New Zealand’s School Journal: Historical (Con)texts


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Abstract

The School Journal, New Zealand’s longest running periodical, encapsulates changing concepts of national identity and, in particular, attitudes towards the child and Maori (the indigenous New Zealander). Since its inception in May 1907 the Journal has occupied a unique place in New Zealand’s primary school classrooms, and has performed a variety of functions. In 2008 it continues to be widely used and supplied free to New Zealand schools.

This paper uses archival and historical material, and curricular to examine ways in which the School Journal reflects pedagogy, policy, and socio-political contexts over time, and its reproduction or challenging of ideologies. It considers the Journal’s purposes and its positioning of the child reader in relation to the text and the world. The theoretical framework of this paper involves close reading (or explication) and new historicism. A representational selection of School Journals is examined according to five distinct periods based on changes in pedagogy, policy, and socio-political contexts. These periods are defined as Imperialism (1907 to 1918), Escapism (1919 to 1938), Nationalism (1939 to 1959), Liberalism (1960 to 1988), and Conservatism (1989 to 2008).
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. Its changing roles have resulted directly or indirectly from changes in the educational arena and socio-political contexts.

This paper examines some of these changes. It also considers ways in which texts reflect trends in English teaching, and reproduce or challenge ideologies, or include mixed messages and a hidden textual curriculum. The Journals are, therefore, considered first as self-contained units of immanent meaning (independent of author and reader), and second as dialogic constructs of a shifting historical background that includes interactive or conflicting elements.

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, and a national voice was emerging. There was a shift away from a formal, traditional British model of education towards an informal, natural style which had roots in the Romantic period and the ideas of Rousseau.

Author of many of these changes was George Hogben, Inspector General of Schools, and later Director of Education. Hogben sought to transform New Zealand’s replication of the British system by promoting a natural method of teaching based on practical rather than 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 acting as experts or informationists who imparted knowledge. Hogben’s 1904 fully revised primary school curriculum was “a landmark in the history of New Zealand education” in that it stressed hands on experiences rather than more formal subjects like grammar and arithmetic (Roth 1993, pp.224-226). However, in spite of these more liberal times, “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. Indeed, Hogben himself had a thoroughly conservative side. His
methods were later described as “stilted and highly artificial [and as] overlook[ing] the creative impulses of children” (Roth 1941, pp. 94-95), and his 1904 syllabus made moral teaching mandatory.

The brainchild of Hogben, the School Journal was perceived initially as both classroom reader and textbook. At its launching Hogben proclaimed: “A child [. . . ] would not have to buy a history reader or a geography reader. [. . . ] In fact he would need nothing but his ordinary literary reader [. . . ] a book of questions in arithmetic and the School Journal”.¹ The Journal therefore aimed 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, it contained a great deal of British material. Didactic and prescriptive, this material conformed to the centuries old belief that life was organised according to a hierarchical system, commonly termed a “universal world view” or “Elizabethan chain of being”. In form and content, then, the Journal reproduced features of this system. It emphasised facts, utilitarianism, and authoritarianism, and the child as an empty vessel to be filled with knowledge, and to conform to the structures of class, empire, and religion.

For example, in 1908 fiction was generally limited to folk lore and fairy tales, and 105 of the 132 prose items were on the topics of history, geography, and civics (Earle 1982, p. 5). In many of these non-fictional texts the author/narrator as the voice of authority is impersonal, all-knowing, and with complete control over, but little engagement with, the subject matter. Journal texts are, therefore, subject-centred, broad-ranging, generalised, and abstract. They deal with absolutes, and their endings are pre-determined. Combined, these factors produce in the information articles an evenness of tone and pace, an unbroken regularity of rhythm, and a definite closure - the finality of knowledge gained (Earle 1954, pp. 40-77). The overall result is a vast distance between the child reader, the author, and the subject matter – a distance paralleling that between the pupil and teacher in the authoritarian classrooms of the time.

May and June Empire Day editions Journal texts were more passionate, but always within the confines of imperialist ideology. Didactic and dogmatic, an article in a May Issue (III, 4, 1908) reads like a sermon. The voice is that of a preacher, the structure is that of parallelism and catechism, and the author/narrator is the problem-poser, questioning authority, and 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 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? [. . .] Is this hard for you to understand? Then hear a parable.


A burdensome morality was projected onto characters, particularly those who were royal, explorers, or battle heroes. 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, 91-93).

The subservience of the unquestioning individual to the authority of God and Empire, of which family, school, class, and country were smaller echoes was emphasised in text’s hierarchical structures. An article entitled “The Hand” (III, 5, 1908, pp.157-159) describes the responsibility of the humble hand to God. As the “organ of touch”, it progressively parallels and serves 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”. Similarly, a Hygiene article (III, 9. 1908) describes red blood corpuscles like coolies, working willingly and in repeated and regular order, bearing the burden of fuel for the body, which is described as a ship (pp. 278-282). A subsequent article in the same series describes the body as a “battlefield”, and the white blood corpuscles as “soldier cells, [. . .] valiant little volunteers, [. . .] warrior corpuscles [who will lead] abstemious lives [and] meet their fate nobly [and even die in order to counteract] attacks” of disease and save the body (III, 10, 1908, pp. 315-318).
Within these structures, then, the emphasis is invariably on the smaller component, whether pebble, raindrop, sunbeam, child, hand, or blood corpuscle being dutiful, obedient, and self-sacrificing to the larger component, whether rock, shower, sun, adult, collective human will, or body. It is little wonder that, effectively indoctrinated, child readers a few years later as adult New Zealanders, sacrificed their lives for the British Empire during World War I.

Like the child reader, Maori (the indigenous New Zealander) was implicitly regarded as being of a lower order. Maori, too, could move within this traditional system as long as they conformed to its overall structure and authority. As a 1908 Journal puts it, Maori could ascend from “savagery to civilisation” (III, 7, 1908, p. 216). At best the Rangitiritanga (or Chief) was a hero and defined in British terms. For instance, Te Rauparaha and Hone Heke were described as “Mäori Napoleons”. Occasionally, they were singled out and sentimentalised. Hongi Hika, a war chief who was invited to visit King George IV, is illustrated resplendent in full war chief regalia, striking a statuesque pose in London’s streets. (The irony that, en route back to New Zealand, he stopped in Sydney to trade the King’s presents for muskets which he later used to shoot more than 2500 Maori whose heads he transported in his waka (canoe), is omitted from the Journal.)

Alternatively, in echo of Rousseau’s ideal of the “noble savage”, Maori was depicted in harmony with nature, the land, and the Maori people. As “natives”, Maori were also seen as projections of New Zealand as a land of plenty, a Paradise, or sort of chosen land where verdant nature reigned. But in relation to Pakeha (the New Zealander of European descent) they were often depicted en masse, faceless, or unthinking, or were frozen in an Edenic prehistory in which evolutionary progression was halted.

Termed “Indians” by the English (as were nearly all dark-skinned people), Maori were positioned lower on the traditional scale. Still lower, they were “savages” or “blacks” and associated with cannibalism, and murder, especially of white colonists, which is ironic given that Pakeha also frequently murdered Maori. In “Captain Cook” (I, I, 1907, pp. 6-7) Maori are termed first “the Maoris” as a generalised, distant concept. Upon closer contact with Cook they become “the natives” then, as a skirmish ensues, they become “blacks”. Finally, with the killing of Cook, they are “murderers” whilst the rights of the tangata whenua (people of the land), and the fact that in this Journal article a Pakeha also kills a Maori, are completely overlooked.
Interestingly, in an article entitled “The United States Today” (III, 3, 1909), p. 73), New Zealand is presented to Americans (and also to the New Zealand child reader) as a proud example of equality in race relations. But undercutting the article’s ideal is the condescending tone, the fact that the equality of Maori is based on the acquisition of a Pakeha education and mores, and the use of the second person plural “we” which actually excludes Maori. Moreover, the chiastic structure of the second sentence makes the Pakeha the measure of good, and Maori the measure of bad, and literally positions the Pakeha centrally whilst marginalising Maori. The view of Maori is, therefore, ethnocentric:

We are accustomed to seeing Maoris sitting at the table with Europeans, talking to them in the street, and completing 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.

As depicted in the School Journal, therefore, Maori fared little better than the child character (or reader) and, indeed, were often compared to children, as we see in “Taieto’s Trip“ (II, I, 1916, pp. 2-7):

They [Cook and his crew] found the people were just like children – full of wonder, easily delighted, easily vexed; man of war, and yet pleased with beads and dolls. Like naughty children, too, the natives would steal and tell lies, and threaten mischief with their spears. But whenever they grew too troublesome, the white men pointed iron tubes that spat out fire and smoke, and the thieves would fall hurt or dead.

A somewhat gentler view of Maori is depicted in the fictional material of the early Journal. Occupying less than a third of the space, and comprising mainly myth, folk lore, and fairy tale, it was taken from the collections of Sir George Grey (Governor General of New Zealand from 1845-1853), Edith Howes, and others. These stories recorded in writing and illustration the rich oral tradition of Maori literature but, shaped for Journal readers, editorial comment often intrudes.

For instance, ‘Maoriland Fairy Tales’ appeared in the Parts I and 2 Journals from 1907 to 1916 and beyond. In an early version the point of departure is the white person’s world, and a double frame takes Jack, a little White boy, from his home in the real present world of the story into the historic fictional past where he meets Moa-bird, teller of fantastic tales of long ago. ‘Through hearing the Moa’s stories Jack travels even further back into the mythical realm of make-believe to hear the long forgotten Maori fairy tales. Crucial in the transition from one world to

Figure 1
another is the English fairy who appears to Jack in his home and accompanies him on his journey. Thus the fairy bridges the cultural gap for both Jack and the Pakeha child reader. Interestingly, as the series proceeds, the initial frame of Jack’s home and the historic frame provided by the moa fall away, and the Maori fairy tales stand on their own, relatively free of editorial influence (see figure 1).

**Escapism, 1919 to 1938**

The revised primary school syllabus of 1919 was more directive and examination oriented, and with less emphasis on teacher’s freedom than Hogben’s 1904 and 1913 syllabuses, but otherwise contained similar material. It seems to have had little effect on the School Journal. It was, rather, a reaction against the unpleasant reality of World War I and the Depression that, according to Peter Hunt, caused in children’s texts an escape into fantasy worlds and domestic bliss (Hunt, 1995). In reflecting this trend, New Zealand’s School Journal moved away from the traditional structures of class, empire and religion.

The Journal may also have been influenced by the revised 1929 syllabus, commonly known as “the Red Book” – a surprisingly liberal spirited document, which repeatedly emphasised the importance of teachers having “freedom”. The Journal started to emphasise wholeness, integration, and child-centred learning. Vocabulary became more complex, irregular, and interesting, stories had more of a plot and therefore meaning, and there was an effort to engage children by relating texts to their backgrounds. Along with the introduction of the genre of the play, there was more humour, fictional material including folk and fairy tales, and 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 (or parsing).

This shift towards liberalism was, however, within limits. Rather than breaking through boundaries, escape from war, depression, and traditional structures meant conforming to different but equally confining boundaries. In Journals of the twenties and thirties, then, the New Zealand images and Māori 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 multiple borders and arching frames finally suggest subordination and conformity. See for example the Journal covers of I, 1, 1931 (figure 2), II, 2, 1933 (figure 3), and III, 1, 1931 (figure 4).

**Figure 2**

**Figure 3**

**Figure 4**

Within the *Journals* the repeated reproduction of the social norm of the time – the happy family – comprised a stultifying unit, usually of two parents and two children, and encouraged conformity, routine, and responsibility. Child characters were merely smaller, cuter echoes of their parents, with a diminished stature emphasised by the repeated use of the adjective “little”. They were constantly engaged in mundane activities around the home, which was plainly and practically made, and a model of order and enclosure. The meaning of life was based on maintaining the family structure. Building a house, completing household tasks, remaining within safe domestic boundaries, resulted in an Edenic domesticity that kept strong emotions and harsh reality at bay. A complacent tone, unimaginative diction, predictable plot, and a lack of adventure marked much material.

By 1934 the Empire Day issue of the *Journal* had ceased, and, where royalty was portrayed, it emphasised what was pleasant and the secure family. 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 abdication of the throne to marry an American divorcée was kept firmly out, covered quickly over as it was by articles celebrating the coronation of King George VI.

In his role as father George VI became a hero of monumental proportions, and he and his perfectly balanced family were eternalised forever in a halo-like frame of domestic harmony on *Journal* covers of Parts I, II, and III, number 1, 1937 (see figure 5). Throughout New Zealand child readers were invited to identify with the “two little princesses”. Repeatedly shown posing outside their playhouse, donated by the people of Wales, the princesses led well ordered lives, and spent time keeping their little house “spick and span”. The royal family members on the Journal cover of the II, 4, 1937 issue reflect the ideal of a pleasant, balanced,
everlasting domestic harmony (see figure 6). Ironically, even in adulthood the two princesses were still being shown in the Journal posing before “The Little House”.

The suspension of childhood in a state of innocence and domestic harmony was reflected in the Journal’s static illustrations. Usually encapsulated within frames, their patterns tidy and distinct, their lines complete, they are delightful for their design element, but do not convey strong emotions or suggest movement. The illustration accompanying Walter de la Mare’s poem “Tartary” from Songs of Childhood (II, 1, 1939, p. 6) is typical (see figure 7).

![Figure 5](image1.png)

![Figure 6](image2.png)

![Figure 7](image3.png)

Depictions of Maori during the twenties and thirties continued to contrast their ways with those of Pakeha, and to suspend them in a static past. “The Maoris’ Dinner” (II, 9, 1933, pp. 135-138), for example, contrasts a present day Pakeha dinner and its preparation using modern appliances to the Maori dinner of long ago, acquired from the bush by means of hunting and fishing. Similarly “Stone Age Maori” (III, 2, 1935, pp. 58-63) depicts Maori using prehistoric tools.

Contrasting to this material are articles by John Cowan and William Satchell (1860-1942). What seems to have made the difference is the fact that both writers had first-hand experience of Maori. Cowan had grown up on his father’s farm which included the area of Orakau, the site of one of the most dramatic battles between Maori and Pakeha during the New Zealand wars (Robinson and Wattie, 1998, p. 115). In Cowan’s “The Battle of Orakau Pa” (III, 2 and 3, 1939, pp. 46-50, 92-96) the writing is clear and evocative, the tone is personal and emotional, and there is little judgement of Maori or Pakeha, but a great deal of compassion for...
Maori. Moreover, the text is written in the third person but also includes a range of other voices, both Pakeha and Maori, and the languages of both.

Thus “the spirit of pure patriotism” is evoked in the actual words of the chief who was mouthpiece to Rewi Maniopoto, chief in supreme command: “Peace will never be made, never, never! [. . . ] Friend, I shall fight against you for ever and ever!” (In Maori: “E hoa, ka whawhai tonu ahau ki a koe, ake, ake!”) The hopelessness and heroism of Maori in retreat is evident in the poignancy of detail: “When the pa was rushed [. . . ] a young man kept back some of the pursuers [. . . ] by repeatedly turning and kneeling and presenting his gun at them. When at last he was shot it was found that the reason he had not fired was because his gun was empty all the time. He was trying to cover the retreat of the old people”. Meticulously acknowledged by Cowan is the fact that the tragedy had been described to him by a survivor, Paitini te Whatua, thirty years after the battle in the great apakuru (the people’s lament for the dead): “The land is swept and desolate,/Mournfully rolls the tide of Punui,/The waters sob as they flow”. And included in the article is the grief of Pakeha and humankind noted in the tribute by pioneer, James Fitzgerald, in *The Press* (a Christchurch newspaper), on 16 April 1864: “This is the last answer which [Maori] gave to a proposal of peace and surrender: “Friends – this is the reply of the Maori – ‘We will go on fighting for ever, for ever, for ever!’” Finally Cowan’s article concludes with a description and the actual words of the warriors who would fight on: “Ake, ake, ake – for ever, for ever, for ever!”

Two episodes from William Satchell’s novel *The Greenstone Door* were published in the *Journal* under the title “Maori and Pakeha” (III, 2 and 3, 1937, pp. 37-43, 75-80), and are as remarkable as remarkable for their times as Cowan’s “Battle of Orakau Pa”. First, the two stories are original fiction rather than myth. Second, they are narrated in the first person rather than the third. Third, they include factual material such as geographical detail on Kawhia Harbour, and Mount Pirongia, and also an editorial note that explains the adult narrator’s fictionalised childhood background. As an orphaned Pakeha baby he has been rescued from Maori warriors by a Mr Purcell and, together with his foster sister, Puhi-Huia, brought up by Mr Purcell and his Maori wife. Thus complex friendships develop between a Pakeha boy and a Maori/Pakeha girl, and also with Rangiora, son of the fearsome Maori warrior chief, Te Huata and his wife, Tuku-tuku (Spider’s Web).
The issue of race is, therefore, not clear-cut in this story. Moreover, the children enact the narrator as a Maori warrior and Puhi-Huia as a white woman, with their roles reversing their own racial backgrounds. There are also explicit references in the dialogue between the narrator and Rangiora to the racial tension between Maori and Pakeha, and a mystical scene in which stone forms in a cave appear to the children as a kneeling adult Puhi-Huia and, at her knees, a dying Maori warrior chief. This visionary scene anticipates the depiction of the future New Zealand wars and, tended by Puhi-Huia, Rangiora’s fall in battle. It is thus the story’s complex mixture of fact and fiction; present, past and future; Pakeha and Maori, and paradoxical closure and peace, and anticipation of tragedy and death that are most unusual.

**Nationalism, 1939 to 1959**

In the forties and fifties, following the directions set by the centennial of the signing of the Treaty of Waitangi in 1940, a national voice started to emerge. An Education Department report on text books in 1937, and in 1939 the subsequent establishment, under Prime Minister Peter Fraser’s initiatives, of a School Publications Branch (Beeby, 1992) also influenced the Journal. Moreover, with Beeby’s appointment to the position of Director of Education in 1940, and the rolling revision of the primary school curriculum from 1943 into the 1950s, education took on a much more liberal slant (Ewing, 1970) with an increased emphasis on freedom, child-centred and co-operative learning, wholeness, and integration. Learning through experience, and drawing on children’s prior knowledge, intuition, emotion, and imagination were valued. The distance between learner and teacher was to close, and the child was an individual rather than an empty vessel (Henderson, 1998).

*The New Zealand School Journal* reflected the changes. It acknowledged authorship and included articles on authors and illustrators as real people, signed book reviews, authors’ notes to fictional stories explaining that these experiences could really have happened, and fiction based on lived experiences. In writing from their experiences, authors of the information article used a personal voice and more colloquial language, and were enthusiastic about their subject. A questioning approach, with an emphasis on inquiry and investigation, in line with curriculum reforms (and a new emphasis on Science), resulted in an engagement in the process of writing, rather than a concern with a pre-determined end result. Consequently the rhythm of the writing was irregular in reflection of life, conclusions were more open-ended, fact and fiction were integrated, and the distance between the author and subject matter, and the child reader, author, and subject matter narrowed (Earle, 1954, pp. 78-109).
These trends carried through to the *Journal’s* illustrations. In “The High Tide” (III, 2, 1958, p. 16), for example, Richard Kennedy’s illustrations include lines that flow across the page to peter out in a blur, whilst the absence of a controlling frame contrasts strongly to the static, design oriented, framed illustrations of the twenties and thirties, with their carefully ordered patterns and completed lines (see figure 8).

With increasing nationalism came the veneration of the New Zealand landscape and bush, and a self-conscious attempt to give equal emphasis to Pakeha and Māori. However, the Pakeha perspective continued to dominate, with Pakeha authors most often aligning themselves to Pakeha characters. Reprinted several times right into the 1960s, “Ellen’s Gift” (III, 2, 1956, pp. 16-23) has a “little Maori girl” stretching out her hand to feel the new velvet dress of Ellen, the white girl who thinks: “Her beautiful dress! It might get dirty (the little brown fingers looked far from clean)” (p.19). Moreover, attempts to incorporate te reo (Māori language) into *Journal* texts were clumsy. In the Part I, 1942 to 1944 “Tilda Twist” series, “tidy timely Tilda”, the chums and duffers language, and regulated domestic routine of dusting and cleaning includes vocabulary such as “kai”, “karaka”, and “kahawai” (food, clock, and fish).

Interestingly, a pattern of reversal marked several *Journal* texts. In the Part III, 1953 series “Toi and Wiki”, for example, the author depicts events from Māori characters’ points of view. By the end of the series, however, the point of view is that of the Pakeha protagonists.

Something similar occurs in the series “Pioneer Family” by G. D. Jensen, illustrated by Russell Clark (II, 1957). In the first episode the thoughts and feelings of two Māori children are conveyed, and in the accompanying illustration the artist positions himself just behind them to show a settlers’ boat from their perspective. But by the end of the series both written and visual texts depict a Pakeha perspective, with the artist positioning himself behind the Pakeha children to portray their view of a Māori waka or canoe (pp. 21 and 30, see figures 9 and 10).
Journal covers designs similarly reversed. For example, a Part IV, 2, 1958 cover illustrated by Juliet Peters depicts on the front traditional English style houses and images, and on the back a small, solitary marae (Maori meeting house, see figure 11). However, these attempts to integrate Māori and Pakeha content must be seen in the context of their time as ground-breaking, and as paving the way for the burgeoning of Māori material that came later.

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, and often comprised works of art. Mervyn Taylor’s woodcuts, for example, used natural materials to portray native birds and bush, and the designs, freed from earlier restricting borders, to flow over the entire cover page, integrated form, content and media to achieve a unified, natural whole (see the Part II, 5, 1945 cover, figure 12).
Less successful were written portrayals of the landscape, which was often just a background for the idealised family unit. Now, however, the family ventured beyond the safety and security of the domestic routine and suburban home, to holiday at the Sounds, the farm, or the beach, whilst more adventurous children explored the surrounding terrain. Typically though, the Susans, Tims, Johns, and Horis, lacking individuality and emotion, were stereotyped, and the different landscapes they explored were the same landscape, with an occasional transplanted mihi mihi, or cabbage or karaka tree.

Of more interest are portrayals of New Zealand bush in poetry where the rata or beech displaces the oak tree as king of the forest. Unsettling in its mixture of tone is “The Passing of the Forest” by William Pember Reeves (first published in III, 3, 1907, pp. 49-50, but republished many times thereafter). In this poem the wild abundance of the native bush is present only in the description of its absence, and is portrayed in the imagery of a militaristic empire 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 Man’s ravaging of nature is implicitly counter-pointed by an admiration of Man’s beauty 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)

Equally out of step with the times was Brian Sutton Smith’s story, Our Street, in which characters like Brian, Smitty, Gormie, and Horsey spoke their own lingo, belonged to a gang, and subverted the outside, adult world of law, 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), and anticipated a more liberal period which valued individuality, enterprise, and adventure. In response to the public’s outcry at the portrayal of boys in a gang, it was discontinued after only three episodes.
Liberalism, 1960 to 1989

Changes developing from Peter Fraser’s initiatives, and their implementation by Clarence Beeby, had their greatest impact on Journals of the liberal humanist period of the sixties and seventies which was a settled period in education. Texts of this time were comparatively free from ideology. Child-centred learning was marked in them by subject matter and language which validated the child’s experience and allowed the child more autonomy during the act of reading to “bring meaning to print”. Instead of being an empty vessel the child’s mind contained knowledge, and the child read from a whole book in a natural way, with plenty teacher support, but less teacher direction. Enjoyment and the process of reading were important, rather than the acquisition of knowledge.

Journals (now categorised according to readers’ abilities, or “reading age” levels) reproduced features of a predominantly liberal system. With a more secure sense of identity, independent of Great Britain, and therefore a less contrivedly nationalist identity, there were fewer discomforting tensions in the Journal, which returned its old title School Journal. Increased use of technology, photography, and colour allowed the Journal to reflect the adventurous spirit of the age. Thus its style, layout, print type, illustrations and photographs were more 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 is evident in that a single Journal often contained just one whole story, or a few texts related to one theme – a marked contrast to the fragmentedness of thirties’ Journals which sometimes contained seventeen different unrelated texts. Similarly, photographs and illustrations showed the integration of Māori and Pakeha, with children of both cultures engaging in natural experiences side by side, and the camera or artist conveying 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).
Fictional material emphasised a spirit of adventure. Real (otherwise published) writers such as Alistair Campbell, Fleur Adcock, Maurice Duggan, Marilyn Duckworth and Jack Lasenby wrote original material for School Publications and portrayed children not as stereotypes but as individuals who crossed boundaries, broke through family constraints, and explored unknown, often forbidden territories. Characters were idiosyncratic, inconsistent, naughty, resourceful, questioning, challenging, and independently minded. Alistair Campbell’s character August Patterson, for example, is an individual who happens to be Māori, rather than a Māori who is not an individual.

Perhaps the biggest transcendence of boundaries in *Journals* of this time came in the form of fantasy. Real writers such as Janet Frame and Margaret Mahy described dream worlds, magic and the supernatural which existed within the New Zealand context, or which contained a darker, not entirely comfortable reality. Neither Frame’s deathly, sunken Friday night city store (III, 1, 1958, pp. 59-67), nor Mahy’s archetypal pirates, witches and wizards would have had a place in the more nationalist context of the forties.

During this period there was a proliferation of Maori material. Not only was it integrated throughout many *Journal* texts, but also whole *Journals* entitled “Maori Issue” were devoted solely to Maori content. In the sixties most writers of Maori material were Pakeha. But many (like Roderick Finlayson and Noel Hilliard) through intermarriage, childhoods spent in rural New Zealand in close contact with Maori or, in the case of immigrant writers and illustrators, a common feeling of marginalisation, strongly identified with Maori.

The Dalmation writer, Amelia Batistich, for example, wrote not only about Dalmations and other immigrants, but also about Maori. As a librarian with access to books, and as an observer of and communicator with people, her work was carefully researched on both
academic and practical levels (Batistich, 2001). Ans Westra, an immigrant from Holland, similarly constructed texts, not from an intellectual or rationalised perspective, but because she loved the Maori people (Westra, 2001). Staying in the homes of Maori families, she took naturalistic photographs of Maori at work and leisure in everyday life. The camera was an apt way of avoiding the stereotyping of earlier illustrators. It was thought by some, though, that Ans Westra’s photographs did display a bias. The “Washday at the Pa” series, published in the School Bulletin (a secondary school periodical affiliated to the Journal) became notorious for depicting Maori as grubby. In an era of increasing political correctness it was, in this case, Maori who discriminated against Maori (Westra, 2001).

Conservatism – The 1990s and the New Millennium

The oil crisis of the seventies, the share market crash of the eighties, and the ensuing world-wide economic slump have resulted in New Zealand in a return to conservatism. Moreover, from 1989 to 2008 New Zealand’s education system has undergone major changes. The 1984 Labour Government’s reforms in economy and education strongly influenced pedagogy and practice. The English Curriculum document of 1994 reflected a market-driven education that emphasised skills, goals, achievement, and assessment, as well as more formal subjects like spelling, grammar, phonics, and the canon of English literature. As its foreword states, the curriculum aims to educate children to take their place “in the workforce and society”. Also impelling the trend towards a more formal, achievement-oriented system of education, have been the recent PIRLS surveys which showed New Zealand to have a long tail of under achievers (especially Maori and Pacific Islanders) in reading.

In addition, in 1989 School Publications was renamed Learning Media (effectively becoming a private enterprise within the state sector) and exported the Journal abroad. This, plus the increased use of computer technology, has made the Journal more commercialised, highly coloured, and design oriented. Multiculturalism prevails with less emphasis on New Zealand’s indigenous people and an increased emphasis on Pacific Island, Asian and other cultures. The effort to appeal to the child reader has seemingly resulted in illustrations favouring a cartoon, comic or photographic format. Similarly written texts include colloquialisms and slang, and there is a decline in fantasy, and an increase in the genre of social realism, whilst inclusivity and equity ideologies often govern form.
Conclusion

The *Journal*’s current aims are therefore quite different to those of the liberal period when real writers sought to convey an imagined or deeply felt truth, or those of the nationalist, escapist or imperialist periods when writers reproduced a national, social or imperialist ideal. Therefore, in form and content the *School Journal* has never been neutral. Language, illustrations, genre, layout, theme, and style reflect historical contexts whilst overt ideologies may often be contradicted by covert ideologies. At best the *Journal* has taught New Zealand children useful facts, positive values, reading, and a love of literature, but at worst it has taught them subordination, arrogance, racism, and conformity. That in 2008 the bright, colourful *School Journal* is still popular and provided free to schools suggests the implications of this research are profound. Teachers clearly need to be critical readers and help children learn to be the same.

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1 Hogben’s address at the *School Journal*’s launch is quoted from “Syllabus of Instruction” in *Supplement to the New Zealand Gazette* (Wellington: Government Printer, December 1913), p. 3687.

This document was added to the Education-line database on 6 October 2008