side. School has always been a topic for me because I want to become a doctor. I have to go to a good medical school, but there’s not very many nearby, so I have to choose whether I want to go to a school that is a better school, but it’s farther away from my family, or go to one that’s not as good, but I get to stay close.

Terrah’s comment suggests that she understands the system of schooling and how Black youth are often required to move away from their homeplace. In this way, Terrah foregrounds how spirit-murder maps onto geographical locations by demonstrating how white people perpetuate an ethic of violence through the spaces they occupy and the places they deny people of color entry into. She indicates that spirit-murder occurs when a young person is forced to leave home in order to attend an “ideal” school. She implies that spirit-murder is so central to the United States that Black spaces will be devalued and rendered invisible a century from now.

Avenae’J’s narrative also comments on how minoritized bodies are concealed, but in her story, instead of segregating people into a separate area of the US, the government forces them to lose their identities through conformity. The setting of the story is a world where the erasure of minoritized identities is foundational. Accents are replaced with robotics to ensure that all people speak in a certain way. Although the specific dialect is not mentioned, based on the erasure of accents, one can assume that Standard American English is required in this futuristic world. Additionally, baggy all-black clothing is used to hide race, body shape, and gender, effectively deleting aspects of people’s identities. If people do not agree to erase who they are, they are given a drug that psychologically and emotionally murders them.

The white spruce tree is used to keep the people in the town, and its bark and sticks are used in essences to deprive people of their personality. They are only used for the ones who start uprisings and show their faces and bodies to people.

In this way, equality is achieved through compliance with a normalized default of dominance that renders obscure all who fall outside the norm.

Later in the story, Avenae'J introduces Area 140, an underground government facility that includes a forced reproduction area; a place where newborn children are taken from their parents and raised until they are 14; a police officer training section; a medical lab for producing the personality serums; and a torture chamber called the Change Room. Area 140 is a horrifying place, but the most shocking aspect of it is revealed at the end of the story, when Avenae'J and her friends find their way above ground: "When they turn around, they see a familiar white stone brick building with an archway and vines and moss growing all over it. The Change Room is beneath their high school, meaning that Area 140 is beneath the town." When I spoke to Avenae'J about Area 140, she said, "Everyone thought it was so far away. . . . They thought it was far away in the country somewhere, so I wanted it to be right underneath everything . . . right underneath places where they were."

Like Terrah, Avenae'J shows how oppression is imbued in locations, but her depiction of the ideal and the invisible is shown through those who follow the rules and those who refuse to comply. The ideal citizens master the art of erasure, murdering their own spirits to avoid physical violence. The invisible are those who are taken to the Change Room, tortured and altered so that their personhood is minimized. Moreover, the fact that a chamber of physical torture, psychological violence, and culture eradication is hidden beneath the school must be highlighted, as Black youth are often spiritually murdered in classrooms (Johnson et al., 2017). In this way, Avenae'J suggests that spirit-murder is in the soil, right underneath everything, under the very institutions that are supposed to love the Black youth who inhabit the space.

Collectively, the girls' stories showcase how spirit-murder is a cancerous element that plagues the body of the United States. From the prevalence of police brutality to the pervasiveness of race and gender oppression, they show how injustice will not just go away. Although this seems like a negative portrayal of the future, it is important to acknowledge that they are describing the world as it is right now. They engage in Afrosurrealism by using science fiction to describe the current moment of racial violence, anti-Blackness, and white supremacy, showcasing how these topics are entrenched in the roots of our past, our present, and possibly our future. Using science fiction, the girls depart from realistic methods of seeing and thinking and transport readers to futuristic worlds that force us to relive modern horrors.

Agitation and Dreaming as Weapons for Freedom

Staples (2010) defined an agitator as "an individual who repels censorship of self and 'others' by re-naming, critically questioning, and transforming wounding

words, images, and practices that are rendered valid by senses of superiority, twisted humor, or titillation” (p. 65). In other words, an agitator chooses disruption and unsettles the normalcy of oppression for themselves and for others. Developing the “Agitator Identity Trait” (Staples, 2010) often requires activists to generate critical questions, produce counternarratives, promote collective freedom dreaming (Love, 2019), employ agitation literacies (Muhammad, 2019b), and engage in private and public action. Thus, like the Black Radical Imagination, being an agitator means pursuing innovative solutions to oppressive constrictions.

Agitation is present in each of the girls’ stories, but how the girls employ strategies of agitation through their imaginative stories differs. For example, the world in Amber’s story is filled with violence and bedlam, but her main character initially refuses to engage in physical or verbal attacks, even when her classmates bully her. Maya’s attitude toward violence is shown at the beginning of the story:

Maya was never one for the violence and chaos she grew up with. . . . As Maya skates to school on her hoverboard, with her long dark, brownish hair flowing freely, she passes by the other kids’ teasing and criticizing words. . . . Every time they would make those remarks, she thought of retaliation, closer and closer to fighting back, but as she thought about retaliating, she remembered what her mother used to tell her. . . . “Violence should never be fought with violence.”

Even though Maya is surrounded by violence, her mother’s mantra and wrongful death in the name of peace push Maya away from violence and give her the strength to ignore those around her. In this way, Maya repels her classmates’ bullying through passivity, disrupting their taunts by refusing to give a response. Later in the story, however, after a random boy purposely shoves her and laughs through a fake apology, Maya decides that she has had enough. At that moment, she resolves that peaceful protest is no longer sufficient: “The next thing Maya knew was that she was swinging. She hit the boy so hard he was on the ground groaning in pain, hints of blood on his face.”

I spoke to Amber about this plot choice because she had foregrounded the character’s commitment to peace earlier in the story, and she stated that she included the scene “because [Maya’s] had enough of it, and in her head . . . it’s just ice breaking and thawing out, and it finally just broke.” In other words, years of bullying by her classmates, together with the violence occurring all around her, weighed on Maya, and eventually her passive veneer shattered. Through Maya, then, Amber comments on how some fights for justice, whether personal or societal, require people to find creative solutions to combat injustice. In her fight, Maya represents an agitator stance by refusing to engage in violence when possible, but also selecting a violent response when necessary. In this way, Amber uses her imagination to construct a world in which Black girls act against injustice in various ways, including nonviolence and physical altercations. She calls upon the Black Radical Imagination to conceive of a world where Black people have the authority to choose how they rectify an oppressive situation.

Terrah's story provides another vision of imaginative justice as she highlights the need for coalition-building among people with diverse identities. In the story, she implies that the wall separating Miaeni from Idonikoes runs vertically down the middle of the United States. Planes are not allowed to cross the boundary, and the only way to cross from one side to the other is through a single entrance. When Zorella makes the trip to her new school on the other side of the wall, she is forced to go through a barrier that will physically separate her from her family. Still, Terrah states that Zorella's move to Idonikoes is progressive because the Idonikonian people "want to start small. They don't want to invite over everyone or allow everyone to come in just yet. They kind of want to experiment and see how the first small group of people goes before opening it up to everyone." So, Zorella's school attendance could be a catalyst for change.

Zorella is young, and she is "uncomfortable at first because she's used to being able to play with her little brother, helping him with his homework, seeing her parents when they come home, and having family time." However, her discomfort dissipates when she meets Thea, a biracial trans girl, on the train. Once they've made their introductions, Zorella asks Thea why she lives in Miaeni, especially since she "seems so normal." Thea replies,

It's an interesting story, actually. My mom used to live in Idonikoes, and so did my dad. My mom is Asian. She came out as demisexual to her parents and they got really upset. She lived out in the street for a while before meeting my dad. . . . They fell in love and decided to move to Miaeni.

Thea is white-presenting, so to Zorella, she seems "normal" because Miaeni is mostly Black and Idonikoes is mostly white. However, Thea's story shows that while her parents may have started on the "ideal" side of the country, prejudice toward her mother's sexuality resulted in her grandparents and society forcing Thea's parents to move to Miaeni. Therefore, people are not only cast out due to their race, but they are shunned because of their sexual and gender identities.

Both Thea and Zorella say they want to be roommates because they do not know anyone else, but I was further interested in why Terrah wanted Thea to be Zorella's roommate, because it seemed as though Zorella was outwardly adjusting to her move. She replied:

I needed somebody who could help Zorella become more comfortable with that area. And since her best friend wasn't coming . . . you know, there had to be somebody who was just the person who kept her level-headed and on-the-ground instead of wishing she could go back.

Although Terrah focused her response on Zorella, details from the story suggest that both characters needed each other to feel comfortable. Through the fictional history of the United States and the treatment of Thea's mother, the story implies that even though they have both been accepted to the school, Zorella and Thea

will be ostracized once they arrive because of their identities. Instead of attempting to integrate the space alone, however, they join forces and create a small space of liberation through friendship. Thus, both characters engage in collective freedom dreaming (Love, 2019), as they build a space “of love, solidarity, and resiliency, as [they] demand what seems impossible” (p. 12). They create a space of joy as they collectively take up space in a society that considers them invisible. Through her characters, then, Terrah showcases the Black Radical Imagination by having them refuse a victim status and create a coalition initiated in the dreams of two youth whose struggles are bound together.

The vision of activism represented in Avenae’J’s story aligns with Terrah’s, as she foregrounds the need for coalition-building in the journey toward justice. The protagonist does not infiltrate Area 140 alone; instead, she is accompanied by her brother, Perdue, and her love interest, Phillipé. They engage in agitation by daring to journey into the underground government bunker with the goal of finding evidence that will start an uprising, and their collective work is grounded in the idea that justice requires people to work together. However, although Avenae’J’s inclusion of this type of grouping aligns with Terrah’s, how Avenae’J centers agitation literacies—or “ways of reading, writing, thinking, and speaking that are connected to the intention and action to upset, disturb, disquiet, and unhinge systemic oppression” (Muhammad, 2019b, p. 352)—sets her work apart.

While underground, Perdue, Phillipé, and Avenae’J find the Change Room, the chamber where the government tortures people into compliance. Once there, they see a bloody, beaten man being dragged into a cell by a police officer. They decide to help, so they pick the lock of the cell in an attempt to free him. Inside, they see “a traumatized young man sitting in the corner with his head in his arms, and slash marks across his arms and forehead.” Avenae’J immediately pulls out a first-aid kit, but Perdue produces a camera.

“What’s that for? Phillipé questions.

“For evidence,” Perdue replies. “If you want to start an uprising, you have to make sure you get photographic evidence that shows the people why they should rise against the powerful. Don’t clean him up yet Avenae’J. I’ve got to get good and genuine photos.”

Perdue’s response suggests an awareness of how visual proof of injustice and the influence of viral photos are integral components of revolution. Avenae’J confirmed the connection between Purdue’s photographs and social media activism by saying, “There are some crimes that aren’t being spoken about . . . ones that really matter. . . . The only way the crimes are being spoken about is through social media. Not even the news is speaking about it.” Through Perdue’s photography, Avenae’J shows the connection between visual literacies and agitation literacies, as the pictures are meant to disrupt systemic oppression and ignite an uprising.

The use of agitation literacies is also represented at the end of the story, once Avenae’J, Perdue, and Phillipé make their way out of Area 140. At home, the three

begin “researching people’s addresses, hacking into private/personal servers, clearing up photos, copying SD cards, and making antidotes” for the people whose personalities have been erased. Even though they engage in these acts of interference, they know they will need more support to truly enact change, so they use the agitation literacy practice of letter writing to find support.

If you are receiving this letter, then that means that you have been asked to join an uprising. This is the year everything changes, it has gone on this way for too long. People want to express themselves again, like how it was 50+ years ago, we want to be able to have relationships with the people we love. We have witnessed The Change Room ourselves, and what is there is horrendous. . . . The uprising will take place July 4, 2070 at 12:00 pm, the uprising will not start unless we feel that we have enough people, so we hope all of you join, because we cannot do this by ourselves, we need everyone.

In the rest of the letter, the group mentions pictures of the Change Room as well as photographs of the horrendous practices within Area 140. They also provide directions for how to build guns so potential allies will be able to fight back against the police. As Avenae’J stated in the interview, “[The people] don’t have guns and stuff so they have to make them because the officers, they have guns, they have tasers, they have dangerous weapons. They’re not just gonna go in bare-handed.” Thus, the letter acts as a protest document that will not only provide evidence that can evoke empathy but also assist readers in building weapons that may be necessary in the fight.

By ending with this letter, Avenae’J aligns with the historical legacy of Black writing as agitation. She shows how this particular form of resistance literacy can not only create awareness but also incite social change. Like the writings of Black activists before her, the words in the letter “were not only meant to lie as words on a page but also intended to enflame some form of action or agitation” (Muhammad, 2019b, p. 352). Additionally, in creating an imaginative landscape that questions police brutality and comments on ways to quell the injustice, Avenae’J shows a connection to the Black Radical Imagination by paying homage to surrealist notions of liberty, rebellion, creativity, and love, as she unites all three within the characters and their actions.

In each of their stories, the girls extrapolate on oppressions that plague society, including policing and surveillance, geographical oppression, schools as trauma sites, and forced identity erasure. However, rather than position futurity in spaces of psychological and emotional death, each girl chooses to center how Black girls and their chosen communities can upend oppression and implement widespread societal change. They engage in Afrosurrealist thinking by focusing on the real world, then departing from it in order to create future possibilities centered in Black freedom. Thus, the girls’ science fiction writing acts as a means to liberate the unconscious, as they show readers diverse ways of countering social, economic, and political oppression. They use imaginative stories to provide blueprints for activism and proposals for how we get free.

Discussion

Butler (2017) argued that Black women's writing often blurs the personal, the intellectual, and the political, as they explore the context of their lives in connection to their demands for a socially just future. Because of this, Black women's stories can provide unique insight into our "ways of being, knowing, and surviving, as well as their/our contributions to the ongoing fight for justice" (Butler, 2017, p. 155). I contend that Black girls' science fiction writing can provide teachers and researchers with unique insight into Black girls' "ways of being, knowing, and surviving," and that their science fiction stories—that blur the personal, political, and imaginary—act as weapons that can be used in the fight against injustice.

The girls depict the harsh landscape of our current social reality, and they identify how social injustice affects Black girls' lives. Amber highlights how violence consumes the US and how Black girls are often forced to navigate that violence alone. Terrah shows how physical spaces are critical to conversations about power and privilege, as young Black girls must analyze how their geographical locations affect their futures. Avenae'J tells the story of numerous Black girls who are asked to exterminate themselves in order to avoid ostracization and violence. Rather than solely extrapolating on injustice, however, they also ask readers to consider their proposals for freedom. Amber suggests a combination of violence and non-violence; Terrah recommends coalition-building and collectively taking up space; and Avenae'J advocates for community-building and agitation literacies. Thus, the girls use science fiction not only to show how they see the world, but to unleash the imagination from realistic constrictions and dream of social change.

Amber, Avenae'J, and Terrah show readers their freedom dreams in a world that continuously tells them that their lives and futures are meaningless. They center Afrosurrealism as they place Black people at the core of their science fiction stories, not as the obstacle, but as the solution. They engage in Black liberatory fantasy, as they foreground dreams of disruption that challenge the hold of whiteness (Dumas & ross, 2016) on Black girls' futures. They promote the Black Radical Imagination by journeying into spaces of freedom that could not be realized without dreaming of the currently unrealistic. So, as English teachers and literacy researchers continue conversations on how we can (re)imagine, (re)envision, and (re)vitalize education, it is imperative for us to construct spaces of learning that are open to uplifting Black girls' dreams. Black girls are already reenvisioning, reimagining, and revitalizing. We need to catch up.

To create a space where Black girls feel safe enough to share their freedom dreams, we must center them as the experts they are, honoring them as partners in research and teaching. Black girls are the specialists of their sociopolitical locations. They are the experts of their experiences. They are the scholars of their presents and futures. As Muhammad (2019a) argued, we must cultivate the genius already inside of them, recognizing the "brilliance, intellect, ability, cleverness, and artistry that have been flowing through their minds and spirits across the generations" (p. 13). To construct a space for Black girls to write their freedom dreams, I had to focus on the girls' knowledge—what they knew about the world, what they thought about

their community, what elements they believed were essential for narrative writing. I had to create a communal space in which the girls felt comfortable enough to tell me how they thought and what they dreamed. Of course, my background as a speculative fiction reader and writer influenced how the girls engaged with me, but CREE requires us to “love the multiple ways people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds express their pain and work toward liberation” (Johnson, 2018, p. 121). That is, even if it is not a part of our background, our job as educators and researchers is to acknowledge that there are multiple ways of being, knowing, and surviving. Dreaming is one of them.

Making space for Black girls to write about how they see the world and how that world affects their freedom dreams is essential to the future practice of literacy research and English teaching, because it is a process of humanization in action. There is humanity and freedom in dreaming a future, and to ignore those future dreams is to disregard the future humanity of Black people. Educators must allow Black girls the space they need to embrace the Afrosurreal, to let go of realistic constraints and dream of Black liberation. This means creating lessons and research studies that center Black girls' speculative fiction writing, oral and digital storytelling, and other artistic methods of freedom dreaming. It means including Black speculative fiction in our syllabi and examining how those stories represent the Black Radical Imagination. It means making space for Black girls to excavate their pasts and presents and write about possible futures.

CREE asks educators to explicitly address racial violence, include activist contexts and social justice movements, highlight how literacy can be used to uplift minoritized groups, and build on the complex literacy practices of Black youth. Through science fiction stories, the girls addressed the endemic nature of racial violence in the US while also acknowledging how agitation and imagination can be used as tools for freedom. They used their narrative writing to uplift themselves, and they showcased the complexity of their literacy practices by connecting their realities to their imaginations. Freedom dreaming is a tradition rooted in liberatory literacy practices, and science fiction writing is a method in which Black people have expressed both their pain and their dreams for liberation. CREE imagines classrooms where “Black children are taught to love every ounce of their Blackness” (Johnson, 2018, p. 121), and we can create these classrooms by acknowledging the love of Blackness imbued in Black imaginations.

Conclusion

Even without a visible activist component, Black imaginations are radical, especially in a world that consistently reiterates that Black stories, hopes, and dreams are meaningless. A focus on Black imagination is critical, as it allows space for Black youth to challenge anti-Blackness and white supremacy and imagine worlds in which they are loved. It makes space for Black girls to create new worlds in which Black freedom is central. Black girls' dreams have laid the foundation for many progressive movements, so it is critical that educators acknowledge and nurture their realities alongside their dreams. If English educators and literacy scholars truly

want to show “an *unapologetic, unashamed, and unconditional* love for Blackness and for Black lives” (Johnson, 2018, p. 109 emphasis in original to the intext citation), then we must also showcase an unwavering love for Black dreams. If we truly want to create classrooms where the humanity of Black people is centered, then we must acknowledge Black pasts, presents, and futures. Black girls have historically engaged in science fiction, and their dreams have much to teach us, but we must make sure those dreams have room to breathe.

REFERENCES

- BAKER-BELL, A., BUTLER, T., & JOHNSON, L. (2017). The pain and the wounds: A call for Critical Race English Education in the wake of racial violence. *English Education*, 49(2), 116–129.
- BORSHEIM-BLACK, C., & SARIGIANIDES, S. T. (2019). *Letting go of literary whiteness: Anti-racist literature instruction for white students*. Teachers College Press.
- BRAUN, V., & CLARKE, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101.
- BROWN, R. N., CALLIER, D. M., GARNER, P. R., HILL, D. C., OLAYIWOLA, P., & ROBINSON, J. L. (2015). Staging Black girl utopias: A Sweetwater tribute. *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, 4(1), 137–149.
- BUTLER, T. T. (2017). #Say[ing]HerName as critical demand: English education in the age of erasure. *English Education*, 49(2), 153–178.
- CARRINGTON, A. (2016). *Speculative Blackness: The future of race in science fiction*. University of Minnesota Press.
- COLLINS, P. H. (2000). *Black feminist thought: Knowledge, consciousness, and the politics of empowerment* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- DACHE, A. (2019). Ferguson's Black Radical Imagination and the scyborgs of community-student resistance. *The Review of Higher Education*, 42, 63–84.
- DAVIS, A. (1989). *Women, culture, and politics*. Vintage Books.
- DUMAS, M. J., & ROSS, K. M. (2016). “Be real Black for me”: Imagining BlackCrit in education. *Urban Education*, 51(4), 415–442.
- FRANCIS, T. (2013). Introduction: The no-theory chant of Afrosurrealism. *Black Camera*, 5(1), 95–111.
- DYSON, A. H. (1995). The courage to write: Child meaning making in a contested world. *Language Arts*, 72(5), 324–333.
- GREEN, K. L. (2020). Radical imagination and “otherwise possibilities” in qualitative research. *International Journal of Qualitative Studies in Education*, 33(1), 115–127.
- HALL, T. (2011). Designing from their own social worlds: The digital story of three African American young women. *English Teaching*, 10(1), 7–20.
- HOOKS, B. (2000). *Feminism is for everybody: Passionate politics*. Pluto Press.
- Imarisha, W. (2015). Introduction. In a. brown & W. Imarisha (Eds.), *Octavia's brood: Science fiction stories from social justice movements* (pp. 3–6). AK Press.
- JOHNSON, L. L. (2018). Where do we go from here? Toward a Critical Race English Education. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 53(2), 102–124.
- JOHNSON, L., & BRYAN, N. (2017). Using our voices, losing our bodies: Michael Brown, Trayvon Martin, and the spirit murders of Black male professors in the academy. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 20(2), 163–177.
- JOHNSON, L. L., JACKSON, J., STOVALL, D. O., & BASZILE, D. T. (2017). “Loving Blackness to death”: (Re)imagining ELA classrooms in a time of racial chaos. *English Journal*, 106(4), 60–66.

- KELLEY, R. D. G. (2002). *Freedom dreams: The Black Radical Imagination*. Beacon Press.
- LADSON-BILLINGS, G., & TATE, W., IV. (1995). Toward a Critical Race Theory of education. *Teachers College Record*, 97(1), 47–68.
- LOVE, B. (2019). *We want to do more than survive: Abolitionist teaching and the pursuit of freedom*. Beacon Press.
- MILLER, D. S. (2013). Afrosurreal manifesto: Black is the new black—a 21st-century manifesto. *Black Camera*, 5(1), 113–117.
- MORRELL, E. (2005). Critical English education. *English Education*, 37(4), 312–321.
- MUHAMMAD, G. (2012). Creating spaces for change. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 56(3), 203–211.
- MUHAMMAD, G. E. (2015a). Iqra: African American Muslim girls reading and writing for social change. *Written Communication*, 32(3), 286–316.
- MUHAMMAD, G. E. (2015b). The role of literary mentors in writing development: How African American women's literature supported the writings of adolescent girls. *The Journal of Education*, 195(2), 5–14.
- MUHAMMAD, G. E. (2015c). Searching for full vision: Writing representations of African American adolescent girls. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 49(3), 224–247.
- MUHAMMAD, G. E. (2019a). *Cultivating genius: An equity framework for culturally and historically responsive literacy*. Scholastic.
- MUHAMMAD, G. E. (2019b). Protest, power, and possibilities: The need for agitation literacies. *Journal of Adolescent & Adult Literacy*, 63(3), 351–355.
- MUHAMMAD, G. E., & HADDIX, M. (2016). Centering Black girls' literacies: A review of literature on the multiple ways of knowing of Black girls. *English Education*, 48(4), 299–336.
- NEVILLE, M. L. (2020). "I can't believe I didn't learn this in school": "Refusing secondly" as an anti-racist English education framework. *Changing English*, 27(2), 193–207.
- POLLECK, J., & SPENCE-DAVIS, T. (2020). Centering #BlackLivesMatter to confront injustice, inspire advocacy, and develop literacies. *English Journal*, 109(4), 87–94.
- REBELLINO, R. L., GRICE, K. M., & MURPHY, C. E. (2019). Engaging with hip-hop, resistance, and remix in *All American boys* and viral YouTube videos. In R. Ginsberg & W. Glenn (Eds.), *Engaging with multicultural YA literature in the secondary classroom: Critical approaches for critical educators* (pp. 132–141). Routledge.
- RHODES, J. P. (1999). *Free within ourselves: Fiction lessons for Black authors*. Doubleday.
- ROOKS, N. (1989). Writing themselves into existence: The intersection of history and literature in writings on Black women. *Iowa Journal of Literary Studies*, 10(1), 51–63.
- SARIGIANIDES, S. T. (2019). Performative youth: The literacy possibilities of de-essentializing adolescence. *English Education*, 51(4), 376–403.
- SPENCER, R. (2020). *Afrosurrealism: The African diaspora's surrealist fiction*. Routledge.
- STAPLES, J. M. (2010). Encouraging agitation: Teaching teacher candidates to confront words that wound. *Teacher Education Quarterly*, 37(1), 53–72.
- UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN. (2020). *Social identity wheel overview and framing material*. <https://sites.lsa.umich.edu/inclusive-teaching/wp-content/uploads/sites/355/2018/12/Social-Identity-Wheel-3-2.pdf>
- WILLIAMS, P. (1991). *The alchemy of race and rights: Diary of a law professor*. Harvard University Press.
- WINN, M. T. (2010a). "Betwixt and between": Literacy, liminality, and the celling of Black girls. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 13(4), 425–447.
- WINN, M. T. (2010b). "Our side of the story": Moving incarcerated youth voices from margins to center. *Race Ethnicity and Education*, 13(3), 313–325.

WINN, M. T. (2012). The politics of desire and possibility in urban playwriting: (Re)reading and (re)writing the script. *Pedagogies: An International Journal*, 7(4), 317–332.

WINN, M. T. (2015). Exploring the literate trajectories of youth across time and space. *Mind, Culture, and Activity*, 22(1), 58–67.

S. R. Toliver is an assistant professor of literacy and secondary humanities at the University of Colorado, Boulder.