English Teaching: Practice and Critique September, 2013, Volume 12, Number 2
http://education.waikato.ac.nz/research/files/etpc/files/2013v12n2ed.pdf pp. 1-10

Editorial: English(es) and the Sense of Place: Linguistic and Literary Landscapes

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It is becoming relatively commonplace now to acknowledge that "English" can no longer be regarded as a single or singular identity (for example, Clark, 2013) – that in fact there are many different forms and practices of English, and relatedly therefore of English teaching, currently in circulation. This is as a consequence but also a symptom of globalisation, just as much as it is a phenomenon linked to what might be called post-imperialism. English as language and as school subject is now clearly disengaged from English as closely articulated with particular historical regimes of culture and nation ("Englishness"). At the very least, as asserted almost two decades ago now, "English is no longer only English", as it were the 'mother-tongue'; "it is also English as a second language, and English as a foreign language" (Pringle, 1985, 129).

This is directly pertinent to our theme here, which is addressed to the sense of place as manifested in language, literature and literacy, specifically in education. The contributors to this issue reflect this plurality, being from Australia, England, the USA, Korea and Cyprus, with others who regretfully dropped out relatively recently coming from Canada and South Africa – a good range of countries. Some are more obviously literary in their orientation, while others focus more directly on language and literacy. Together, they provide a rich panoply of linguistic and literary landscapes – although, it must be said, by no means exclusively from the viewpoint of the detached, distant observer, and as much deeply imbricated in lived experience and active, sensory life.

But perhaps above all else it is this notion of the sense of place that organises and informs all of them, albeit in various ways. This is partly to be understood as what place means – what *is* "place"? How is it to be understood? What is its meaning? How is it being used here, across these essays? But it is also something quite distinctive, and specific, with the expression "sense of place" being part of a larger understanding of place as a concept, increasingly evident in and beyond the educational literature. Perhaps the leading exponent of this new focus on place is the North American scholar published variously as David Gruenewald and David Greenwood, who has been particularly active over the past decade in arguing the case for "a critical pedagogy of place" (Gruenewald, 2003) and "place-based education" (Gruenewald & Smith [Eds], 2008), or as it is arguably better expressed "place-conscious education" (Greenwood, 2010). Place is sometimes associated with a renewed localism, with the project of "reclaiming the local" (Gruenewald & Smith, 2008, p. xiv) in the face of rampant globalisation. This is by no means the only way the term is to be understood, however, or mobilised educationally. (Notable critiques include Nespor [2009] and McInerny, Smyth & Down [2011]). Indeed, it may be more productive to always work with a relational view of *place*, *space* and *scale*, as a trialectical field of reference, as argued elsewhere (Green, 2012, 2013). The relationship between "place" and "space" is certainly something needing clarification. While the latter term has

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become a focus for a growing body of work in education (for example, Leander & Sheehy [Eds], 2004; Gulson & Symes [Eds], 2007), there is little explicit connection with work that is more specifically place-referenced (for example, Comber, Nixon & Reid [Eds], 2007; Somerville, Power & de Carteret [Eds], 2009). How place and space can, and must, be thought together is something still to be done.

Geographers Tim Cresswell and John Agnew provide an important resource in this regard, as does Doreen Massey. For Cresswell (2004, p. 7), drawing specifically on Agnew, place is to be understood as "meaningful location" and involves three distinct but related aspects, which he identifies as "location", "locale" and "sense of place" (in this regard, see Anae's essay – this volume). The first two of these refer, respectively, to the more external, formal and as it were technical dimensions of place – where it is located geo-physically in time and space, for instance on a map, and as "the material setting for social relations" (p. 7). "Sense of place", however, refers to "the subjective and emotional attachment people have to place" (p. 7) – how it is lived, how it is drawn into everyday life, and becomes inscribed in and formative of one's identity, both as an individual and as a group, a community. Cresswell points to novels and films, in particular, as often evocative of "a sense of place – a feeling that we the reader/viewer know what it is like to 'be there'" (p. 8). He also describes place as "a word that seems to speak for itself" (p. 1), and as a word "often used in everyday language to simply refer to location" (p. 7) – which is say, a matter taken too often as commonsensical, and unproblematical, somehow "natural". But place is far from that, in fact, as Massey (2005) demonstrates, for instance, in arguing for notions such as "a global sense of place" and place-as-"event", as a coming-together of stories and trajectories. This more active, mobile view of place, for Agnew (2011), means that it must always be thought relationally and dynamically.

A range of work has been addressed to place in literacy studies. Recent research in the United Kingdom for instance has "focuse[d] on the ways that children perceive and represent their place-related identities through reading and writing, as well as the way that their response to and creation of texts shape their place-related identities" (Charlton et al, 2011, p. 71), working with a Massey-inspired view of place as "an event, as a 'meeting place'" (Wyse et al, 2011, p. 2). Place has emerged as a particular concern in recent Australian work, especially oriented towards notions of social justice and eco-ethical responsibility (Comber, 2013; Green, Cormack & Nixon, 2007[1]). Indeed a project addressed specifically to researching literacy, place and the environment (for example, Cormack, Green & Reid, 2008), with particular reference to primary schooling, has produced a range of publications in this regard, including a ground-breaking special issue of the *Australian Journal of Language and Education* (Vol 30, No 2, 2007)[2]. But place-as-environment is just one of a range of ways of thinking in and for literacy and education. Others include place-as-location and place-as context, as well as place-as-event, and also "place-as-inequality" and "place-as transformation" (Comber, 2011), and its usage potentially ranges across urban and rural settings and circumstances (Green, 2012).

To date, much of this work has been in the context of primary schooling and early childhood education. Intriguingly, there may be much less focused or systematic take-up of place as an organising principle in secondary English teaching, and it is interesting to speculate about why this might be so. (That is notwithstanding the continuing ambivalence and even tension of the relationship between English teaching and literacy education.) Perhaps it is because, historically, English teaching has been understood in reference to literature, as a literary project, a specific form of literary studies. Although "setting" has long been set alongside notions such as "character", "plot" and so on, as a staple of classroom pedagogy, it has been most commonly understood as, in effect, a subordinate albeit necessary consideration, with the focus being typically on what happens to whom, or how "people" live their lives, and (only to some extent) where. There are exceptions, of course; one might cite Thomas Hardy, or William Faulkner, or Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* – and certainly there are other notable national and regional examples that might well be referenced here (for example, Australia's Tim Winton).

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[1] Please note this paper may be incorrectly attributed to the journal's overall editors.

[2] See also Kerkham (2011).

The point is: Addressing place as concept and experience is arguably less foregrounded in literature as such, or is it rather in literary pedagogy? This has something to do perhaps with the field's traditional realism, although that assertion might be countered by pointing to the pervasive influence of Romanticism (Reid, 2004). Even so, "[w]riting about place has long featured in English teaching", with '"[w]riting about one's 'place'" being "a common activity in English lessons, as well as what is called 'nature writing' – writing that seeks, in some fashion, to represent and evoke the natural world" (Cormack & Green, 2007, p. 86). Even so, one would expect there to be much curriculum potential in brokering a more systematic relationship between English teaching and place-conscious education. Recent developments in what is called "eco-criticism" have much to offer here.

In summary, then: Place has become a matter of increasing, if also still somewhat ambivalent and indeed problematical, interest in literacy education. The qualification here is partly because it isn't at all clear why some literacy scholars are turning to place as a reference-point for their work. But it is partly because the motivation for transitioning between an emphasis on "situated-ness" (for example, Barton, Hamilton & Ivanic [Eds], 2000) and the notion of "place" is often obscure. Another way of approaching this is to ask what has provoked or prompted the emergence of place in the field? Why *place*? Why place *now*?

Further, a sense of place is more than simply a geographical concept. It is also imaginative, and communal, in that many of us share senses of place through creativity in writing and through speaking in ways which may mark us as coming from a particular place. In terms of a language such as English, the places associated with it are to be found across the globe in a variety of different geographical locations, and also in other places, where people speaking English may never visit places in which English is the native language. Many communities differentiate the English they speak in relation to its place: American English, Afro-American English, Australian English, Indian English, New Zealand English, and so on. Linguistic variations of different "Englishes" across the globe can be marked by the integration of vocabulary specific to the region in question, by distinct pronunciation, and by integrating morphosyntactic elements drawn from indigenous languages into a specific variety of English. Regions also mark distinct shared experiences through literature written in various Englishes, contributing to the ways in which identities are established in relation to place and landscape.

The fact that people move between places, especially in today's increasingly multicultural and mobile world, means that a sense of place can also be interwoven, or feature alongside, pupils' experiences of places and cultures other than the one in which they currently live. Many of the pupils in our schools and students in universities across the world have multi-layered identities which relate to people and places, and mobilities can contribute to the identity of place and to personal place-based identities, rather than detracting from these things. Even in an ostensibly monocultural place such as England, for example, it is becoming increasingly common for people to mark their geographical background through drawing upon linguistic resources specific to a particular region, especially through accent, to mark identification with place. By the same token, literary writing can mark a sense of place not only through imaginative and geographic landscapes, but also through drawing upon place-specific variations of English. Of course this might be differently realised in other English-speaking countries. Nonetheless, place matters.

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The articles that comprise this thematic issue are testimony to the ways in which contemporary educators are drawing upon and integrating linguistic and literary landscapes into their pedagogic practices and teaching of English, in a wide and diverse range of global settings.

The opening article, "Sensing Place: Embodiment, Sensoriality, Kinesis, and Children behind the Camera", by Kathy Mills, Barbara Comber and Pippa Kelly, provides an account of two sites of literary work, one in the suburb of Logan in Queensland and the other in a remote Aboriginal school in Western Australia. It explores the sense of place in both communities as generated in and through children's embodied and sensory literacy practices, and as realised in their documentary filmmaking. The authors take the notion of "sense of place" quite literally, emphasising the role and significance of the senses. They work with four important ways of knowing and being – embodiment, "sensoriality", co-presence, and movement. The multimedia/multimodal resource is linked with what is called "sensory ethnography". Realising place, they write, pertains readily to "sensory phenomena, because without the senses one cannot know place". Learning place in this way is clearly a rich literacy experience. With regard to the English curriculum, they write, a need exists to "transcend the limits of cognitive knowledge to acknowledge the sensoriality of embodied ways of knowing and representing the world".

Andrew Green's account of how London is represented in the fiction and other writing of Peter Ackroyd and Will Self works with the notion of the city as place – the place called London. Drawing on interviews with the authors as well as his own readings of their work, Green explores in "London in Space and Time: Peter Ackroyd and Will Self" how the city is richly imagined, and how "the urban environment is shaped by space and language". The article usefully brings together geography – more particularly, "psychogeography" – and literary studies. When students read texts of the city, how are they encouraged and drawn to develop a rich sense of place? How does literature, fiction and non-fiction, realise a sense of place? How is place conceptualised in such work? And what might be its pedagogical opportunities and challenges? The focus here is the senior years of secondary schooling, and arguably the interface between the secondary and tertiary sectors. However, it is easy to consider how such matters might be brought into lower-secondary, middle-years and primary classrooms.

In “Constituting a Sense of ‘American’ Identity and Place Through Language and Literary Study: A Curriculum History, 1898-1912”, Jory Brass takes up a similar view of place, this time with regard to the USA – the nation as place. He presents a curriculum history of English teaching in America, with reference specifically to the late Nineteenth and early Twentieth Centuries and drawing on a small corpus of English curriculum texts from that period as his primary source. Place here is understood as geographical to some extent, and geo-political, pertaining to the nation-state, but also as historical and cultural. There is little work of this kind in the literature, especially addressed to English teaching, and it is extremely helpful to have such a well-researched and scholarly account of the early formation of English as a school-subject. He also references North American curriculum inquiry scholarship in what is called “the curriculum of place”, and this might well be useful as a resource for work in other countries, and hence for comparative-historical inquiry in mother-tongue education and literacy studies. Something that might be observed of this article, and also Green’s on London, is that it is rather curious to depict such objects – cities, nations – as “places”, a term which is usually understood as referencing smaller spatial fields. This is where notions of *scale* become important. It may be, too, that it is more appropriate to refer to such objects as “spaces of places”, made up as they are of a multitude of places realised on different (that is, smaller or lower) scales. This is, in fact, how Australian work on the Murray-Darling Basin has proceeded (Cormack, Green & Reid, 2008).

Urszula Clark, in her article “A Sense of Place: Variation, Linguistic Hegemony and the Teaching of Literacy in English”, considers the ways in which literacy in English as taught in school generally subscribes to and perpetuates the notion of a homogenous, unvaried set of writing conventions associated with the language they represent, especially in relation to spelling and punctuation as well as grammar. Such teaching also perpetuates the myth that there is one “correct” way of language use which is “fixed” and invariant, and that any deviation is at best “incorrect” or “illiterate” and at worst, a threat to social stability. It is also very clear that the linguistic norms associated with standard English are predicated upon and replicate white, cultural hegemony. Yet, at the same time, there are plenty of literary and creative works written by authors from all kinds of different cultural, ethnic and linguistic backgrounds, including canonical ones, where spelling and punctuation are varied and championed as a sign of creativity. In the world beyond school, pupils are also surrounded by variational use of written language, especially in public displays such as shop signs, writing on mugs and t-shirts, posters, graffiti and so on, which link language to place. Equally, the voices we hear in entertainment and public broadcasting, far from being homogenous, celebrate diversity in Englishes. The homes and backgrounds of pupils in our schools, including their linguistic backgrounds, may also be very different either in terms of a different variation of English or languages spoken other than English. Since the emphasis is usually upon “correct” and “fixed” ways of teaching writing in English, it has often been difficult for teachers and pupils to reconcile the kind of English taught in school as the “correct” way and thus, by definition, all others as “incorrect”. However, narrow definitions of linguistic “correctness” are becoming increasingly difficult to uphold, given that the public spaces with which we are surrounded are peppered by examples of variational use in writing. There is a tension then, between creative expression of linguistic use often linked to place and those linked to standard English. This article explores those tensions and discusses the implications and possibilities for the teaching of English and literacy.

By way of a case-study approach, the article shows how addressing the issues raised by pupils' cultural-linguistic realities, which are different from those of mainstream English culture, whether it be in South Africa, the United States or England, are complicated and not straightforward. It may seem to be educationally liberating to ecologise local literacy practices, but such practices may well lead to an increase in pupils' confidence and their desire to write, but liberation only goes so far. Literacy practices influenced by linguistic ecology can become restricting rather than enabling, and run the risk of creating an almost impossible leap for students to make when faced with the world beyond their immediate milieu. This is because there is a mismatch between the micro-content, which arguably is acceptable as a local ecological form of English within the local context, and the macro-sociological level in the world beyond where it is not. She also shows how arguments for the exclusion of the study of canonical poets are based upon the very notion that is criticised, namely that of exclusion. If one subscribes to the notion that education is a key factor in social mobility and a key means to economic prosperity, then ecologising literacy practices or designing curricula based upon exclusion of any reference to culture beyond the immediate one of pupils' cultural-linguistic realities seems to promote the very thing it seeks to affect: social inequality.

Sociolinguistic research may thus have influenced educational practice and pedagogy in showing how variational use of English in both speech and writing, far from being "incorrect" or "illiterate", is creative, and thus points to a shift in our conceptual thinking about language(s) and varieties. The shift contributes to a challenging of linguistic hegemony, from where English or any variety of it is perceived as static, "fixed", totalised and immobile to its being thought of as dynamic, fragmented and mobile, with the focus upon mobile resources rather than immobile languages. It may appear to make sense then, to allow for more creativity in the teaching of English literacy rather than practices centring upon the teaching of linguistic norms of spelling and grammar of standard English allow. However, the fact remains that much subject knowledge is assessed and judged through expression in writing that demands a certain level of competence in standard English, as does the world of work.

Becoming confident writers of standard English and the corresponding awareness of its importance both educationally and socially, as recent sociological research shows (Clark 2013), does not mean that people have to become slaves to language. Rather, situational use of language can indeed transcend traditional social categories and individuals draw upon linguistic resources in creative and innovative ways, but this is only possible once a certain degree of competence in standard English and linguistic awareness has been achieved. Helping students become confident writers of standard English, then, is the responsibility of every teacher, regardless of their subject-discipline or age-phase. To do anything else, such as adapting literary practices or curriculum content in restricting ways, for whatever the reason, is to deny disadvantaged pupils the chance to succeed and to impact upon linguistic landscapes in conscious creative and challenging ways should they so wish.

In their article “Space-Centred English Language Learning: The Cyprus Case”, Mustafa Kurt and Sevinc Kurt explore how, in order to understand how spaces, tangible, social, or immersive, can be effectively integrated in the process of language learning, it is significant to define spaces in relation with human experiences. Their article discusses a study conducted in the Ledra/Lokmaci Milieu in Cyprus, an area in the centre of the divided walled city of Nicosia, where Greek and Turkish Cypriots have to use English to communicate with one another. The aim of their study was to locate the effects of a learning space on language learners, teachers and syllabus-designers. It is clear from their study that Ledra/Lokmaci Milieu has had an immense effect on individuals’ use of the English language, creating a space that places English Language in the centre. People using the space started to understand the necessity of knowing and using English and, as a result, began to change their attitudes towards learning English. With increasing use of English, Ledra/Lokmaci Milieu became a tangible and social space to practise English with authentic instances. Thus, the Milieu has become an open-air classroom and a learning space for English language learners who often spend time there to practice and relate what they have studied in their English classes.

Their research supports the belief that people develop ownership within the spaces they interact with bodily and socially, and this feeling of ownership is reflected in other dimensions of life. By incorporating space (tangible, social or immersive) related elements into language syllabi, English language learners are motivated to learn as they are themselves one of the components of these spatial realities or constructs. Learners improve their language knowledge, abilities and skills by interacting and communicating in the vicinity within which they reside. Urban spaces thus become open-air classrooms, enabling language learners to overcome inhibitions regarding speaking and communication and to be more motivated to learn English. Their work shows the importance of considering the space within which language learning takes place and how learning spaces, tangible, social or immersive, should be determined and used in every language syllabi. The integration of learning space should be the primary concern of syllabus designers, because according to the findings of the study, learning becomes more meaningful and effective when there is dynamic interaction between learners and the learning spaces they inhabit.

Michael Chesnut, Vivian Lee and Jenna Schulte continue this theme, with their article, “The Language Lessons around Us: Undergraduate English Pedagogy and Linguistic Landscape Research”, considering Korean undergraduate students’ experiences of conducting a linguistic landscape research project. Their research found that participating in such a project led to students’ greater awareness of the complex and contradictory relationships between languages, as part of their development as language-learners. However, the study also found that the different Korean student perspectives and that of their Canadian instructor shaped how they viewed these multilingual signs, creating both tension and opportunities for learning. Further, the discussion of the teaching implications of this study should aid any instructors or scholars interested in creating a program where students conduct linguistic landscape research in order to develop their language abilities and communicative skills. Overall, working with linguistic landscape research, for these students, appeared to have multiple benefits. Participants reported greater understanding of language and communication, specifically when considering how culture and language shape language perception, and increased awareness of how different people view different aspects of language. Additionally, this project allowed students the opportunity for field research and a chance to interpret research findings as well as writing and presenting their results. This study shows how, for some students, conducting a linguistic landscape research project can be a powerful tool for learner development.

Nicole Anae is the final theme-related article and, in doing so, returns us to an appreciation of the way in which realising place challenges conventional understandings of literacy and pedagogy. In "Athenian and Shakespearean Tragedies in Oceania: Teaching Dramatic Literatures in Fiji", the author presents an account of her experience teaching English in Fiji, taking due account of what she calls "the Fijian/Oceanic context of place". Working with different ethnic groups in a course addressed to English dramatic literatures and bearing in mind that, while English is the language of education, it is by no means the student's primary language for meaning-making and learning, she shows how a performative pedagogy was both necessary and productive in encouraging her students to engage with what might otherwise have been all but inaccessible "classical" Western texts. This involved body and voice, imagination and movement, as much as reading *per se*, or conventional literary analysis. In doing so, she argues for "the reciprocity between drama and place", and presents an informed understanding of place as "a meaningful location", specific to what she calls the "Pacific Islands context of place". What is striking here is that the essay demonstrates very clearly what has been presented here as place-based or place-conscious education, locating what is to be taught clearly and firmly in context, in place, situating it in the specificity of learners' culture and milieu. That this is sensitive to indigeneity is important, given that the new awareness of place is widely acknowledged to be expressly aligned with, and informed by, indigenous ways of knowing and being. What is also significant about this article, finally, is that it works with an expanded sense of literacy and learning, much akin to the opening essay by Mills, Comber and Kelly, which similarly deals with indigenous forms of meaning-making, within their own account of literacy, embodiment, and what has been called "a multisensory semiosis" (Farnell & Varela, 2008, p. 228).

The final article in this issue, from Daniel Xerri, and written out of the Maltese context, is entitled "Poetry writing in the post-16 English curriculum" and links with the theme of Volume 12, Number 1. The findings emerge from a small-scale study adopting a mixed methods approach, explores the views of teachers, students and an influential examiner. The paper argues that while there seems to be an appreciation of what creative writing can contribute to students' engagement with poetry, there is at the same time a fear that students may not be capable of writing poetry because of a perceived lack of skills and talent. It also concludes that teachers may resist the teaching of poetry writing, because of a lack of professional craft knowledge and pedagogical skill in this domain.

The theme-related articles gathered here present a range of way of thinking about place. They include place as context and as location, and more broadly, place as imagined, remembered, read about and written, visualised and performed, and otherwise as represented and "real"-ised. Our hope is that they will provide a catalyst for further scholarly and pedagogic explorations of literacy and place, and more generally that this theme issue encourages work in the rich nexus of English teaching and place-conscious education.

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