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Constituting a sense of "American" identity and place through language and literary study: A curriculum history, 1898-1912

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ABSTRACT: This article examines constructions of "American" identity and place in the first influential guides for English teaching published in the United States at the cusp of the 20th Century. It recovers how English teaching was to weaken youths' ties to more immediate people and places and to reorient their sense of self, others and the world around imagined communities that differentiated America/Americans from uncivilised, irrational and illiterate "others". Language and literature were directed to reorder thought, inculcate the spirit of peoples and places, and locate individuals, races and nations temporally and spatially in sacred-secular redemption narratives. The study historicises practices of English teaching that have inscribed people and places within a religion-science-nation-West horizon, constituting distinctive experiences of sameness/difference, nationalism, and place that have spanned more than a century of English teaching.

KEYWORDS: English teaching, curriculum history, nation-building, imagined communities, place

INTRODUCTION

English has often been understood as a school subject derived from university disciplines of language and literary study. Since the turn of the 20th Century, however, the subject English has also played a central, though often overlooked role in modern nation-building by fostering youths' self-disciplinary capacities and attuning them to norms of individual and national identity (Brass, 2010; Cormack, 2003; Donald, 1992; Green & Cormack, 2008, 2011; Green & Reid, 2002; Hunter, 1988; Morgan, 1990, 1995; Patterson, 2000). In the United States, these practices of modern governance have been connected to constructions of "America" that are not primarily geographical, but constituted in discourses that inscribe people and places within what Baker (2012) calls a religion-science-nation-West horizon.

This article examines such constructions of "American" identity and place in influential books written at the turn of the 20th Century that Applebee (1974) credits with representing the earliest professional consciousness within US English education. My readings of Hinsdale (1898), Chubb (1902), and Carpenter, Baker and Scott (1903) examine the ways in which English teaching was named an important means to constitute a particular kind of "America" (and "American") in response to a series of fears linked to urbanisation, industrialisation, the perceived decline of Christianity, and demographic changes brought about by the migration of southern blacks and influxes of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe (Popkewitz, 2008a). Recovering this history can unsettle the progressive historiography of English education in the United States, attend to the ways in which English teaching has constituted historically contingent senses of time and place, and offer historical

perspectives on present struggles to reconnect English teaching to local knowledge and more inclusive notions of national language and identity.

HISTORICISING ENGLISH TEACHING, NATION-BUILDING AND PLACE

This historical study departs methodologically from more established studies of "place". In the United States, "place-based education" is an umbrella term that brings together several traditions that aim to connect teaching and learning processes to everyday life in local communities, including service learning, environmental education, culturally relevant teaching, critical pedagogy, family and community literacies, and project-based learning (Greenwood, 2010). Within curriculum studies, reconceptualists have also examined place from the perspectives of social psychoanalysis, critical theory, literary theory, and autobiography, particularly to understand the complexity of the American south, southern identity, and Southern place as curriculum (Casemore, 2007; Kincheloe & Pinar, 1991; Reynolds, 2013). This study takes a different path through "new curriculum history" (Baker, 2009c) to draw attention to the ways in which English has been structured in part to displace youths' connections to local community and place in order to establish racial and national imaginaries as dominant forms of belonging. In this sense, my study is concerned with the historicity of place, broadly defined, and the ways in which English teaching has been implicated in the construction of certain kinds of American-ness since the cusp of the 20th Century.

Transnational histories of education have linked the emergence of mass popular education to modernisation processes that converged between the late 18th and early 20th Century (Trohler, Popkewitz, & Labaree, 2011). Processes of modern nation-building unfolded differently across nations and territories. In spite of national and regional differences, however, the education systems that emerged across "the long nineteenth century" shared a common objective – the making of republican citizens who were rational and self-governing (Trohler et al., 2011). At their historical emergence, primary schools and (later) secondary schools were understood as historically contingent solutions to a central problematic of modern governance:

> creating a society of self-regulating individuals who pursue the public good of their own volition. But for this mechanism to work, there needs to be an institution that promotes systematic internalization of political and moral principles within the individual psyche, and that institutional is the modern public school. (Trohler et al., 2011, pp. vii-viii)

In the United States, English educators have only begun to examine the ways in which practices of English teaching have been aligned historically with these modern governing practices (Patterson, 2013). In other Anglophone countries, however, curriculum histories influenced by Foucault's work have identified practices of English teaching that have been employed for more than a century to align individual psyches and souls with the governing patterns of social, economic, and political life (Green & Cormack, 2011; Peel, Patterson & Gerlach, 2000). This scholarship has identified at least two ways in which English teaching has been central to the nation-building project of modern schooling. On one hand, the modern English classroom adapted a disciplinary apparatus from Christian pastoral care that aimed to construct youths' self-disciplinary capacities through the child's emulation of the teacher and

through literary pedagogies that encouraged personal reflection and youths' sympathetic identification with a range of sociopolitical norms (Green, Cormack & Patterson, 2013; Hunter, 1988; Peel et al., 2000). On the other hand, historians have taken up poststructural theories to foreground the ways in which print and other symbolic forms have been structured in English classrooms to constitute particular fields of thought, action and desire (Green & Reid, 2008).

These practices of English teaching have often been organized around constructions of racial, national, and colonial identity. In a history of modern literary education in England, for example, Donald (1992) noted how constructions of "literature", "nation", and "race" were joined in a discursive nexus that was largely disseminated through modern literary education (Donald, 1992). The category "literature" established in mass popular schooling helped invent and establish a national (and colonial) sign community that differentiated people, places, and language relative to a hierarchy of values that inscribed commitments to British national culture and empire (Donald, 1992, p. 48). Thus, students' sense of England as a "nation" was an *effect* of cultural technologies; that is, modern literature and teaching practices helped *produce* what could be recognised as a "national culture" and also worked to construct people's sense of "*belonging to* or *in a* place, being *at home in a place"* (Donald, 1992, p. 50 italics in original).

In Canada and Australia, the emergence of the English subjects at the cusp of the 20th Century was also governed in part by notions of "English-ness" that inscribed politics of race, nation-building and British imperialism. In Canada, "English" language and literature were understood as important means to restructure symbolic fields in order to transform alien races (Morgan, 1990). The emergent English curriculum was to order significations of "practical utility, enlightened patriotism, humane ideals...bonds of sentiment and bonds of race" that were normalised through notions of a "common heritage" and "common culture" that located England at the spiritual centre of the universe (Morgan, 1990). Similarly, following the 1901 constitutional formation of an Australian nation out of former British colonies, the English curriculum was designed to construct an individual who was both "subject" to the British empire and a "citizen" of Australia (Green & Cormack, 2011). As Green and Cormack note, "the quite specific literacy project of the public school, distinctively organised in terms of nation and empire within a changing world order, was profoundly implicated in the discursive construction of Australian identity" (Green & Cormack, 2011, p. 242). Thus, the English subjects were as much about nation and empire as language, literacy and literature (Green & Cormack, 2008).

THE STUDY

These histories have employed Foucaultian notions of governmentality, pastoral power, and subjectivity to account for English education's role in constituting individual and national identities. These perspectives can also illuminate how English teaching has also been implicated in the discursive construction of place, broadly defined, through practices that have constituted particular experiences of home, belonging and identification with particular geographies, communities, and national imaginaries (Donald, 1992). For the purposes of this thematic issue, this article revisits the emergent professional literature of US English education to highlight the

ways in which English was established in part to counteract the educative influences of local place by constituting racial and national imaginaries as dominant forms of belonging. My study tries to recover these largely forgotten aspects of English's history by revisiting three of the first influential texts specifically written for teachers of English in US elementary and primary schools (Applebee, 1974):

- B. A. Hinsdale's (1898) *Teaching the Language Arts.* A former school superintendent and then Professor of the Art and Science of Teaching at the University of Michigan, Hinsdale's wide-ranging book of more than 200 pages sought to define the English language arts, trace the origins of children's knowledge and language development, distinguish the work of elementary and secondary schools, and frame the curricular and pedagogical knowledge of English for elementary and secondary school teachers.
- Percival Chubb's (1902) *The Teaching of English in the Elementary School and the Secondary School*. A social reformer remembered more for his activism in the ethical culture movement, Chubb wrote this 400+-page book while Principal of the High School Department of Ethical Schools, New York. Written for teachers, this comprehensive book outlined "leading principles governing the study of English" in the service of the author's "plea for unity and continuity in the English course from its beginnings in kindergarten up through the high school" (p. vii).
- Carpenter, Baker and Scott's (1903) *The Teaching of English in the Elementary and the Secondary School*. Much like Chubb's (1902) book of the same title, this 400-page book was written "to define and determine the aims, scope, subject-matter, and methods" of elementary and secondary English teaching, based upon "a careful summary of the most sound opinions" with respect to the "instruction of our youth in their mother tongue" (Preface). Unlike Chubb's (1902) book, however, this book was written by university faculty at prestigious universities: George Carpenter (Columbia University) and Fred Newton Scott (University of Michigan) were professors of rhetoric and composition, and Franklin T. Baker was professor of education in Teachers College, Columbia University. A decade later, the newly formed National Council of Teachers of English would name Scott (1912, 1913) and Baker (1914) the first two Presidents of the Council.

These comprehensive books were largely responsible for outlining the first influential visions of English teaching for the 20th Century – particularly the latter books, which were reprinted regularly into the 1920s (Applebee, 1974). To contribute an alternative history of English's emergence in the United States, I revisit central arguments across these texts that represented an American nation-building project that has been obscured by traditional histories that attribute the subject's beginnings to the 1894 Committee of Ten, university disciplines of literary study, and Americans' "progressive" rejections of cultural élitism (for example, Applebee, 1974; Hook, 1979; Lindemann, 2010). To unpack this modern nation-building project and the ways in which it set out to reconstitute Americans' sense of place, I then trace "dividing practices" in these texts that differentiated "Americans" from other nations, races, and populations. These distinctions helped order emergent visions of subject English that set out to interrupt personal, place-based identities and to constitute racial and national imaginaries. Lastly, I illustrate how language and literature were positioned to reorder thought, inculcate the spirit of peoples and places, and locate

individuals, races and nations temporally and spatially in sacred-secular redemption narratives. In these ways, English teaching functioned to construct individual and collective identities in relation to certain constructions of place that were geographical as well as temporal, religious, racial and national.

ENGLISH TEACHING AND NATION-BUILDING IN THE U.S.A.

Histories published by the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) have largely naturalised the narrative that elementary and secondary English took on their modern form at the cusp of the 20th Century as part of the battle between ancient and modern subjects. In this narrative, established by Applebee's (1974) history, English emerged as a viable school subject when it joined together previously distinct areas of study, including rhetoric, oratory, spelling, grammar, literary history and reading. For Applebee, the Report of the Committee of Ten (1894) provided the unifying framework that organised English curriculum and pedagogy around two objects of study:

> The main objects of the teaching of English in schools seem to be two: (1) to enable the pupil to understand the expressed thoughts of others and to give expression of thoughts of his own; and (2) to cultivate a taste for reading, to give the pupil some acquaintance with good literature, and to furnish him with the means of extending that acquaintance. (Applebee, 1974, p. 33)

English solidified its status as a core school subject over the next two decades. Applebee (1974) and subsequent histories of the NCTE have narrated the subject's rise as a progressive reform movement galvanised by educators' opposition to uniform college entrance requirements imposed by élite colleges and universities concerned about the poor writing of college freshman (for example, Hook, 1979; Lindemann, 2010). This opposition to college entrance requirements is now celebrated as English educators asserting their professional autonomy in a principled rejection of élitist education, prescriptive curricula that limited teachers' autonomy, and a commitment to the more inclusive education of the "common school" (Applebee, 1974; Hook, 1979; Lindemann, 2010). Histories of the NCTE, in particular, have credited these formative years with establishing a "broad and inclusive agenda" in English education marked by consistent commitments to teacher professionalism, social justice, education scholarship, and "progressive" positions from the early 20th Century to early 21st Century (Lindemann, 2010).

This progressive narrative of English's emergence in the United States accounts for some key educational conflicts in the late 19th and early 20th Century. However, this historiography has also obscured broader issues associated with the role of vernacular language education in the project of modern nation-building as represented in the influential work of Hinsdale (1898), Chubb (1902), and Carpenter, Baker and Scott (1903).

At first glance, Hinsdale's (1898) *Teaching the Language-Arts* seemingly validates Applebee's (1974) account of the 1894 Committee of Ten Report providing a unifying framework for the English language arts. The book opened with an explicit discussion of the perceived deterioration of writing among Harvard freshman and worked towards a comprehensive vision of English teaching that combined speech,

reading and composition as "Language-Arts". Already in the first paragraph of the preface, however, Hinsdale (1898) explicitly set out "to take a broader view of the subject" (ix), orienting English teaching around the problem of national welfare.

For Hinsdale (1898), the crisis of freshman writing at Harvard was only narrowly about college entrance requirements – and more broadly about "[t]he industrial, commercial, and political tensions of American society" brought about by changing social conditions, including the "relatively low standard of culture prevailing in this country", which was itself brought about by a "more heterogeneous class of persons" matriculating through high schools and post-secondary education (pp. xvi-xvii). Here Hinsdale wrote that the "technical" or "practical" views of English as language, literature and composition failed to recognise the "higher function" of subject English. The "broader and more fundamental view of the subject" recognised that language conditioned all other discipline and culture (p. 17); thus, English language and literature were less objects of study than means to discipline and condition how youth experienced their self, others and the world.

Similarly, Chubb's (1902) argument was that common statements about the aims of English teaching (Committee of Ten) were "not only inadequate but misleading" (p. 236). In his words, the received frameworks of reading, written expression and literature embodied the "bookish view" that did not go far enough to ascertain the "large human view" or "social view" of subject English. English should not be taught primarily for the "linguistic values" of developing readers, writers and speakers, but for its "large cultural values" (p. 237). At its emergence, English should provide students with a "double-preparation". English needed to prepare youth for modern social and personal life – that is, for manhood, womanhood and citizenship – and also prepare them to fit modern vocational, academic and professional life (Chubb, 1902, p. 240). Again, language and literature weren't primarily objects of study, but means to constitute subjects whose inner lives – their minds and souls – were attuned to norms of modern personal, social, economic and civic life (Brass, 2011).

Finally, Carpenter, Baker and Scott (1903) echoed the 1894 Report of the Committee of Ten when they identified three "cardinal points" of mother-tongue education: helping individuals understand others' thoughts, helping them express their own thoughts, and gaining aesthetic pleasure through native literature (p. 55). At the same time, Carpenter et al. (1903) couched these cardinal points within a trans-national movement of modern nation-building: "We have seen the rise of the study of the vernacular in the chief European nations....It is obviously for the welfare of the nation that all communities which form it should realise their mutual relations" (Carpenter, Baker & Scott, 1903, p. 53). Here, English teaching needed to cultivate individuals' "ability to utilise language as an instrument for his conscious rule over himself", to "realise their mutual relations," and "the attainment of national consciousness" (p. 54). Importantly, then, language and literature were means by which English might constitute the self-governing subject of modern nation-states:

> It is important that the student should have a clear realisation of the elements of his native literature that are most characteristically national or racial, in order that his individual ideals of conduct may become consonant with the more permanent and noble aims of humanity and of the special division of humanity to which he belongs by inheritance or by education (Carpenter et al., 1903, p. 62).

Traditional histories of English education in the USA have not attended to these largely parallel statements about the aims of English teaching (Brass, 2013; Patterson, 2013). However, all three of these pivotal texts problematised the received view of English teaching popularised by the 1894 Committee of Ten as they pointed towards "broader" or "larger" projects of personal, racial and national development. Histories published by the NCTE have characterised the rise of English teaching as a progressive movement driven by commitments to cultural inclusion; however, as English established itself as central to modern schooling in the 1890s to 1910s, its nation-building project deployed hierarchical constructions of difference that divided the world by race and nation.

CONSTITUTING AMERICANS: DIVIDING PRACTICES AND AMERICAN JEREMIADS

Whereas British, Canadian and Australian educators oriented themselves to questions of nation and empire in the early 20th Century, the emergent professional literature of US English education invoked fears of cultural decline and threats to "American" identity brought about by social, economic and demographic changes. In the Progressive Era reforms of 1880s-1920s, these threats were embodied in images of southern and eastern European immigrants and migrations of African Americans, overlapping with increased urbanisation and capitalism, that seemed to undermine established narratives of collective values, national identity and modern progress (Popkewitz, 2001b, p. 185). Hinsdale (1898), Chubb (1902) and Carpenter, Baker and Scott (1903) each identified the country's increasingly heterogeneous population as a threat to national identity and the national tongue. However, it was especially Chubb (1902) and Carpenter et al. (1903) – texts that influenced English education for a quarter century – that took up Progressive Era inscriptions that "differentiated and divided the urban immigrant, poor, and racialised populations . . . [that] lie outside the moral and ethical qualities of the reasoned individual" (Popkewitz, 2008a).

Chubb (1902, p. 4) divided the world in relation to "the rise of a new type of national culture". This culture was "modern in spirit" and distinctly "American" but also derived from "ancestral British sources", and also comprised now of German, Celtic, French, Norse and peoples; similarly, the "American race" was linked to the "English race" and "Teutonic races" of western Europe in a discursive axis that linked modern, cultivated and civilised peoples. In this narrative, America was developing a higher standard of national culture that increasingly rivaled the cultural, scientific, political and mechanical achievements of its "sisters" and "cousins" in (western) Europe. This construction of "America" also embodied Protestant values and a temporal narrative in which the nation's past and future were necessarily tied to a sacred-secular mission of redeeming individuals and the world. Chubb (1902), in particular, mobilised Christian language as he called for English teachers to create spiritually formative environments for children that would lead youths minds, souls and wills towards noble ideals and cultural values by virtue of English teachers' "potent ministry" (Chubb, 1902, p. ix). American youth would not only embody Protestant values and faith, but also develop the capacities for rational self-discipline that distinguished "developed races" and "modern nations" from children, savages and undeveloped races. Within this discourse, the United States was aligned with England, France and Germany as "modern" nations and "advanced races", whose tastes and values were

often represented in English education as elevated, civilised, permanent and universal principles of the human condition.

Given these distinctions, immigrants were positioned as a threat to the nation's progress and language, particularly those associated with less modern and civilised countries of origin. In Chubb's (1902) view, the immigration problem accounted for English teaching taking root in the United States earlier than it did in England and its colonies:

> Doubtless this illiteracy is due largely to the deterioration of our linguistic manners, the depression of literary standards, by the influence of foreign immigrants – a fact that explains why it is that this strenuous movement for the improvement of our national tongue has its origins in America rather than in England or her colonies. (Chubb, 1902, p. 3)

Carpenter, Baker and Scott (1903) also divided the world into a series of racial and national hierarchies. Their constructions of national belonging identified a progress narrative in which America evolved from "pagan ancestors" (Anglo-Saxons) and western European immigrants into a (Protestant) Christian and "modern nation"; this America was related to its "sister nations" of England, France and Germany and "Scandinavian cousins" that shared different degrees of political, religious, geographical and biological ancestry with the United States. The languages and peoples of modern nations were differentiated from "imperfectly civilised Eastern lands" that comprised increasing numbers of immigrants to the United States. Thus, while the United States had been subject to rapid immigration for many decades, the rise of immigrants from southern and eastern Europe (for example, Italians, Catholics, Poles, Jews, Eastern Orthodox) constituted a special threat to national (modern, Protestant, western) identity and the national tongue.

This educational discourse established "narratives and images of the nation (partly in contradistinction to other nations and other people)" and "systems of collective 'belonging'" – and exclusion (Popkewitz, 2001). Here, English education universalised Euro-American notions of whiteness and western-ness that positioned Eastern European immigrants as threats to American progress. Other nations, races and languages were located outside of rationality, progress and the imagined community of America through their omission in this professional literature. Hinsdale (1898), Chubb (1902) and Carpenter et al. (1903) made little note of American Indians, African Americans, Chinese Americans, and descendants of Mexico and Spain, who were positioned as foreign or subaltern groups outside of constructions of America, even as they had inhabited the nation's geographical borders for generations. Through these religion-science-nation-West horizons (Baker, 2012), the field's first influential texts constituted a sense of national identity and place that differentiated "America" and "Americans" from uncivilised, irrational and barbaric "others" who needed to be saved (Popkewitz, 2008a).

AMERICAN JEREMIAD

This redemption narrative, marked by dualistic focus on hopes-and-fears of American progress-and-decay, often embodied the rhetorical structure of the "American Jeremiad" (Bercovitch, 1978). Derived from the Old Testament prophet Jeremiah and

established through Puritan crisis sermons of the 17th century, the rhetorical form of the American Jeremiad has combined prophecy, history and moral appeals to "inscribe on the American physical and intellectual landscape a symbolic narrative" – one of a national identity marked simultaneously by a "fervent hope in a historical, national purpose of transcendence for America, as well as a fear that this mission will be derailed" by individual immorality and corrupting social forces (McKnight, 2003, p. 3). In its initial Puritan formulations, the Jeremiad stressed America's universal, historical and spiritual importance in Biblical terms of an "errand in the wilderness" to establish "America" as a special nation, chosen by God, to serve as the "new Jerusalem" and a "city upon a hill" that would bring light and redemption to the world (McKnight, 2003). Jeremiad sermons and reform narratives helped construct a distinctive sacred-secular redemption narrative in which

> nationalism carries with it the Christian meaning of the sacred....Of all symbols of identity, only America has united nationality and universality, civic and spiritual selfhood, secular and redemptive history, the country's past and paradise to be, in a single synthetic ideal. (Bercovitch, 1978, p. 4).

For several centuries, the Jeremiad has figured heavily in social reforms that have positioned literacy and schooling as means to redeem individuals and the nation from perceived crises of individual and collective well-being (McKnight, 2003; Popkewitz, 2008a). In American education, the Jeremiad crisis ritual goes like this: America is perceived as immersed in a moral crisis due to changing cultural conditions and fracturing of national identity; public schools are then charged with restoring the sacred/secular symbolic identity of America, saving the nation from its present cultural crisis, and renewing its mission to redeem the world (McKnight, 2003, p. ix).

McKnight (2003) has identified the American Jeremiad structure operating within the curriculum frameworks of history and social studies for more than a century. However, the Jeremiad narrative was also deployed to solidify the place of English in the school curriculum, and to mobilise English teachers to counteract fears of cultural decline and reinvigorate hopes in American progress and exceptionality.

In one of the first published essays on English teaching by an American teacher, Emma Breck (1912), also the first secretary of NCTE, framed "[a] new task for the English teacher" that exemplified the American Jeremiad. Breck found the college ideal of literary study to be inadequate, but not because uniform college entrance requirements were élitist or unnecessarily constricted teachers' professional judgments. The problem was that faculty at prestigious universities failed to recognise "educational problems due largely to the lack of homogeneity in our population" (Breck, 1912, p. 66). Positing that "different classes of society have different needs" (Breck, 1912, p. 66), Breck wrote that the uniform course of study failed to satisfy the interests and desires of certain classes of society, and also failed to integrate youth into the social, civic and economic roles by which they might be fitted by nature, home environments and educational interventions. The "vital point" of English teaching – largely overlooked in university literary study – was that English language and literature should ultimately "help in the formation of right ideals of thoughts and of action" and thus reverse America's perceived decline and foster individual and national welfare (p. 66). Here Breck exemplified the rhetorical form of the American Jeremiad:

> There is great need of this today, for many of the old forces for good that furnished past generations with a present help in time of trouble have ceased to be operative or are fast losing their efficiency. We are no longer a Bible-reading people; the church and the Sunday school are fast losing their hold; family life is less intimate and watchful; respect for law and authority is decreasing, while forces of evil are steadily multiplying in our midst. The moving pictures and vaudevilles, cheap and commonplace if not immoral, the trashy magazine, the daily paper with its scandal and vulgar comic supplement are but a few agencies at work which have already helped to bring about a cheapening of ideals, a lowering of standards, and a blunting of fine sensibilities and distinctions, already perceptible in our American people, both man and youth. It is time that we English teachers, recognising ourselves as awakeners of the spirit, should ask ourselves what we are doing to reverse this downward tendency. (Breck, 1912, pp. 68-69)

CONSTITUTING A SENSE OF IDENTITY AND PLACE THROUGH LANGUAGE AND LITERARY STUDY

Following in the line of Hinsdale (1898), Chubb (1902) and Carpenter et al. (2003), Breck's *Jeremiad* called for English teachers to remake individuals and a nation in perceived decline by re-establishing a sacred-secular redemption narrative of America. This nation-building project was linked to place in at least two respects. First, Hinsdale (1898), Chubb (1902) and Carpenter et al. (1903) positioned English teaching against the corrupting influence of local place and community. Second, language and literature were identified as powerful means to constitute racial and national imaginaries as dominant forms of belonging.

From Hinsdale (1898) to Breck (1912), formative visions of English teaching employed a series of dividing practices to mobilise English teachers in a disciplinary struggle against the social environments in which youth were born and socialised. Combining various theories of personal and cultural development, race, language and learning, the field's early professional literature identified a series of factors thought to increase or diminish the work of schooling, such as the influence of children's family, community, religious exercises, the press and libraries. In this discourse, the "normal child", who was raised by "educated and refined" parents and immersed in "good English", was not a problem; here Carpenter et al. (1903) employed images of the New England village of the 18th and early 19th Century as a distinctive place that was positively ordered to cultivate private and public welfare. With practically no element from "foreign parts", no organised religion opposing the Protestant church, and no popular amusements undermining personal virtue, the "peculiar life of the New England town" enabled parents, clergy and communities to cultivate personal responsibility and raise the national standard (p. 41-42). In a context of rapid immigration and urbanisation, however, modern English teachers also faced "a child from a family of a wholly different kind", who was identified as a problem because he or she was reared in families, communities, urban environments and a commercial culture that were marked as illiterate, uncivilised, uneducated and amoral (Carpenter et al., 1903, p. 64). Likewise, Chubb (1902) located English teaching as a clash against social environments and atmospheres that were understood as undermining the progress of individuals, the race and the nation:

> In no subject do the forces of the social environment against which the school has to strive make themselves so continually felt as they do in English. In literary studies the higher ideals and sentiments of the race expressed by its poets and seers clash with the average commercialised ambitions and soiled ideals in whose atmosphere the child is reared; while in language work the higher usages of literary English exacted in the school are in perpetual conflict with the barbarisms of the swarming illiterate outside. The teacher of English, at least in the great majority of our city public schools, is involved in unceasing warfare with these retarding forces. (Chubb, 1902, pp. 8-9)

Revisiting these theories of mother tongue education unsettles "progressive" histories of a school subject that eschewed cultural élitism in the interest of cultural inclusion and common education. The shift from classical language to English language and literature carried with it axes of inclusion/exclusion that positioned immigrants and a more "heterogeneous population" as uneducated, illiterate, uncivilised, soiled, barbaric and retarded, largely on the basis of the status of their families, communities, religion, nation and race. In contrast, the teaching of English would transform individuals and society by subjecting youth to the redemptive power of modern self-discipline, scientific rationality, Protestant Christianity, nationalism, and what were named universal principles of human nature acquired by only the most advanced nations and races. In this discourse, English teaching was liberal, progressive and humanistic in the sense that English language and literature would weaken youths' place-based identities in the interest of "civilising" the population and establishing racial and national imaginaries as Americans' dominant sense of place.

Language and literature were identified as powerful means to constitute racial and national imaginaries as dominant forms of belonging. At the cusp of the 20th Century, Hinsdale (1898), Chubb (1902) and Carpenter, Baker and Scott (1903) foregrounded three uses of vernacular language education. English language and literature were directed to (1) establish a common national tongue, (2) order thought and individual capacities for rational self-governance, (3) inculcate the spirit of peoples and places, and (4) locate individuals, races and nations temporally and spatially in sacred-secular redemption narratives.

Linking the teaching of English to the rise of vernacular education in Europe, Carpenter, Baker and Scott (1903) reasoned that the teaching of the English mother tongue was "indispensable to the establishment of national ideals and of national systems of thought" (p. 54). In their view, national ideals and consciousness were largely dependent upon the establishment of a common tongue and of shared experiences constituted by literary texts. Carpenter, Baker and Scott (1903) maintained that it was ultimately the combined practices of those who used the common speech – not the language of the genius, critic, scholar or man of letters – that most shaped individual and national identities; thus, for the welfare of the nation, it was crucial that English teachers save the English mother tongue from "deterioration" and "decay" (Carpenter et al., 1903, pp. 60-61) and raise the standard of literacy, speech and morality of all Americans. The higher standards of the nation and race were not located in "bookish" language or "literary snobbery and pretentiousness" (Chubb, 1902), but should be judged in terms "of presentation of human life that shall be 'true' in that it faithfully represents human nature" (Carpenter et al., 1903, p. 265). Uniting nationality and universality, English teachers saw themselves as saving youth from the parochial, irrational and corrupting influences of

their social environments and, instead, helping them to embody "national ideals and national systems of thought" (Carpenter et al., 1903, p. 54) and "partake...of the highest fruits of the ethical and religious consciousness of man-to effect through them that cleansing" (Chubb, 1902, pp. 392-393).

In addition to establishing a "common" language and literature, the teaching of language also provided means for schooling to order thought and foster youths' self-mastery. Hinsdale (1898) argued that thought and language were "practically inseparable" since most thinking was carried on through the medium of words; thus, the teaching of language was understood as an educational instrument to intervene in youths' capacity to reason and to establish the rational principles that should govern individuals' thoughts, tastes, desires and conduct. In this sense, English teaching was central to the project of modernist schooling: "the ability to utilise language as an instrument for his conscious rule over himself is his distinguishing mark as a man, the token that marks him off from the child or the savage" (Carpenter et al., 1903, p. 54).

This "liberal" and "humanising" project of elevating the condition of the nation and race was also premised on an older, religious view of language in which linguistic signs were not arbitrary but "inseparably bound up with" the spirits of individual writers, peoples, times and places (Hinsdale, 1898). Carpenter et al. (1903) understood texts as fundamental "expressions of the life and spirit of the time in which they were written," and of revelations of people's spirits and personalities (Carpenter et al., 1903, p. 254). It was reasonable, then, that certain reading practices potentially afforded readers with social and spiritual connections to others across time and space. Thus, the command of a "noble vernacular" – such as German, French or English – carried with it the spirit, knowledge, sentiments and feelings of more than a thousand years of cultural development, if not ideal standards of conduct realised by advanced races and civilisations; conversely, individuals and nations could be corrupted by teaching the languages of corrupted nations, races and times, which would confine and repress people's mental and moral life (Carpenter et al., 1903, p. 18).

On these grounds, "English" language and literature – not Latin or Greek – needed to occupy a central place in the modern scheme of education (Hinsdale, 1898). Chubb (1902) and others took up metaphors of nutrition as governing principles for the English curriculum. Instruction in English was conceived as a "feeding process", in which English teachers were charged with "selecting the best food for the spiritual sustenance of the child" (Chubb, 1902, p. 29-30). At the turn of the 20th Century, the teaching of "English" language and literature had a special role to play in fostering national consciousness through a select "diet" of the English mother tongue:

> It is this linguistic form of patriotism that is to be the main spring of scholarly consciousness in our literary culture – a culture that need not be less fine, and may be more vital, because it is nourished upon Shakespeare and Milton; upon the Bible and the "Pilgrim's Progress"; upon Addison and Irving, Burke and Webster, Scott and Hawthorne, Tennyson and Longfellow, Browning and Emerson, Whitman and Thoreau much more than upon the masters of antiquity (Chubb, 1902, pp. 5-6).

On these bases, literature was understood as a special order of language that was particularly well suited to order thought, inculcate the spirit or essence of peoples and places, and structure racial and national imaginaries as dominant forms of belonging

and place. Hinsdale's (1898) approach to literature took up each of these cultural theses about language in locating the school as an institution that should cultivate youths' morals, manners, tastes and social comportment in the interest of personal and national welfare. First, language did not simply "furnish" the mind with facts and ideas, but created and ordered the "knowledge that shapes, or at least influences, our conduct" (p. 71). In an older articulation of power/knowledge (Foucault, 1980), Hinsdale (1898, p. 74) wrote, "there is no knowledge that does not bring discipline, and no discipline apart from knowledge"; thus, the English curriculum could order symbolic forms to constitute youths' knowledge of themselves/others and shape fields of thought, action, taste and desire. Further, since authors' thoughts, feelings, virtues and selves flowed into their language and texts (p. 67), the provision of "good company and good books" created formative contexts in which pupils might "fall into the spirit of the piece" and experience saints and sages whose minds and spirits "spoke" to the reader when books began to "talk" (p. 70). In this sense, subjectification through literary discipline was not only mental, but inter-subjective, spiritual, imaginative and communal – offering teachers of literature several means to cultivate youths' aesthetic tastes, personal character, national ideals and identifications with real and imagined others from the past and present.

For Chubb (1902), the teaching of literature could secure lasting moral effects and profoundly influence the ways in which young people thought about, felt about, looked at, and acted upon themselves and their worlds (Chubb, 1902, pp. 381-382). Conceived "as art" and as a "vital form of life", English literature could be made to "provoke a life-long thirst for helpful and inspiring communion with [Shakespeare, Milton, Emerson, Lowell] and other great spirits...bring the child under the sway of noble ideals of manhood and womanhood...and embody and create ideals that cast their imaginative spell upon the child" (Chubb, 1902, pp. 379-380). The goal was to create conditions in which young people voluntarily assented to define themselves and others in specific terms of likeness and difference, to locate their experiences in relation to those of real and imagined others, and to fashion their lives around particular norms and ideals in order to "take with them [the perspective] of the race and the ages [and the] outlook...of civilisation and its needs" (Chubb, 1902, p. 319). In this "new humanistic movement in American education", English teachers were "called upon to use our unsurpassed English literature, as it has never been used before, toward the formation of character, the enrichment of life, and the refinement of the manners" (Chubb, 1902, pp. 6-7).

Similarly, for Carpenter et al. (1903, p. 54), the literature curriculum should foster individuals' capacities to align their lives with national ideals and national systems of thought. Understanding that literature embodied the spirit or truth of various epochs as well as the characteristic traits of the race or the nation, teachers could juxtapose past and present texts to establish narratives of modern progress, foster youths' patriotic identification with the national language, establish "common experiences" narrated by common texts and characters, and identify and differentiate "I/we" from "you/they" in terms of racial and national imaginaries inscribed in literary texts (Carpenter et al., 1903, p. 190). It was reasoned that literature would have transformative effects on character through the series of sense impressions, stories and representations that would persist in "our memories and take on deeper meanings as they were reinterpreted in light of wider experiences and deeper thought" (Carpenter et al., 1903, p. 259). Literary plots and characters were particularly important here as

representations and embodiments of national ideals and consciousness, of the life and ideals of different ages, of the relation between characters and environments, and of universal or ideal standards of human living:

> The celebrated characters of literature are types of human nature, throwing into high relief its various phases. By acquaintance with them, we not only widen our knowledge of the world of men and women about us, but become more definitely conscious of what we ourselves are, actually and potentially. (Carpenter et al., 1903, pp. 260-261)

Today's place-based education aims to connect processes of teaching and learning to youths' experiences of local place and community (Greenwood, 2010). At its emergence, however, the modern English classroom was placed in opposition to the influence of families, local community, urban space and popular culture, which were often located as adverse social forces that undermined individual and collective welfare. An aim of English teaching was to weaken youths' place-based identities to provoke their identification with "imagined communities" (Anderson, 2006) that differentiated "America" and "Americans" from uncivilised, irrational and barbaric "others" who lacked culture, reason and virtue (Popkewitz, 2008a). English language and literature played important roles here by constituting American identities in relation to national geographies, progress narratives and racial hierarchies.

MODERN CITIZENS, NATIONAL IMAGINARIES AND CULTURAL INCLUSION/EXCLUSION

This study points to key ways in which English teaching was linked to modern nation-building in the United States from its emergence in the late 19th Century. By selectively ordering pedagogical environments around certain narratives, images and axes of difference, English teachers could develop people's capacities for choice and action within interpersonal and symbolic fields that might incline youth to form their lives around norms of moral and physical development, economic productivity and national citizenship (Foucault, 1979). As was true in other Anglophone countries (Cormack, 2003; Donald, 1992; Green & Cormack, 2011; Hunter, 1988; Morgan, 1990; Peel et al., 2000), the teaching of English in the United States was implicated in the discursive construction of racial and national imaginaries at the cusp of the 20th Century; at the same time, the first influential texts of English education in the US employed distinctive narratives of American progress and decay to centre the subject in the redemptive project of mass popular education.

In the same ways, English language and literature helped constitute youths' identities in relation to place. English education set out to weaken more local, place-based identities to incline individuals to place their "self" and "others" in terms of national and national imaginaries constituted in the English curriculum. In this view, the construction of an "American" identity was not a natural experience of home or belonging or primarily a geographical phenomenon (Popkewitz, 2008a, p. 46). Rather, "America" might be understood as an "imagined community" (Anderson, 2006) in which most members may be separated by time and space yet share a sense of national identity, belonging and place constituted by language and social practice. The American Jeremiad was one of several symbolic forms by which teachers and

students of English could interpret the work of redemption and progress inscribed on the American landscape and population:

> The American *wilderness* takes on the double significance of secular and sacred place....For God's "peculiar people" it was a territory endowed with special symbolic import, like the wilderness through which the Israelites passed to the promised land. In one sense it was historical, in another sense prophetic. (Bercovitch, 1978, p. 81)

These notions of redemption and progress also inscribed the religion-science-nation-West horizons typical of modernity's Euro-American, occidental and colonial discourses (Baker, 2009b). Thus, English educators' hopes for an inclusive, modern society also expressed fears of dangerous populations – those who were not Protestant, "modern" or descended from western Europe – who threatened the nation's sacred-secular redemption and progress. This inscription placed immigrants, native Americans, and other minority groups outside of rationality and American civilisation until they were "civilised" or "humanised" through the redemptive force of modern reason and agency, Protestantism and higher ideals embodied in English language and literature. In this sense, progressive and celebratory accounts of English's history have obscured the overt racism and national prejudices that were central to the establishment of English language and literature in the "common" American high school.

Histories of academic fields often attribute "progress" to the passage of chronological time (Baker, 2009a); however, important aspects of English education established at the cusp of the 20th Century reverberate in the early 21st century. The subject English remains a central site of struggle over the standardisation of language and national culture, for example, including "culture wars" over traditional American and British literature, multicultural texts, and students' rights to their own languages. A century after Hinsdale (1898), Chubb (1902) and Carpenter, Baker and Scott (1903) placed English classrooms in opposition to many youths' homes and communities, different constructions of place-based education have placed considerable hope in student-centred learning environments, problem-based learning, culturally relevant teaching, and critical pedagogies to situate teaching and learning within everyday life in local communities. With a historical perspective on English education's contributions to modern nation-building, English educators can begin to scrutinise how educational reforms from *No Child Left Behind* to critical pedagogy embody American Jeremiads (McKnight, 2003; Popkewitz, 2008b) that inscribe (un)changing hopes and fears of redemption, progress and social change.

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