

Re-Reading the Emergence of the Subject English: Disrupting NCTE's Historiography

JORY BRASS

Arizona State University

Methodologically, the key challenge for curriculum history in response to the linguistic turn . . . is how to engage with text and discourse as both historical 'data', on the one hand, and as constituting the very practice of curriculum history itself, on the other. (Cormack & Green, 2009, p. 231)

THE IMPACT OF THE POSTSTRUCTURAL, FEMINIST, AND LINGUISTIC TURNS remains limited in curriculum history (Cormack & Green, 2009; Hendry, 2011). Since the mid-1990s, however, a new wave of curriculum history has taken up new problematics and possibilities associated with Foucault's historiography (Popkewitz & Brennan, 1998), new cultural history (Popkewitz, Franklin, & Pereyra, 2001), and the new curriculum history (Baker, 2009b). Much of this work annuls the distinction between "history" and "historiography," adopting the poststructural position that historians do not narrate a "reality" or "past" that lies outside of representation—but that their narratives and language *constitute* history. Thus, as Cormack and Green (2009) note, the challenge for contemporary work in curriculum history is to attend to the ways in which historical inquiry itself structures and delimits certain modes of (un)intelligibility and also to practice historiography that is sensitive to multiple discourses that have constituted modes of (un)intelligibility represented in archival texts.

This article takes up both methodological challenges by examining how English, the school subject, has been constituted in the historiography of the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE) and in some turn of the 20th century texts that Applebee (1974) credits with creating an initial identity and consciousness within the profession. It begins with a reading of NCTE's three sanctioned histories (Applebee, 1974; Hook, 1979; Lindemann, 2010) that documents how history has been constituted as celebratory and complicit in maintaining education's grand narratives of progress, enlightenment, and change (Baker, 2009; Hendry, 2011; Popkewitz, Franklin, & Pereyra, 2001; Winfield & Hendry, 2011). Then, my analysis

charts multiple classificatory regimes represented in the field's emergent professional texts that have been obscured by NCTE's historiography. My goal is not only to draw attention to configurations of knowledge that framed, disciplined, and ordered teachers' ways of thinking about and practicing English at the turn of the 20th century, but also to consider the practices and techniques by which students of English were to be shaped and (self-) disciplined (Cormack & Green, 2009). With NCTE's traditional historiography disrupted, it becomes easier to examine how formative accounts of English represented a curriculum territory that was not primarily organized around the knowledge of university English studies (Patterson, 2000). Rather, from the late 19th century on, a range of discourses worked together to construct elementary and secondary English as sites to foster youths' capacities for ethical self-discipline and citizenship, to constitute racial and national imaginaries, and to govern how youth think about, feel about, "see," and relate to their "self," "others," and the world (Brass, 2010, 2011a, 2011b; Donald, 1992; Green, 1993; Green & Cormack, 2011; Green & Reid, 2002; Hunter, 1988; Morgan, 1990, 1995; Peel, Patterson, & Gerlach, 2000).

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it is no longer sufficient to accept 'English' on its own traditional and self-serving terms, a rhetoric which has been pugnaciously anti-historical and politically neutralizing. (Morgan, 1990, p. 231)

Canadian scholar Robert Morgan once characterized English education as an anti-historical field in which teachers and researchers were largely unaware of the historical commitments and political effects of their practice. More than two decades later, this remains true within the NCTE. Prior to publishing an edited history to commemorate its 2011 centennial (Lindemann, 2010), the only NCTE histories still in print¹ were published in the 1970s: Applebee's (1974) *Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English* and Hook's (1979) *A Long Way Together: A Personal View of NCTE's First Sixty-Seven Years*. While Lindemann's (2010) commissioned history added contributions of women and minorities that were sometimes overlooked in the 1970s texts, all three histories published by NCTE are told through intellectual and social traditions governed by progressive axioms and American enlightenment narratives of rational and national progress (Popkewitz, 2011; Winfield & Hendry, 2011).

In spite of their differences, Applebee (1974), Hook (1979), and Lindemann's (2010) texts overlap by narrating "recurrent histories" governed by a modern teleology of reason, progress, and change (Dean, 1994; Rose, 1996). As Rose (1996) explains, recurrent histories separate the *sanctioned history* of an academic field—that is, narratives of a field's precursors, influences, obstacles overcome, genius, and progress—from its *lapsed history*—that is, the false paths, errors, illusions, and prejudices that are ultimately overcome. *Tradition and Reform in the Teaching of English* (Applebee, 1974) narrates a recurrent history plotted in relation to oppositional poles of "tradition" (lapsed history) and "reform" (sanctioned history). In this narrative, the history of English is represented by the emergence of a common school subject between the 1880s and 1910s, a "grand experiment" in progressive approaches in the 1920s and 1930s, an unfortunate "over-reaching" of progressivism in the 1940s and 1950s, a reactionary return to traditional "academic" goals in the late 1950s and 1960s, and a progressivism infused

by “new insights and new courage” in the 1960s and 1970s (Applebee, 1974, p.ix). In Hook’s (1979) narrative, NCTE formed in 1911 as an “organization born of protest but inspired by altruistic urges” (p.3) that led to professional progress (“A Long Way Together”) for much of the 20th century. Hook attributes the field’s progress (and lapses overcome) to the efforts of key editors and officers within NCTE whose leadership is narrated as fostering or hindering professional advancements that enabled English teachers to overcome professional inertia and generally embody rational progress.

This historiography is also pronounced in *Reading the Past, Writing the Future* (Lindemann, 2010), an edited book commissioned to celebrate NCTE’s 2011 centennial. Often reifying the narratives of Applebee (1974) and Hook (1979), Lindemann’s (2010) book largely constructs a modernist narrative of “mass professionalization that emerges in support of mass education” (Brandt, 2010, p.x). In spite of NCTE’s lapsed history—represented here by struggles for women and minorities to assume leadership positions in NCTE—Lindemann’s (2010) sanctioned history narrates “an overwhelmingly progressive pattern that has informed the positions, beliefs, and practices of the Council” (Christenbury, 2010; Mayher, 2010, p. 41). In this modernist narrative of progress and change, English education’s present is the necessary result of the insight, effort, and activism of past scholars and educators who shared a “consistent core of commitments: developing sound practices, advancing scholarship, professionalizing teachers, and educating the public” (Brandt, 2010, p. xi).

To summarize NCTE’s small corpus of historical writing, history largely has been constituted as celebratory (Christenbury, 2001; Lindblom, 2012; Lindemann, 2010), reifying the contributions of pioneering men and women within NCTE (Applebee, 1974; Donnelson, 1982; Gerlach & Monseau, 1991; Hook, 1979; Lindemann, 2010; Monseau, 2000; Smith & Stock, 2003) and narratives of historical continuity that frame English in grand terms of progress and change (Patterson, 2000). The Call for Papers for NCTE’s 2011 Centennial exemplify how this historiography has produced, ordered, limited, and normalized how teachers and scholars might understand English’s past and present:

With the rich history of NCTE as a backdrop—from the rebellious founders who were combating elite-university encroachment on high school curriculums to courageous opponents of racist, sexist, and homophobic instruction to committed supporters of productively principled teacher autonomy and cultural inclusiveness—we will gather to take stock of our collective journey and to renew ourselves. (Gilyard, 2010)

Doing Curriculum History Differently

These modernist narratives have been made to function as “real” and taken for granted truths that work against more complicated and disorderly histories of English. Mainstream educational historiography has served to deintellectualize and depoliticize historical work as nostalgic, celebratory, and complicit in maintaining education’s grand narratives of rational progress and change (Hendry, 2011; Popkewitz, 2011; Winfield & Hendry, 2011). This modernist impulse stands in stark contrast to the postmodern and poststructural currents that constitute new waves of cultural history and curriculum history (Baker, 2009b). Curriculum history influenced by the linguistic turn deliberately avoids grand narratives of progress and

enlightenment, problematizes taken-for-granted categories (such as “progressive education”), and remains open to multiplicity, ambiguity, and new ways of engaging or recovering what has been subordinated by traditional historiography (Cormack & Green, 2009; Hendry, 2011). In the new cultural history of education, for example,

Cultural historians are not interested in identifying the key ideas that are thought to characterize a particular period or age. Nor do they wish to investigate the so-called great ideas of the past and the individuals who championed them. With diverse intellectual interests and theoretical approaches, cultural historians bring to bear a particular connection with theories of knowledge and language as they rethink the problems and methods of historical studies. (Popkewitz et al., 2001, p. ix)

Much of this work draws from multiple critical traditions concerned with the relation of knowledge, power, and social change. Given the role of discourse in constituting what is (im)possible to think and do in particular historical moments, history is constituted as “the study of the historically structured ways of reason that frame, discipline, and order our action and participation in the world” (Popkewitz et al., 2001, p. ix); in practices of educational history, this emphasis on the social epistemologies inscribed in archival texts attends to the ways in which historically constituted ideas functioned to “construct, shape, coordinate, and constitute social practices through which individuals ‘reason’ about their participation and identity” (ix-x). Influenced by Foucault’s notions of historical discontinuity and change, this historiography decenters actors and agents (philosophy of consciousness) and Enlightenment narratives of progress to instead “pay particular attention to change or ‘ruptures’ in knowledge and how these changes order, intern, and enclose social, cultural, and political action” (ix-x). This Foucaultian emphasis on tracing changing configurations of knowledge makes it possible to disrupt narratives of progress and historical continuity, to analyze how present languages and practices of education are related to and/or discontinuous with past configurations, and to foster change by denaturalizing past and present ordering principles through archaeology and genealogy:

This, then, is the project of these disordered and fragmentary genealogies. If we were to characterize it in two terms, then ‘archeology’ would be the appropriate methodology of this analysis of local discursivities, and ‘genealogy’ would be the tactics whereby, on the basis of these local discursivities, the subjected knowledges which were thus released would be brought into play. (Foucault, 1980, p. 85)

My approach draws from intersections of cultural history, Foucaultian archeology and genealogy, and new curriculum history in order to problematize NCTE’s historiography and to unearth multiple classificatory regimes that constituted ways of thinking about and practicing English teaching that have been overlooked and obscured by NCTE’s sanctioned histories. In doing so, this history takes up problems and foci that are aligned with the new curriculum history: It questions the progressivist meaning given to the passage of linear time, delineates the emergence and descent of English education’s classificatory regimes to historicize and denaturalize them, unearths forgotten associations between key educational concepts and religious heritage that are discernible today; maps the conjoining, modification, seepage, and traveling of discourses/practices across time-space; and forges unexpected analytical pathways

that might uncleave traditional assumptions and open new spaces for historical inquiry in education (Baker, 2009a).

Governing the Soul: Resituating English's Beginnings

In 1974, Applebee hoped that *Tradition and Reform* would provide “a useful beginning” for a profession that lacked a tradition of systematic historical inquiry. Forty years later, however, NCTE’s limited corpus of historical inquiry has largely naturalized the narrative that elementary and secondary English took on their modern form in the 1880s-1890s as part of the battle between ancient and modern subjects. Through this process, Applebee argued, English threw off traditional preparatory school functions in the service of a common education that joined together previously distinct areas of study, including rhetoric, oratory, spelling, grammar, literary history, and reading. For Applebee, the *Committee of Ten* (1894) provided the unifying framework that organized 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)

The danger of such narratives of historical continuity is that a range of historical knowledges get disqualified, buried, and disguised by modernist imperatives for functionalist coherence and formal systematization (Foucault, 1980, p.82-83). In this case, Applebee’s (1974) historiography could not account for religious and secular discourses that combined to construct modern schooling as a self-disciplinary project to save society by saving the souls of its youth (Trohler, Popkewitz, & Labaree, 2011). Thus, this section revisits two texts that Applebee (1974) identified as authoring the first influential accounts of English within the profession: Corson’s (1895) *The Aims of Literary Study* and Chubb’s (1902) *The Teaching of English in the Elementary and the Secondary School*. Instead of imposing a grand synthesis upon these texts, my aim is to unearth intersecting classificatory regimes that helped define “English” in these touchstone texts in order to unleash “local, discontinuous, disqualified, and illegitimate knowledges against the claims of a unitary theory which would filter, hierarchize, and order them in the name of some true knowledge” (Foucault, 1980, p. 83).

In Applebee’s (1974) view, the Committee of Ten offered a unifying vision of English organized around the study of language, writing, and literature and doctrines of mental discipline. In contrast, Corson’s (1896) *The Aims of Literary Study* was organized around an explicit distinction between educating the mind versus educating the soul. Corson wrote that the acquisition of knowledge and mental discipline were good things; at the same time,

there is something of infinitely more importance than all those—it is, the rectification, the adjustment, through that mysterious operation we call sympathy, of the unconscious personality, the hidden soul, which . . . determines the active powers, the conscious intellect, for righteousness or unrighteousness. (Corson, 1896, p.13)

Combing excerpts from Christian scripture, Romantic poetry, and the work of Plato, Corson (1896) argued that teachers failed to grasp the “higher purpose” of literary study if they conceived of their work as inculcating linguistic knowledge or mental discipline. For literary study to be transformative for individuals and society, he wrote, it not only needed to affect the mind, but work through people’s sympathies to affect the *soul*, “the infinitesimally small part of our absolute being which comes to consciousness in this life” (Corson, 1896, p.9). In this cosmology, the primary aim of literary study was to guide young souls towards Truth in order to actuate youths’ beings and to form their conscious intellects, desires, and intentional actions (“active powers”) around righteous ends. In doing so, the work of English teaching could be aligned with the ministry of Jesus Christ:

When Christ said “follow me” he addressed the “what is” in human nature. Follow me—not from an intellectual apprehension of principles involved in my life, but through deep sympathy, through the awakening, vitalizing, actuating power of incarnate Truth; through a response of your spiritual nature to mine . . . your essential life will be brought into harmony with . . . the spiritual forces of the world. (p.17)

A few years later, Chubb’s (1902) *The Teaching of English in the Elementary and Secondary School* was organized around similar problematics and curricular ordering principles. For Chubb (1902), English teaching was a “potent ministry” charged with “the spiritual enlargement, clarification, and discipline of young hearts and minds and wills” (ix). Reading, oral and written expression, and literary appreciation were good things, Chubb reasoned; however, those common statements of the aims of elementary and secondary English were “not only inadequate but misleading” (p.237). English was

less a matter of instructing the young how to read with understanding and to speak and write correctly, than that of developing the higher emotional and rational nature—its sympathies and vision, its loves and hates, its ideals and aspirations, and its powers of self-command, self-organization, and self-expression through its use of language. (Chubb, 1902, pp. 237-238)

In opposition to the Committee of Ten (1894), Chubb (1902) did not frame reading, writing, and literature as the objects of English teaching, but as “means to an end; and that end is the animating interest, the controlling aim and impulse, of man’s [sic] activity” (378-379). Literature was important here in the sense that it provided English teachers with “a fatal power” to affect the “springs of character”—individuals’ sympathies, visions, loves, hates, ideals, aspirations (p.377)—which were understood to animate and control human conduct. Thus, the “starting point and master motive of literary discipline and nurture” was not inculcating literary knowledge or mental discipline, but using literature, language, and art to structure possible fields of thought, desire, imagination, feeling, longing, and being. In doing so, English class could develop youths’ capacities to monitor, discipline, and fashion their own hearts, minds, wills, and conduct around particular norms and ideals. On these grounds, English teachers were not constituted as purveyors of knowledge, but “a lay priesthood called to the cure of young souls (Chubb, 1902, p.378).

Traditional histories of English cannot account for these Christian tropes, rationalities, and pastoral practices. However, recent work influenced by cultural history of education and new curriculum history offer generative explanations to account for similar regimes of intelligibility assembled between the late 18th to early 20th century— “the long nineteenth century” (Trohler et al., 2011). This work examines how modern school systems across a range of countries were constituted as key institutions to secure the making of the citizen and the progress of nations (Trohler et al., 2011). Trohler et al (2011) are worth quoting at length here:

the political culture associated with republicanism was intertwined with salvation themes that were secularized in the new forms of government. In northern European and North American contexts, this entailed the Protestant visions of the soul that combined with political themes to provide a solution to the central problem of order in modern society... 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 institution is the modern public school. (Trohler et al, 2011, p. xii-xiii)

In the next section, I trace similar discursive intersections in Chubb (1902), which identified English’s “core and foundational” role to play in helping American youth internalize norms of health, enlightenment, productivity, and national citizenship (Foucault, 1979; Popkewitz, 2002; Trohler et al., 2011). My goal is to disrupt “common sense” narratives of English’s invention as a literature-based subject to draw attention to a self-disciplinary project in which English curriculum and pedagogy functioned to attune youths’ minds and souls to a range of sociopolitical objectives that were understood as good for the individual and good for society (Brass, 2011a, 2011b; Hunter, 1988).

English: Governing the Mind and Soul

Around the turn of the 20th century, Chubb named English teaching as an important supplement to Christianity in the work of saving souls and nation-building (Brass, 2011a, 2011b; Green & Cormack, 2011; Green & Reid, 2002; Hunter, 1988; Patterson, 2000). For Chubb, language and literature were not the objects of English teaching, but means by which English teachers could discipline and control youths’ hearts, minds, wills, imaginations, sympathies, feelings, and actions. In Chubb’s reasoning, “our souls, ourselves, are forever imitating what we see and hear, the forms, the sounds which haunt our memories and imaginations” (Chubb, 1902, p.33); thus, the English curriculum needed to privilege “those musical and imaginative of products which lodge more memorably and fatally in the heart and mind of a child . . . and determine his [or her] life-long habits of seeing and feeling” (p. 29). Teachers could thus develop and guide individuals’ self-fashioning towards “noble ideals of manhood and womanhood” through a language and literature curriculum that ordered select texts that “embodied and created ideals that might cast their imaginative spell upon a child” (Chubb, 1902, p. 380).

In Chubb (1902), English curriculum and pedagogy were not only governed by Christian notions of salvation, but by secular notions of redemption and progress ordered by modern scientific knowledge, psychological norms of development and individual autonomy, racial

hierarchies, and national imaginaries. Chubb (1902), for example, reasoned that the social sciences should be brought into English to reconstruct teachers' knowledge of curriculum, pedagogy and child development. First, psychology—particularly the work of G. Stanley Hall—offered an expert knowledge of youths' "natures" that made it possible to address English to "the characteristics, needs, and interests of the adolescent period" (1902, 361). Second, psychological principles provided direction for teachers to select and order texts in order to support "normal" or "natural" patterns of human development. Finally, the psychological and social sciences offered a positive knowledge of American society that made it possible for the English curriculum to mediate youths' "preparation for social and personal life – that is, for manhood, womanhood, and citizenship-- . . . a vocation . . . and higher institutions of learning and craftsmanship, academic and professional" (1902, p.241).

Chubb (1902) also identified English as the key subject in the secondary curriculum to inculcate the knowledge and self-disciplines required of psychological autonomy and modern American citizenship. Importantly, English needed to equip individuals to govern themselves—"to create their own lives and shape their own destinies" around particular ideals of manhood or womanhood (p.380). Second, the English curriculum should be responsive to "the rise of a new type of national culture" that was "modern in spirit" and distinctly "American" yet also linked politically and racially to England and northern Europe (p. 3-4). Finally, to counteract the "deteriorating standard" of language and culture in America brought about by the "influence of foreign immigrants" (p.3), Chubb (1902) described teachers as "elevating" and "humanizing" the population by using the "mother tongue" and "English literature" to mold youths' souls and lives around the "higher sentiments and ideals of the race expressed by its poets and seers"—not the "commercialized ambitions and soiled ideals . . . barbarisms . . . retarding forces . . . and illiteracy of the playground, street, and home" (Chubb, 1902, p.8). Through these practices, all students—particularly immigrants—could develop an emotional attachment to "America" and choose to take up "the point of view of the race . . . the age . . . and the outlook of civilization and its needs" (1902, 318–9).

In summary, Christian themes of saving souls were reworked into sacred and secular redemption narratives in which the progress of the nation and race could be secured in elementary and secondary English classrooms by inculcating Protestant faith, scientific rationality, self-regulation, patriotic citizenship, and Anglo-American tastes and values. NCTE histories have obscured these emergent configurations of English curriculum and pedagogy; however, these discursive intersections not only cut across the work of Corson (1896) and Chubb (1902), but also the first programmatic statements¹ of secondary English teaching published in NCTE's first professional journal, *The English Journal*.

Sacred-Secular Redemptions in *English Journal*, Volume I

The National Council of Teachers of English formed ten years after the first printing of Chubb's (1902) *The Teaching of English*. NCTE histories attribute the Council's origin to "protests against curricular rigidity imposed by colleges on American high schools" (Hook, 1979; Lindemann, 2010). In the inaugural issues of *The English Journal*, however, English teachers often contradicted this narrative and represented English as a curricular space to foster

the progress of the nation and race by inculcating Protestant faith, self-discipline, scientific rationality, patriotic citizenship, and Anglo-American tastes and values.

In “A New Task for the English Teacher,” for example, California teacher Emma Breck (1912) named English as an important adjunct to Christianity in the work of saving souls and forming a national citizenry. Counter to NCTE’s narrative of its revolutionary beginnings, Breck (1912) wrote “without question” that colleges and universities had performed a “valuable service to secondary schools” by drafting uniform college entrance requirements (Breck, 1912, p. 65). The problem was not that faculty had prescribed secondary school teachers’ work, but that the prescribed curriculum failed to comprehend the aims of English. The “vital point” of English teaching was “not to make readers and writers of youth,” but to “help in the formation of right ideals of thought and of action” (p.68).

Here Breck (1912) framed a spiritual problematic using language reminiscent of Corson (1896) and Chubb (1902). English teachers not only needed to “train the mind to think, but the imagination to see, the heart to feel and desire, and the will to determine, to have, and to be that which is noblest and best” (p.68). In this sense, English teachers’ “new task” was to resurrect an “old” spiritual project begun in Christian churches and Sunday schools:

We are a country of wonderful material advancement and wealth, but we cannot remain truly great without spiritual development, as well . . . 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. . . It is time that we English teachers, recognizing ourselves as awakeners of the spirit, should ask ourselves what we are doing to reverse this downward tendency. (Breck, 1912, p. 68-69)

Early programmatic essays argued that English should foster pupils’ “self-mastery” rather than their mastery of literary knowledge. Identifying the Committee of Ten’s (1894) framework as a point of departure, Lewis (1912) wondered if English teachers “aimed at the wrong thing” by teaching English “for knowledge rather than for power” (p.11). The mastery of knowledge was not a bad thing, Lewis reasoned, but citizens of the early 20th century needed “self-mastery,” or the “power” to conduct themselves in accordance with the demands of modern civilization. In a related essay, Owen (1912) also reasoned that the overarching aim of English was “not mastery of an ancient subject-matter, but a sense of power, or self-mastery” (p.200); English teachers needed to create conditions in which “youth were made conscious of [their] control over their selves” and developed the capacity to refashion *themselves* “for the demands of the modern world” (p. 200-201, italics in original).

In this sense, Owen (1912) wrote, English both maintained and broke with the humanizing function that classical education had carried for centuries. Classical education subjected youth to “that kind of experience . . . by which their forming mind and soul may be organized” (p.202). In similar fashion, Owen reasoned, English curriculum and pedagogy could foster “reorganization of the individual” (p.199) by selectively reordering the symbolic field to shape how youth identified, thought about, and felt about their self, others, and the world. English language and literature played a pivotal role in this “humanizing” practice because it

constituted possible fields of thought, desire, and social identification:

If we wish to know how men [sic] have thought, felt, and aspired, we turn to literature . . . So literature is the truest and most universal method of communicating experience; not all kinds of experience, but the kind of experience that we all need in youth, in manhood [sic], and in old age to enable us to identify ourselves with our kind, to detect the peculiar likeness of another's life to ours, to find the revelation of our yet unformed resolves in the governing ideals of another's mind. (Owen, 1912, p. 199)

In a context of increased immigration from southern and eastern Europe, English's emergent professional literature invoked racial and national imaginaries as dominant forms of belonging (and exclusion). Owen (1912) wrote that English teachers needed to “learn how to use [English] as the old masters of the classics used [Latin and Greek] to equip men and women for the modern world” (202). Instead of forming youths' minds and souls around the social heritage of Plato, Homer, and Virgil, however, the modern English curriculum broke from classical education by ordering curriculum and pedagogy to inculcate the “standards of taste . . . ethical and spiritual ideals . . . most permanent judgments and highest resolves . . . for those who are going to be Americans” (Owen, 1912, p. 202). Similarly, Hulst (1912) reasoned that English courses could be made to “humanize the class and secure a true social culture” by inclining youth to embody Euro-American values, tastes, and ideals (p.73). English teachers needed “to rouse youths' spirits from their passive states” so they could “enter into the life of a book”—and also “stimulate, and in some fashion control” (p.73) texts and experiences to shape how youth differentiated between virtuous and enlightened individuals, races, and nations and dangerous “others” who did not embody rationality, Christian faith, or the cultural, scientific, and political achievements of the Anglo-American and Teutonic races (Hulst, 1912). Thus, in the early 20th century, the English curriculum should not elevate the antiquated worldviews of “Greek paganism” (p.80), but a modern cosmology of Euro-American progress:

Plato held that the purpose of telling children great stories was to make them “heroes” for the state; we are teaching [them] . . . to consider their duty as citizens in the Kingdom of God . . . to appreciate the present justly, with its fruits of the struggle from pagan to Christian, from mediaeval to modern . . . and bring them into their heritage, the riches bequeathed the race by the ancestors . . . to all that Europe has produced . . . and secure among ourselves . . . the widest sympathies with all the sister nations. (Hulst, 1912, pp. 74-76)

Finally, teachers' curricular and pedagogical decisions should be governed by “new methods of investigation and new criteria of value” (Owen, 1912, p. 196)—namely, scientific rationality. Echoing Chubb (1902), Owen (1912) identified science as constituting an “indispensable method of control of experience and therefore . . . of education” (p.198). As W.D. Lewis noted, the social sciences offered teachers an expert knowledge of youths' natures and a positive knowledge of society society, which made possible a “revolutionary” break from the classical curriculum:

We shall conform to the doctrine that education is the process of developing the child from what he is to what he ought to be rather than our recent practices of leading him from where he isn't to where he doesn't want to go. (Lewis, 1912, p. 12)

Combing several of these modern classificatory regimes, Davis (1912) organized the English curriculum around frameworks of moral and vocational guidance. It was reasoned that lives would be filled with discouragement, failure, and crime unless education inculcated knowledge and self-discipline that equipped individuals to “fit” into modern social, economic, and civic life. Thus, it was not enough for English teachers to “impart the technical and literary sides of the subject”—they also needed to provide systematic guidance that enabled youth to “grow independently for themselves . . . develop self-knowledge . . . and advance towards a successful career . . . broad fields of opportunity . . . and their best service as social beings (p.457). Once again, literature was not constituted as an object of study as much as a means to reconstruct subjectivity by “awakening” individuals’ inner lives and structuring sympathetic identifications that would

lead the pupil to emulate the character of the good and great who have gone before; [develop] a conception of oneself as a social being in some future occupation . . . and an appreciation of one’s duty and obligation towards business associates . . . neighbors, and the law. (p.458)

In short, English teachers were not simply teaching language, composition, and literature, but “entering into the great work of guiding and molding lives” (p.460). Through these modern practices of governing youths’ souls and minds, English teachers could “prevent many misfits in life” and also “raise the standard of moral efficiency in the coming generation” (p.458).

Re-reading English’s Curriculum History

Curriculum histories often construct narratives of winners and losers, perennial struggles, and grand narratives of rational progress; however, these framings can obscure the complex ways in which history functions and constrain what might constitute legitimate methods and objects of historical inquiry and knowledge-production (Baker, 2009b; Coloma, 2011; Cormack & Green, 2009; Hendry, 2011; Popkewitz, 2011). This is true of conventional histories of English that attribute the subject’s emergence to the rise of modern school subjects, which stages a linear narrative of educational movements said to either foster or hinder the field’s rational progress over the past century. Not surprising then, the field’s few histories have tended to frame English’s curriculum history as “overwhelmingly progressive” (Mayher, 2010) if not subversive and emancipatory (Gilyard, 2010). These progressive, if not Whiggish readings of English’s history have obscured important power-knowledge relationships in which English has been implicated for more than a century:

The failure to go behind favoured terms, then, has meant evading a careful working through of the specific historical connections between nations and signification, the

textual and the sexual, culture and class—relationships which the pedagogic practice of English is nonetheless always active in constructing. (Morgan, 1990, p. 201)

In contrast, this history deliberately avoided modernist axioms and grand narratives in order to locate English's emergence and descent at the intersection of multiple discourses that combined to construct mass popular education as a means to save society by saving its youth and inculcating norms of republican citizenship (Trohler et al., 2011). Only tangentially aligned with university disciplines of literary study, the field's emergent professional literature assigned elementary and secondary English classes a "core and foundational" role in another disciplinary project—calibrating and forming youths' minds and souls around a range of sociopolitical objectives understood as good for the individual and society (Chubb, 1902).

Even a cursory reading of English's emergent professional literature indexes numerous ordering principles that are largely excluded, if not obscured by NCTE's historiography. A short list would include Enlightenment notions of reason, science, and liberty; Protestant notions of moldable souls, salvation, and American Jeremiads; scientific discourses on child development and pedagogy; a calculus of risk management, moral statistics, and social welfare; and Republican notions of citizenship and the public good—that worked together to constitute "English" and its pastoral teachers. Given these grids of intelligibility, the secondary English curriculum can be read as a governmental apparatus which inculcates self-disciplinary techniques in the interest of individualization and the management of the population (Morgan, 1990; Patterson, 2000); as a modern mutation of the Christian cure/care of souls (Brass, 2011; Hunter, 1988); as a "psychologized" version of university disciplines built for and transformed by the school (Baker, 2009a; Popkewitz, 2002); and as a technology to construct and legitimate racial and national imaginaries (Green & Cormack, 2008, 2011). Much of this governance was legitimated and governed by classification systems of race, nation, and human development that were overtly Eurocentric, exclusionary, and steeped in fears of "others" (e.g. southern European immigrants, Blacks, Catholics) who needed to be "humanized" through the inculcation of rationality, Christian morality, and (self-) discipline. These early texts raise important questions about narratives of a progressive, altruistic, and subversive subject shedding the elitist pretensions of classical education in the interest of cultural inclusion, democracy, and modern progress.

In conclusion, this study provides a much needed turn to curriculum history and curriculum theory for a scholarly field that has been pugnaciously anti-historical and seemingly untouched by the reconceptualization of curriculum studies. It represents a small step towards extricating curriculum history from the normative tenets of modernism, progressive axioms, and traditional, self-serving terms that have circumscribed historical writing on English teaching in the United States (Morgan, 1990; Winfield & Hendry, 2011). It also links with other scholarship that tries to reconstruct important links between Protestantism and the emergence of mass popular schooling (Baker, 2009b; Hunter, 1995; McKnight, 2003; Trohler, 2011) and the multiple discourses that made possible and shaped modern efforts to save society by saving the child (Trohler et al., 2011). Finally, the study suggests that the emergence of English in the United States shares important similarities with the emergence of English in England, Canada, and Australia—but also represents themes of salvation, progress, and religious-racial-national identity that may be distinctly American (Bercovitch, 1978; McKnight, 2003). In these ways, it tries to spark new lines of inquiry that examine the subject's diverse historical lineage and

provoke reflexivity towards the norms that have enabled and constrained what might constitute curriculum history in English education.

Notes

¹ NCTE also published another history: Gerlach & Monseau's (1991) *Missing Chapters: Ten Pioneering Women in NCTE and English Education*. However, this book is no longer in print and did not garner the uptake of the older NCTE histories, Applebee (1974) and Hook (1979).

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