

Primary School Reading Materials and
Contexts of Change:
New Zealand's *School Journal*
1907 to 1989

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ABSTRACT

This paper considers primary school texts as resources for teaching reading and as children's literature, applying principles of close reading and New Historicism theory to explore the effects on texts of changing social, political, and pedagogical contexts in the twentieth century.

Particular issues discussed are predominant themes and ideologies, narrative technique, representations of systems of authority and control, the positioning of the child reader, and the relationship of the text to curriculum and the teaching of reading.

There will be a focus on the *School Journal*, as New Zealand's longest running periodical, an apt illustration of contextual change.

INTRODUCTION

The *School Journal* is New Zealand's longest running periodical. First published in 1907, and provided free to schools, it continues thus today. Over the years it has performed a variety of functions within the primary school classroom, as a textbook, a periodical for browsing an aid in the teaching of reading, spelling, grammar, and vocabulary, a resource for research, and as fine literature to be read for pleasure. Often this changing role has directly or indirectly resulted from change in the educational arena and, beyond that, in the wider world of social and political ebb and flow.

This paper examines some of these changes. It considers in particular major trends in English teaching, ways in which texts reflect these trends, and ways in which texts reproduce or challenge ideologies. The paper also considers ways in which some texts give mixed messages resulting in a hidden textual curriculum, a sub-text often incidental or quite contradictory to what may be the writer's or illustrator's original intentions.

The method employed to examine these textual changes is, in the first instance, textual analysis. Primary sources have been analysed according to the principles of explication or close reading: "The detailed and subtle analysis of the complex interrelations and ambiguities (multiple meanings) of the components within a work." (Abrams, 1985, p.246).

The close reading of *School Journal* texts is, in the second instance, implemented in relation to New Historicism theory, a mode of literacy criticism which views human beings and their artefacts, reader and text, as products of a constantly shifting historical background. Rather than comprising a closed or self-contained unit of immanent meaning, existing as an autonomous unit, independent of author, reader, and history, the text is open, an affect of external influences, a construct of social and historical forces. As such it reflects the predominant ideologies of an era, positioning readers in a way that subject(s) them to the interests of the governing culture and ruling classes. These ideologies however are not always clear-cut. New Historicism recognises the dialogic nature of many texts, and the interaction or conflict of elements which are essentially opposed.

The paper examines a small selection of *School Journal* texts, some representational, some exceptional, covering four main ideologies and periods - Imperialism (1900 to 1919), Escapism (1920 to 1939), Nationalism (1940 to 1959), and Liberalism (1960 to 1989). The ideologies specified are but a few of the many which have over the years impacted on primary school texts, the divisions between the related periods purely arbitrary for the convenience of analysis as, in reality, there is always an overlap with, at any one time, a range of ideologies intermingling and informing each other. There are instances therefore when reference will be made to texts and events outside, but typical of, the stated timeframes. The paper concludes with a brief look at Conservatism in the 1990s and future trends.

Imperialism 1900 to 1919

The early twentieth century in New Zealand was a period of wide-ranging social reforms. A liberal government was in office, a national voice was beginning to make itself heard, and, in education, there was a shift away from a formal traditional British model towards an informal and natural style of teaching and learning which had its roots in the Romantic period and the ideas of Rousseau.

Author of many of these changes was George Hogben, Inspector General of Schools. Hogben sought to transform New Zealand's formal British system by promoting a natural method of teaching based on the practical rather than on bookish instruction. Accordingly he widened the curriculum to include practical subjects, de-emphasised fact cramming and rigid standards, and allowed teachers more liberty. As facilitators teachers were to draw knowledge out of the child rather than to act as experts or informationists who imparted knowledge. Hogben's 1904 fully revised primary school curriculum therefore was "a landmark in the history of New Zealand education" in that it stressed practical teaching and hands on experiences rather than more formal subjects like grammar and arithmetic (Roth 1993, pp.224-226).

In spite of these being more liberal times however, "the spirit of reform did not (fully) extend to the sphere of education" (Roth 1952, pp.81-93) and Hogben met up with a great deal of resistance to many of the ideas he tried to implement. Indeed Hogben himself had a thoroughly conservative side, his methods and ideas later described as "stilted and

highly artificial ... overlook(ing) the creative impulses of children" (Roth 1941, pp.94-95), and his 1904 syllabus made moral teaching mandatory.

Texts of this time then, rather than seeking to transform or reform, mainly reproduced the formal traditional British model of learning. Centuries old, this system believed the young child to be associated with original sin, an empty vessel to be filled by external authoritarian forces, (such as parent, teacher, society and God), with fundamentals, (such as facts and separate components of language), manners and morals, and civic and religious laws and beliefs, these aspects of knowledge to be acquired through careful study and drills. Related values and morals promoted by texts were therefore those associated with utilitarianism, fundamentalism, and Imperialist, civic and class structures.

The brainchild of George Hogben, and New Zealand's longest running periodical, the *School Journal* was perceived initially as both classroom reader and textbook aiming to teach English, History, Civics, Health, Geography, Nature Knowledge, Astronomy, and Morals. Closely linked to Hogben's 1904 curriculum, to become a prescribed text in 1914, the *School Journal*, contained a great deal of British material. This, together with its primarily didactic and prescriptive functions, meant that, in spite of the inclusion of liberally oriented material, it more predominantly conformed to the conservative elements of the time. Thus it reproduced in both form and content various aspects of the British class system and Imperialism, the fundamentals of facts, and a utilitarian and authoritarian view of education.

A most obvious indication of the *Journal's* concern with fundamentalism and utilitarianism is the huge amount of factual and useful material in relation to fiction, which was generally limited to folk lore and fairy tales. In 1908 105 of the 132 prose items were on the non-fictional topics of history, geography, and civics (Earle 1982, p5).

Many of these non-fictional texts display characteristics akin to formal traditional ideas about teaching and learning. The author/narrator, for example, is the voice of authority, impersonal, all-knowing, and with complete control over, but little engagement with, the subject matter. Texts are subject-centred, broad-ranging, general, and abstract, and deal with absolutes. Their endings are pre-determined. These factors combine to produce, in the information articles, an evenness of tone and pace, an unbroken regularity of rhythm, and finally, at the conclusion, a definite closure - the finality of knowledge gained (Earle 1954, pp.40-77). The overall result, then, is a vast distance, not only between author and subject matter, but between the child-reader and the author and subject matter. This distance parallels that existing between pupil and teacher in the authoritarian classrooms of the time, a lack of context relevant to the pupil also distancing the pupil from much of what was taught.

On a few occasions non-fictional material was more emotional. May and June Empire Day editions of the early *Journal* were often particularly passionate, but always within the confines of Imperialist ideology. Didactic in tone, dogmatic in message, an example from a ten and an article in the Part III, May Issue (III, 4, 1908) reads like a sermon, the voice that of a preacher, the structure that of parallelism and catechism, the author/narrator the problem-poser and questioning voice of authority as well as provider of the answers.

Today we are met together to call to mind that we are members of the British Empire. Have you ever thought of what the British Empire means to us and to the other peoples of the world? Have you ever thought of its vast extent, and of its vast powers for good or evil? It was a great dominion compared with the land over which the British flag waves to-day...

And how comes it that the British have spread from their little islands in the northern seas over all the world? Was this great Empire built up according to a plan made by these islanders? No: it grew up almost without a plan. It grew up because the Briton is fond of the sea, and is fond of adventure, and is fond of trade that has a spice of danger in it, and because he has a genius for making himself at home in new lands....

If, then, the citizens of the British Empire lose their simple and hardy ways of living, and become lovers of ease, the Empire will pass away; if they become proud, and refuse to learn from other nations, the Empire cannot last; if they fail to learn that the greatest Empire is the Empire that has the greatest number of well-grown men and women - well grown in body, mind, and soul - then the Empire will fall into decay, if they fail to learn that an Empire may be poor though its banks are full of gold and its warehouses full of goods, then the Empire will not stand; if the British people become a selfish people, then the sceptre of empire will be taken from them; if the cleverest of the citizens keep the other citizens from getting their just share of the good things of life, then the Empire is doomed. God has so made us that we cannot long hold any good thing without deserving to hold it....

But can we find out why God cast down the empires of past time? We can: what else is history for? If God wrote in letters of fire upon the night sky the secret of lasting empire, it could not be a clearer message than he has given to us in the history of the human race. What, then, is the message?" The message is that we can hold our Empire only if we hold it as a trust - a trust to be used for the good of all the men and women who are our fellow-citizens, and for the good of all the men and women who live upon the earth. Is this hard for you to understand? Then hear a parable....

Extract from "Empire Day. 24th May" (III, 4, 1908, pp.99-109).

Taken from William Gillies, M. A. (author of "Simple Studies in English History," & c), in the "School Paper", Victoria.

An effort to make non-fictional material accessible and interesting to the young reader does to a degree exist. Facts are often fictionalised, a child narrator acts as a vehicle or framework for conveying information, and seriousness of tone and subject matter is lightened by the use of humour. Generally, though, these attempts fail. The fiction, child narrator, and humour remain separate to the factual and serious content, and an uncomfortable disjointedness results, this lack of cohesiveness paralleling the fragmentedness of the infant level texts, and a formal teaching system which valued separate parts as opposed to wholes.

Images and structures of class and Imperialism related to the formal traditional British system were also reproduced in texts. A burdensome morality was frequently projected onto characters, both fiction and non-fiction, particularly royalty, explorers, and battle heroes. This morality encouraged passivity, docility, and soberness, locking characters into one-dimensional stereotyped roles, and into an irrevocable place in systems of class and

Imperialism. Thus the child reader was invited to identify with the good, kind, loving, generous, and forgiving young Queen Victoria (I, 4, 1908, pp.50-55), or with Cook who was tender, humane, temperate, self-denying, understanding, wise, courageous, benevolent, and above all unremittingly persevering (III, 6, 1907, pp.133-134), or with the dying Nelson who thanked God he had done his duty four different times within just one Journal. (II, 6, 1907, pp.85-88 and 91-93).

Repeatedly what was emphasised were order and control, and the unquestioning subservience of the individual to the authority of the Empire, of which family, school, class, and country were but smaller echoes. Hierarchical structures throughout the texts push this message over and over again. In "A Wonderful Escape" (II, 5, 1909, pp.74-77), for instance, school children are saved from a cyclone only because, in getting under their desks, they are obedient to the teacher. An article entitled "What is Required of You" (III, 7, 1907, pp.184-187), in giving advice to the Standard Six school leaver, states: "If you leave school to seek employment, you should always remember that the first essential to the recognition of your work is loyalty to your employer ... *Your interests and his are identical.*" (p.185).

A Part III, number 9, 1908 Hygiene article similarly describes red blood corpuscles like coolies, working willingly and in repeated and regular order, bearing the burden of fuel for the body, described as a ship (pp.278-282). In a subsequent article in the series the body is described as a "battlefield", the white blood corpuscles as "soldier cells ... valiant little volunteers". These "warrior corpuscles" will lead "abstemious lives" and "meet their fate nobly" and die in order to counteract the "attacks" of disease, and accomplish the task of saving the body (III, 10, 1908, pp.315-318).

And an article entitled "The Hand" (III, 5, 1908, pp.157-159) describes the humble component of the hand, the "organ of touch", progressively - as serving and expressing first the other senses, then the body, then the "genius ... wit ... courage ... affection ... will ... and power of man", and finally the collective "work of that giant hand, with which the human race acting as one mighty man has executed its will".

Within these structures then, the emphasis is invariably on the smaller component, whether pebble, raindrop, sunbeam, blood corpuscle, child, or hand, being dutiful, obedient, and self-sacrificing to the larger component, whether rock, shower, sun, body, adult, or collective human will. Rather than progressing beyond these structures, to become a fully individualised, independently minded autonomous human being, the child must conform to the structures, and follow the dictates of those above. Whilst it is sometimes possible to move, to grow, to explore, and to learn, any worthwhile development must occur only within one's established position in the hierarchy, and as a result of submitting one's own wishes and ideals to the superior voice of authority. Comprising a uniform and consistently rigid system of beliefs which spans all categories of the *Journal*, these hierarchical structures are ultimately confining and distancing, overarching the child reader to bear down on him/her, to fill the empty vessel with ideology and facts, and to encourage conformity.

In emphasising these traditional British hierarchical structures, rigid systems of conformity, regularity, order and control, a dour Victorian morality, and the authoritarian, didactic, and distanced roles of author, parent, teacher, employer, and King, the early *School*

Journal reproduced over and over again in a variety of ways nineteenth century Imperialism and a formal traditional British system of education. In largely denying early twentieth century liberal reforms in New Zealand society and education the *Journal* posited fact over fiction, usefulness over imagination, regularity and conformity over spontaneity and individuality, law and order over nature and freedom, reason and control over emotion and impulse, and seriousness and morality over humour and fun. Texts therefore reflected at a more advanced level the “bottom up” skills and drills style of teaching English, with its emphasis on fundamentals and fragments, its lack of contextual relevance, and its placement of the child learner in a peripheral position, distanced from both author and subject matter.

Escapism, 1920 to 1939

The revised primary school syllabus of 1919, although more directive and examination oriented, and with a decreased emphasis on teacher’s freedom, had little direct effect on the *School Journal*, containing as it did much of the same material as Hogben’s 1904 and 1913 syllabuses.

Perhaps a less direct but more powerful influence on primary school texts were the terrible effects of the first world war, the depression years, and the beginning of the second world war, resulting in a movement in children’s reading materials away from reality, facts and Imperialism towards escapist worlds of fantasy and domestic bliss. (Hunt, 1995)

The slow shift in education towards wholeness, integration, and child-centredness, initiated by Hogben, was given a new emphasis in the revised 1929 syllabus, commonly known as “the Red Book”, a surprisingly liberal spirited document. In junior school texts there was consequently an increased emphasis on a more complex, irregular, and interesting vocabulary, on plot and meaning, and on fiction. Similarly in middle and senior school texts there was an effort to engage children and to relate texts to children’s backgrounds, with the introduction of the genre of the play, and an increase in humour, folk and fairy tales, and in Nationalist content. *The School Journal* became *The N.Z. School Journal*, and the cover page designs incorporated New Zealand images such as ferns, kiwis and Māori motifs. Backed up now by a range of textbooks, the *Journal* was more predominately used to teach aspects of English such as oral and silent reading, vocabulary, spelling, dictation and grammar.

The shift towards more liberal styled reading texts was, however, within limits. In the *School Journal* the apparent “freedom” from unpleasant reality, rather than a creative or imaginative expansion of boundaries, comprised a flattening out or compression of previous hierarchical structures resulting in an even more confining structural system.

“Things to Forget”, a poem published in *School Journal*, II, 2, 1908, epitomises and anticipates the blinding effect of this period. With its regular rhyme, jaunty rhythm, heavily stressed end-stopped lines, shorter pragmatically worded fifth lines, and overall repressive message, it suggests a control and denial of things to do with the heart, the imagination, and truth, terrible as that might be:

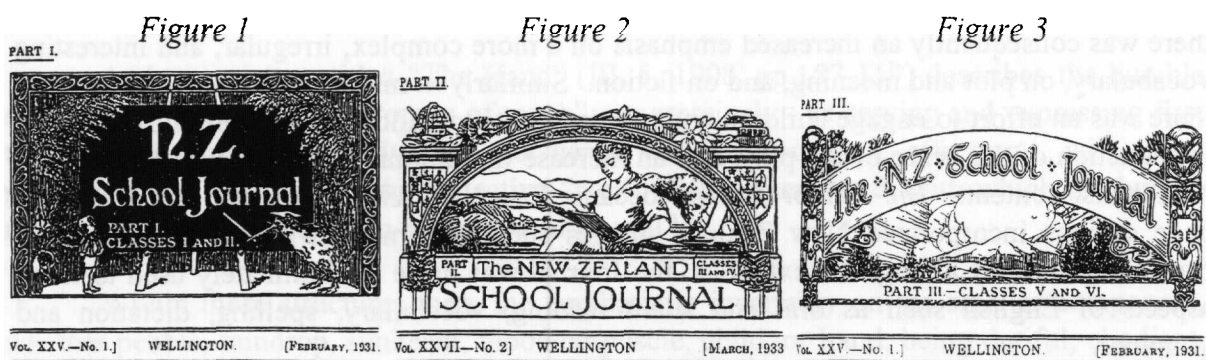
*If you see a tall fellow ahead of a crowd -
A leader of men - marching fearless and proud,
And you know of a tale whose mere telling aloud
Would make his proud head in deep anguish be bowed,*

*It's a pretty good plan to forget it.
If you know of a skeleton hidden away
In a closet, and guarded, and kept from the day
In the dark, and whose showing, whose sudden dismay,
Would cause grief and sorrow and lifelong dismay,
It's a pretty good plan to forget it.*

*If you know of a thing that will darken the joy
Of a man or a woman, a girl or a boy,
That will wipe out a smile or the least way annoy
A fellow, or cause any gladness to cloy,
It's a pretty good plan to forget it.*

(p.16)

In the *Journals* of the twenties and thirties then the Nationalist material, was also a reaction against Imperialism and an escape from unpleasantness associated with war and depression. In fact the New Zealand images and Maori motifs of the *Journal* covers sit somewhat uncomfortably with the traditional British images of white boy pupil, mortar board and cane, blackboard and easel, globe and scholarly tomes, and shield and crest. And the overall stasis of the designs as well as the controlling devices of the multiple borders and arching frames finally suggest an alignment to the overall confining structure operating in the *Journals* generally at this time. See for example the *Journal* covers of I, 1, 1931 (Figure 1), II, 2, 1933 (Figure 2), and III, 1, 1931 (Figure 3).



Within the *Journals* this structure is evident in a number of ways. Most obvious of all is the repeated reproduction of the social norm of the time - the happy family. A stultifying unit, usually comprising two parents and two children, it encouraged conformity, routine and habit, practicality, and responsibility. Child characters were merely smaller cuter echoes of their parents, their stature demeaned by the over use of the adjective "little". They were constantly engaged in mundane daily activities centred around the home, the house itself, plainly and practically made, a model of enclosure, order and control. The meaning of life for the characters in these texts was to be gained solely from their contribution to maintaining this family structure. Building a house, completing household tasks, remaining within the safety and security of domestic boundaries, resulted in a domestic Eden, but one which kept strong emotions and harsh realism at bay. Smug and complacent, the general tone of these texts reflected the lack of passion and adventure that marked their content, as did the unimaginative diction, and predictability of plot.

Not so appealing were the texts portraying royalty. With the movement away from British Imperialism came also almost an entire absence of texts portraying war (a contrast to the proliferation during the previous period of articles on the first world war), and a parallel decrease in texts about royalty. By 1934 the Empire Day issue of the *Journal* had ceased, and, where royalty was portrayed, it was in an unrealistic haze of niceness. King George V's death in January 1935 was acknowledged, and much was made of Edward VIII's ascension to the throne. However Edward's subsequent breaking of social conventions, his abdication of the throne to marry an American divorcee, was kept firmly out, covered quickly over as it was by articles celebrating the coronation of another new king, George VI.

Particularly appealing to *Journal* editors was the fact that George VI was a family man. In his role as father within the domestic unit he became a hero of monumental proportions, he and his perfectly balanced family eternalised forever in a halo-like frame of domestic harmony on the *Journal* covers of Parts I, II, and III, number 1, 1937. (See Figure 4). All over New Zealand child readers were invited to identify with the "two little princesses". Repeatedly shown posing outside their play house, donated by the people of Wales, the princesses led well ordered lives, and spent some time in keeping their little house "spick and span". The *Journal* cover of II, 4, 1937 (see Figure 5), in the expressions, activities and arrangement of the family members, again reflects the ideas of an everlasting domestic harmony. Ironically, years later, even in adulthood, the two princesses were still being shown in the *Journal* posing before "The Little House".

This suspension of childhood in a state of innocence and domestic harmony relates to the overall stasis of much of the *Journal* material. Illustrations, like the child characters, remain frozen on the page. Most usually encapsulated within frames, their patterns tidy, ordered and distinct, their lines complete, they are delightful for their design element, but do not convey or evoke strong emotions or suggest a range of movement. The illustration accompanying Walter de la Mare's poem "Tartary" from *Songs of Childhood* (II, 1, 1939, p6) is typical. (See Figure 6)

Figure 4

THE NEW ZEALAND
SCHOOL JOURNAL.

PART I.—For Standards I and II.

Vol. XXXI, No. 1. February, 1937.



THE ROYAL FAMILY.
KING GEORGE VI, QUEEN ELIZABETH, PRINCESS ELIZABETH, AND PRINCESS MARGARET ROSE.

Figure 5

THE NEW ZEALAND
SCHOOL JOURNAL.

PART II.—For Standards III and IV.

Vol. XXXI, No. 4. Wellington, N.Z. [May, 1937.



From "Our Princesses," by Alfred Duns. (Stamps.)
A HAPPY FAMILY.

Figure 6



Poetry of the time is similarly ordered and controlled. Often of trivial subject matter, and with regular rhythms and rhymes (often rhyming couplets), many of the poems contain

chiastic line structures, fore-shortened lines, questions and asides (often parenthesised), but always with pre-determined answers in mind. These asides, and indeed the overall message, come across as quirky, trivial, smug and complacent, the writer in a position superior to the child reader, all-knowing, patronising, and condescending. "Elizabeth's Poem", by L. G. Eady, (abridged and slightly altered) from *N.Z. School Journal*, (I, 7, 1931) is a good example:

*Elizabeth would like to be
A poet, so she says, and she
Is making up a verse for me
(She's thought of lots to say);
She's bought a penny book
(it's blue),
A pencil and a rubber too,
So now there's nothing else to do
But just to stay away.*

*The rhymes she doesn't mind about:
They won't be very hard, no doubt,
And if they are she'll leave them out -
A plan that's very good;
And very soon she says she ought
To fill the penny book she's bought
With all the things of which she's thought
How lovely if she could!*

*But somehow (why, I don't quite know)
The making of the verse is slow,
And "POEM" is all she's written, though
She sighs a dreadful lot;
You'd think that with a book of blue,
A pencil and a rubber too,
She'd find it easy - wouldn't you? -
But she says it's not.*

(pp.108-109)

Predominantly then the *Journals* of the twenties and thirties in many ways seek to transform systems associated with British Imperialism and formal traditional British methods of teaching and learning. This occurs through the use of more fiction, particularly fantasy in the form of fairy tales, increasingly vital and interesting diction, and in the effort to engage, and get down to the level of, the child reader. Ironically, in doing these things, texts all too frequently conform to the newly established ideology of the times, that of the Edenic domesticity of the happy family. All in all efforts both to transform and reproduce result in a denial of harsh reality, a compression of extremes, and a stasis, in textual structures, in characters (both physical and emotional), and in the involvement of the child reader. Finally the inter-war period of the twenties and thirties was a passionless time when people retreated to zones of safety and security. *The New Zealand School Journal* reflected this trend, reproducing systems for escape in textual themes, images, language, and structures. The period comprised a momentary respite prior to the massive educational reforms wrought by Clarence Beeby and the new directions set by the centennial of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1940.

Nationalism, 1940 to 1959

The effects upon texts of the changes to the curriculum were anticipated in 1937 with an Education Department report on text books and in, 1939, the subsequent establishment, under prime minister Peter Fraser's initiatives, of a School Publications Branch (Beeby, 1992). With Beeby's appointment to the position of Director of Education in 1940, and the rolling revision of the primary school curriculum from 1943 on into the 1950s, education generally took on a vastly more liberal slant (Ewing, 1970). The widespread reforms saw a slow but steady overturning of the previous formal traditional model of teaching, with its stiltedness, its emphasis on order, control, intellect, fundamentalism, utilitarianism, and subject matter remote from the learner. Instead there was an emphasis on freedom and a large shift towards child-centred and co-operative learning, and wholeness and integration. This involved learning through actual experience, drawing on children's prior knowledge, and engaging children's intuition, emotion, and imagination. The distance between learner and teacher was to close, and the child was an individual rather than an empty vessel to fill (Henderson, 1998).

Whilst Junior school texts like *Janet and John* were slow to reflect these changes *The New Zealand School Journal* was somewhat more successful at challenging the old ideology. In its new acknowledgement of authorship, articles on its own authors and illustrators, signed book reviews, authors' notes to fictional stories explaining that these experiences could really have happened, and fiction based on truth, it emphasised the reality and personalities of its contributors and the value of writing based on real personal experiences. Thus it reflected transformative liberal ideas to do with child-centredness and learning through experience.

During this period the information article represented these changes. In writing from personal experiences the now acknowledged authors used a personal voice, simplified and more colloquial language, and were more emotional about their subject matter. A more questioning approach, with an emphasis on inquiry and investigation, in line with developments in the reforming of the curriculum, resulted in an engagement in process, particularly the process of writing, rather than a concern with a pre-determined end result. Consequently the rhythm of the writing was irregular, more reflective of the highs and lows of everyday life, the conclusions more open-ended, fact and fiction more integrated, and the distance between author and subject matter, and child reader and author and subject matter, far less than it had been before (Earle, 1954, pp.78-109).

The emphasis on an emotional engagement in subject matter carried through to the illustrations. The illustrations of "The High Tide" (III, 2, 1958, p.16) by Richard Kennedy, for example, with their lines moving and flowing across the page to peter out in a blur, and their lack of a controlling framing device, contrast strongly to the design oriented static framed illustrations of the twenties and thirties, with their carefully ordered patterns and completed lines. (See Figure 7).

Now containing much material written in New Zealand, and printed by the newly established School Publications, *The New Zealand School Journal* attempted to challenge the old British ideology. These attempts, self conscious and not entirely successful, often result in texts in a curious ambivalence, where the reproduction of formal elements sits uncomfortably alongside transformative liberal features. Most apparent in the transformative

trend is the National voice, always an element of the *Journals*, but now coming to the fore. This voice made itself heard in two main ways - in the respect and status given to Maori, and in the veneration of the New Zealand landscape and bush.

The Maori dimension had always been a significant part of the *School Journal*, right from its inception. As subjects mainly of history articles, Maori landwars, interaction with settlers, and Maori figureheads, had been portrayed during the Imperialist period and beyond. Early portrayals though emphasised facts and figures, and were written from the distant and superior point of view of the white man.

This resulted in an ambivalent frame of reference which measured the status of Maori according to his relationship to the white man, his values and world. Consequently the Maori was regarded as a "savage" or a "native" who, associated with original sin, was innately evil, as the chiasitic structure of this quotation from "The United States Today" (III, 4, 1909, pp.110-117) suggests:

We are accustomed to seeing Maoris sitting at the table with Europeans, talking to them in the street and competing with them on equal terms in various sports and occupations. The good Maori stands as high as a good pakeha, and the bad pakeha sinks as low as the bad Maori.

(pp.115-116)

Alternatively, in the white man's romantic need to idealise freedom and nature, the Maori was regarded as "noble", and elevated to hero status, or anti-hero status. Both Te Rauparaha and Hone Heke, for instance, are described at different times as "Maori Napoleons". Even the old Maoriland fairytales of 1909 have as their point of departure the white man's world, taking the reader as they do through the double fictional frame of a "whiteboy's" home in the real present to the fictional historic context of a story telling "Moa-bird", before finally entering the mythical realms of Maori make-believe. (See I, 4, 1909, Figure 8 for example).

Figure 7



"My word! I don't like the look of that. High tide is at half-past ten, and look where the tide is already . . ."

Figure 8



With the new transformative movement in the *Journals*, however, the emphasis in portraying Maori was on making reference to something in the immediate experience of the New Zealand child reader, on finding something distinctively New Zealand, an element to be found nowhere else, and on seeing that element as integral to the National character. Ideally therefore both settler, or Pakeha as the white person came to be called, and Maori were to be two separate but equally important and complementary parts of one harmonious whole.

In reality though, in the *Journals* of the forties and fifties this did not happen. In the early forties Maori motifs completely replaced the previous mixed British/New Zealand cover design, to give way after only a couple of years to photographs of rural New Zealand. Inside the *Journal* covers texts continued as before to be conveyed through the point of view of the Pakeha, the Pakeha authors most often aligning themselves to the Pakeha characters. Unconscious racist attitudes, in spite of conscious efforts otherwise, invariably surfaced. Several times reprinted, "Ellen's Gift" (III, 2, 1956, pp.16-23) exemplifies the reproduction of old fashioned bigotry in spite of the attempt to transform: As a "little Maori girl" stretches out her hand to feel the white girl's new velvet dress, Ellen thinks "...Her beautiful dress! It might get dirty (the little brown fingers looked far from clean)." (p.19).

Attempts to incorporate Maori language into texts are similarly suspect. The Part I, 1942 to 1944 "Tilda Twist" series continues the portrayal of the regulated and tidy domestic situation of the twenties and thirties. The injection of Maori vocabulary such as "kai", "karaka", and "kahawai" into the dusting and cleaning routines, and chums and duffers language of "Tidy Timely Tilda" is intrusive and lacking integration.

Many subsequent stories are more successful at portraying an integrated picture of Māori and Pakeha. In the Part III, 1953 series "Toi and Wiki" the author aligns himself to the Māori characters, depicting events from their points of view. By the end of the series, however, the point of view has shifted, as the author, unable to sustain the Māori perspective, finally aligns himself to the Pakeha protagonists.

This pattern of reversal is a common one during the forties and fifties. A commendable effort is made by writer, G. D. Jensen, and illustrator, Russell Clark in the Part 2, 1957 series "Pioneer Family". The first episode of the written text conveys the thoughts and feelings of two Maori children. In the accompanying illustration the artist positions himself just behind the two and shows a settlers' boat coming in from their perspective. But by the end of the series, in both written and visual texts, it is the point of view of the Pakehas which prevails, with the artist now positioning himself behind the Pakeha children to see a Maori waka from their angle (pp.21 and 30). (See Figures 9 and 10).

Figure 9



Figure 10



A similar pattern exists on many of the *Journal* covers, with back covers frequently depicting the reverse or underside or backview of designs on the front. In relation to Maori, for example, the delightful IV, 2, 1958 cover by Juliet Peters shows on the front a collection of traditional English style houses and images, and on the back a small and solitary marae. (See Figure 11).

Unsuccessful though these attempts are to portray an integrated view of Maori and Pakeha, they must be seen in the context of their time as transformative and groundbreaking, paving the way as they did for the burgeoning of Maori material that came later. The wonderful “Life in the Pa” series (III, 1948), and the complete Maori issues of the 1960s developed from these foundations.

Portrayals of the New Zealand landscape underwent a similar progression. Photographs and illustrations of typical rural scenes dominated the covers of the forties and fifties *Journals*. Initially static and lifeless, these cover designs eventually became works of art with Mervyn Taylor’s woodcuts. Using natural materials to portray native birds and bush, the designs, freed from the earlier restricting framing device of the border, and flowing over the entire cover page, integrated form, content and media to achieve a unified whole. (See the Part II, 5, 1945 cover for instance, Figure 12).

Figure 11

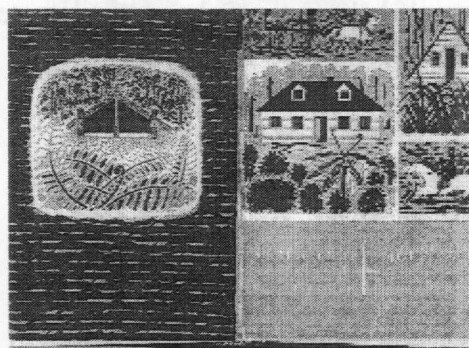


Figure 12



Not so successful were the many written portrayals of the landscape, often a background to the continuation of the idealised family unit of the twenties and thirties. Now, however, the family ventures beyond the safety and security of domestic routine and suburban homes, to holiday at the Sounds, the farm, or the beach, the children, more adventurous, exploring the surrounding terrain. Typically though, the Susans, the Tims, the Johns, and the Horis, lacking individuality, and emotion, are stereotyped, and typically the different landscapes that they explore are all the same landscape, with just the occasional transplanted mihi mihi, or cabbage or karaka tree.

Of more interest are some of the portrayals of New Zealand bush in the poetry. In several texts the rata displaces the oak tree as king of the forest, thus reflecting the shift from Imperialist to Nationalist ideology. In another text the trees are in competition with each other, again with the decline of the oak and the supersedence, this time, of the beech.

And unsettling in its complex mixture of tone is "The Passing of the Forest", by William Pember Reeves) (III, 3, 1907, pp.49-50). Here the wild abundance of the native bush is present only in the description of its absence, and is portrayed in terms of Imperialist military imagery as a "forest nation" of "flanks kings warring and wrestling a realm with tangled rankness rife ... tree columns, shafts of stateliest grace (its waterfall) like a sword." In the final stanza the passionate outpouring of rage and grief at the ravaging by Man is counter-pointed at a subtextual level by an admiration of the beauty of Man and the destruction he wreaks:

*Keen is the axe, the forest fire streams bright,
Clear, beautiful, and fierce, it speeds for man
The Master, set to change and stern to smile
Bronzed pioneer of nations! - Ay, but scan
The ruined wonder wasted in a night,
The ravaged beauty God alone could plan,
And builds not twice! A bitter price to pay
Is this for progress - beauty swept away!*

(p.50)

The forties and fifties, then, were a period of immense change, with texts, more than ever before challenging and seeking to transform the previous ideology associated with the formal traditional British system of teaching and learning. Messages were mixed, however. Change occurs over time, not over night, and new ideas take a while to take hold. Texts of the early part of the century consistently and unrelentingly reproduced one dogmatic message, allowing for some movement within the multiple structures of Imperialism. Texts of the twenties and thirties reproduced one equally dogmatic but much blander message, allowing for very little movement within just one structure. But texts of the forties and fifties allowed for movement, and to a degree transformed. In promoting ideas about child-centredness, integration, wholeness, and freedom they reflected the beliefs of John Dewey and progressive education, implemented in New Zealand by Clarence Beeby. Though these ideas were often undercut by old ingrained beliefs, they did pave the way for the more liberal period to come.

Liberalism, 1960 to 1989

Changes to education developing from Peter Fraser's initiatives, implemented by Clarence Beeby, had their greatest impact on texts in the liberal humanist period of the sixties and seventies. It was a settled period in education, and texts of this time were relatively free from ideology. The movement towards child-centred learning was marked in texts by the use of subject matter and language which validated the child's experience, and so allowed the child more autonomy in the application of their own knowledge during the act of reading. In "bringing meaning to print" children played a much more important part than the teacher in the construction of meaning. Meaning, it was thought, existed in the child's head rather than in the text itself. Thus from the beginning children were to be given a whole book and to learn to read in a natural way, with maximum teacher support, but minimum teacher direction. Commonly referred to as "Top Down", this style of learning drew on theories of liberals such as Frank Smith (Psycholinguist theory) and Brian Cambourne (Whole Language), and represented the very opposite of the "bottom up" style of learning of the earlier part of the century, with its emphasis on fundamentals and separate bits rather than wholes, and on skills and drills.

With the general decline in ideology associated with the formal traditional British system therefore, texts of this period had no need self consciously to engage in the transformative functions of those texts of the forties and fifties. Instead they reproduced the current liberal ideology. Consequently the discomfiting tensions, and ambivalence of many of the previous texts were absent, replaced as they were by a greater degree of unity, harmony, and wholeness.

Early Junior school texts used a controlled vocabulary, but natural language, "talk written down", and contained traditional tales and stories relevant to the child. Thus supported the child reader, rather than the teacher, was in control of his/her own reading.

Later, in the eighties, with the continued impetus of liberalism, the control of vocabulary lessened, the emphasis in these texts being on interest words, and rhythm, rhyme, and repetition, in order to carry the child naturally along in the process of reading, and to enable them to predict meaning and so read on. In addition the lay out and close integration and interdependency of print and picture encouraged directionality and a more active part in interpreting meaning.

Middle to senior school texts (now carefully categorised for individuals' abilities, according to "reading age" levels) also reproduced aspects of the predominantly liberal system of education. With a more secure sense of an identity independent of Britain, and therefore a less contrivedly Nationalist identity, the *Journal* returned to its old title *School Journal*. Increased use of technology, photography, and colour allowed the journal to reflect the adventurous spirit of the age in its style, with layout, print type, illustrations and photographs often varied and irregular. In a Part I, 1965 *Journal* for instance, the text is placed sideways on the page with several different fonts, interspersed with pictures, often overlapping. (I, 5, 1965, pp.32-33. See Figure 13).

The emphasis on integration and wholeness in this period is also evident in the *Journals*. Single *Journal* numbers often contained just one whole story, or just a few texts

related to a single theme, a huge contrast to the fragmentedness of thirties' numbers which sometimes contained seventeen different unrelated texts. Similarly photographs and illustrations showed the integration of Maori and Pakeha, with children of both cultures engaging in natural experiences side by side, the camera or artist able to convey equally both points of view. (II, 2, 1965, p.5. See Figure 14).

Articles were written in colloquial and relaxed language, drawing the child reader into the text in a natural way. And photographs illustrating these articles showed children involved in creative exercises or play, often focusing on close ups of their faces to show their spontaneous responses and feelings. (II, 4, 1964, p.17. See Figure 15).

Figure 13

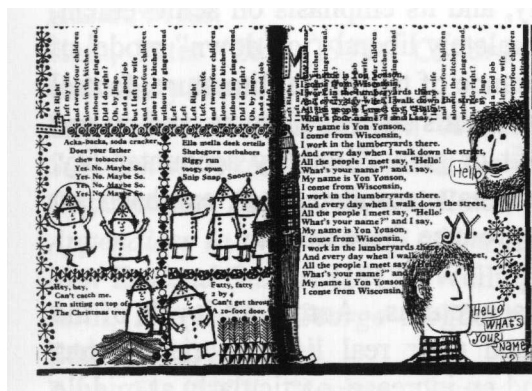


Figure 14



Figure 15



With an even greater emphasis on the qualities of imagination, intuition and emotion, posited previously by Beeby, came a corresponding emphasis on individualism and the spirit of adventure. Real writers such as Alistair Campbell, Fleur Adcock, Maurice Duggan, Janet Frame, Marilyn Duckworth, Margaret Mahy, and Jack Lasenby wrote for School Publications, injecting an originality into previous themes and genres. Gone was the stereotyping of the previous period. Instead they portrayed children as individuals, crossing boundaries, breaking away from family constraints, and exploring unknown and often forbidden territories. Characters were sometimes idiosyncratic, inconsistent, naughty, resourceful, questioning, challenging, free-thinking, and independent. Alistair Campbell's character August Patterson, for example, is an individual who happens to be Maori, rather than a Maori who is not an individual.

Brian Sutton Smith's story, *Our Street*, anticipated this emphasis on individuality, and adventure, with characters like Brian, Smitty, Gormie, and Horsey who spoke their own lingo, belonged to a gang, and subverted and existed outside the adult world of law and order and family constraints. Published in Part III *Journals*, 1949, it was about ten to fifteen years ahead of its time (Ewing, 1970, p.220). In response to public outcry at the portrayal of boys in a gang, it was discontinued after only three episodes.

Perhaps the biggest transcendence of boundaries in *Journals* of this time, though, came in the form of fantasy. Writers such as Janet Frame and Margaret Mahy described dream worlds, magic and the supernatural. Occasionally these worlds existed within the New Zealand context, and occasionally these worlds contained a darker and not entirely

comfortable reality. Neither Frame's deathly and sunken Friday night city store (III, 1, 1958, pp.59-67), nor Mahy's archetypal characters of pirates, witches and wizards would have had a place in the more didactic Nationalist context of the forties. They were very much texts of their time.

Conservatism - The Way of the Future? The 1990s and the New Millennium

Trends go in cycles. The oil crisis of the seventies, the share market crash of the eighties, and the ensuing world-wide economic slump, together with the wide-ranging curriculum reforms of the eighties and nineties, have resulted in New Zealand in a return to a more conservative emphasis in education. The English syllabus, *English in the New Zealand Curriculum*, published in 1994, reflects this trend. With its repeated reference to educating children to take their place in the workforce and society, and its emphasis on achievement, skills, and assessment, it signals a shift away from a completely liberal "top down" model of teaching. Instead there is a new recognition of the importance of traditional literature, formal features of English, such as spelling and grammar, fundamentals such as phonics, and on end results and learning for utilitarian purposes, or for profit or gain. Similarly accountability, talk of national testing, and standards based assessment, have resulted in an emphasis on conformity. Many primary school texts of the nineties reproduce these trends.

In some junior school texts a controlled vocabulary returns. Across all levels of the school an effort to make texts relevant to children and their real life experiences has ironically resulted in a decline in the genre of fantasy and an increase, particularly at middle and senior levels, in the genre of social realism. Inclusivity and equity issues in many cases govern form, with a consequent didacticism and blandness as texts try to be inoffensive and squeaky clean. Messages rather than individuals abound.

With greater autonomy through being independently funded and governed by Boards of Trustees, schools now comprise a market for texts. School Publications, in 1989 becoming Learning Media, and other independent publishers, cater for national and international markets. Catering for market forces, writing to sell, may result in the commercialisation of texts as they reproduce market demands - quite a different focus to writing to convey an imagined or deeply felt truth, which was the concern of the writers of the previous liberal period, or writing to reproduce a political or social ideal, as were the concerns of the Imperialist period of 1907 to 1919 and the escapist period of 1920 to 1939.

Many of these recent trends recall those of more conservative eras in the past. However, with each turn of the cycle, with each swing between conservative, stasis, and liberal, there is an overall improvement in the quality and content of primary school texts, and a parallel progression in systems of teaching and learning. Whether texts seek to reproduce or transform current ideology, whether there is integration between form and content, and whether or not there is consistency between authors' intended and hidden messages, the fact remains - children still learn to read. Ultimately, how they do this may be insignificant. Quite possibly, in spite of all change, teachers will teach in the same ways, and children will continue to learn and to grow.

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