

JEAN HERBISON LECTURE
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**Pedagogy of the gaps:
Lessons on evidence, from the beach**

*E ngā mana,
e ngā reo,
e ngā kararanga maha o te motu,
o te ao whānui kua huihui nei.
Tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou kātoa.*

I am honoured to present the Jean Herbison Lecture this year, and thank NZARE for the opportunity to speak to you, my colleagues and friends.

Thanks to Professor Kuni Jenkins; my student has become my teacher and friend. While Kuni and I have discussed and written about¹ the historical stories in this paper, their framing here is my own. We do joint work, but we cannot and do not speak with one voice. As will become obvious, I speak here as a Pakeha. I speak out of a passionate political interest in the relationship between Maori and Pakeha². It is this relationship on which I focus today..

I am going to start with an origin story.

It is a flat little tale, told straight. It's vaguely familiar to most of us. It's the story of some events which led to the first school in New Zealand. The usual approach to these events is expressed in a popular book: Michael King's *The Penguin History of New Zealand*, published last year. Michael King's version goes something like this:

Samuel Marsden was the Church of England's Church Missionary Society chaplain in NSW. He befriended a Maori sailor, Ruatara, which led to Marsden setting up the first Church Missionary Society mission at Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands. Marsden conducted his first service in New Zealand on Christmas Day 1814. Marsden left three lay workers at Rangihoua, including Thomas Kendall a schoolmaster.³ (paraphrased)

Of course, Michael King was writing a lengthy history of New Zealand, so he did not

intend to elaborate as he rushed by this apparently small moment in our past. As a result, his brief account is more interesting in what it does *not* say than what it *does*. (This is *not* an attempt to criticise King's work, but to use this paraphrased excerpt as a rendition of the 'usual story').

I want to pause over this bit of text. Its striking lack of nuance – its spooky simplicity – offers an unlikely but fruitful moment within which to consider the framing of educational research in New Zealand today.

In particular, the stories it represses offer a chance to discuss the predominant ways *it has become possible to think* about the relationship between Maori and Pakeha in schooling. In saying I am interested in the ways *it has become possible to think*, I signal an interest in a particular sort of theorising (thinking about thinking). Conferences, of course, are a great place to think about thinking; we don't seem to get much time otherwise.

It has become difficult these days in education to think outside of the frame of inequality. In particular, when *ethnic groups* are spoken about in New Zealand, inequality in educational achievement is sure to be in the next clause. It has become *particularly* difficult to think about Maori and Pakeha as categories, or as 'related' groups, in education, outside of this limited, but compelling, frame.

And it is certainly difficult to think about *practice* outside of the frame of inequality. Official education policy and government sponsored research in education require us to *act* in its name. *Addressing* educational inequality has assumed the force of a moral imperative.

This dominant framing (something we have all fought for) expresses education's modern and not-so-modern desire: its desire to banish social inequality. This intensely admirable, but ultimately self-deluded, desire assumes that education's power is magnificent. Enough to overwhelm history and economy and politics. Such conceit is necessary; its optimism compels all of us as educators forward. It certainly compels

my own work – despite my radical pessimism.

Education's confidence about its own power underpins all that I have to say here, but I won't consider this conceit *directly* here – I will come at it obliquely.

Today I want to revisit fragments of Michael King's short scene from the past to help me illustrate something important about the ways we are positioned in relation to each other in education. I want to develop the suggestion that locating Maori and Pakeha more or less exclusively in a frame of relative inequality in education effectively positions us in a relationship to each other which is doomed not to change. The inequality story cannot have the emancipatory or liberating effects it desires. This is largely because it fixes Maori and Pakeha together in a way which tends to *shut down* possibilities for thinking creatively into the future.

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Maori have always occupied – or have been made to occupy – a problematic space in New Zealand education. Over the years, Maori have been the subjects of civilisation, of integration, assimilation, disadvantage. More recently, perhaps moved into a more hopeful perspective, Maori appear as key subjects in 'celebrating difference' and 'addressing diversity' in schools. Many of us see our work in these terms: addressing diversity (which is the new code for inequality).

At the moment, a pragmatic neo-liberalism means we are most concerned about the serious economic consequences of inadequately schooling a significant proportion of the new and changing labour markets. Maori are expected to be 21% of those entering the labour force in about six years time⁴. Worries about the waste of human-capital have meant that anxiety about Maori 'educational underachievement' now dominates official thinking about Maori in education.

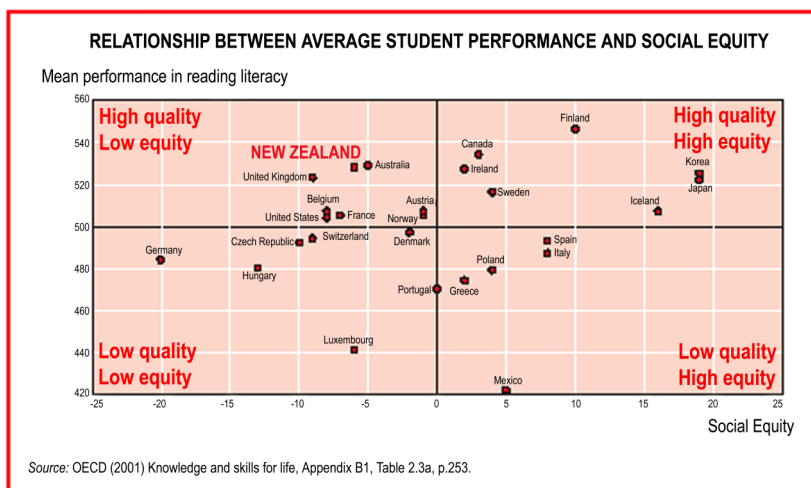
In each of these accounts, whether about disadvantage or underachievement, Pakeha as a category remains silent, but always determining the frame. It is the achievement of Pakeha against which Maori education achievement has been valued and understood. It is the Other against which education of Maori has been found wanting.

The usual story of Maori school achievement

We all know the storyline. It goes something like this:

*“New Zealand students tend to do well by international standards. By age 15, the average achievement of New Zealand students is well above OECD average in reading, mathematics and scientific literacy. However, there continues to be a wide spread of achievement amongst New Zealand students in most curriculum areas....”*⁵

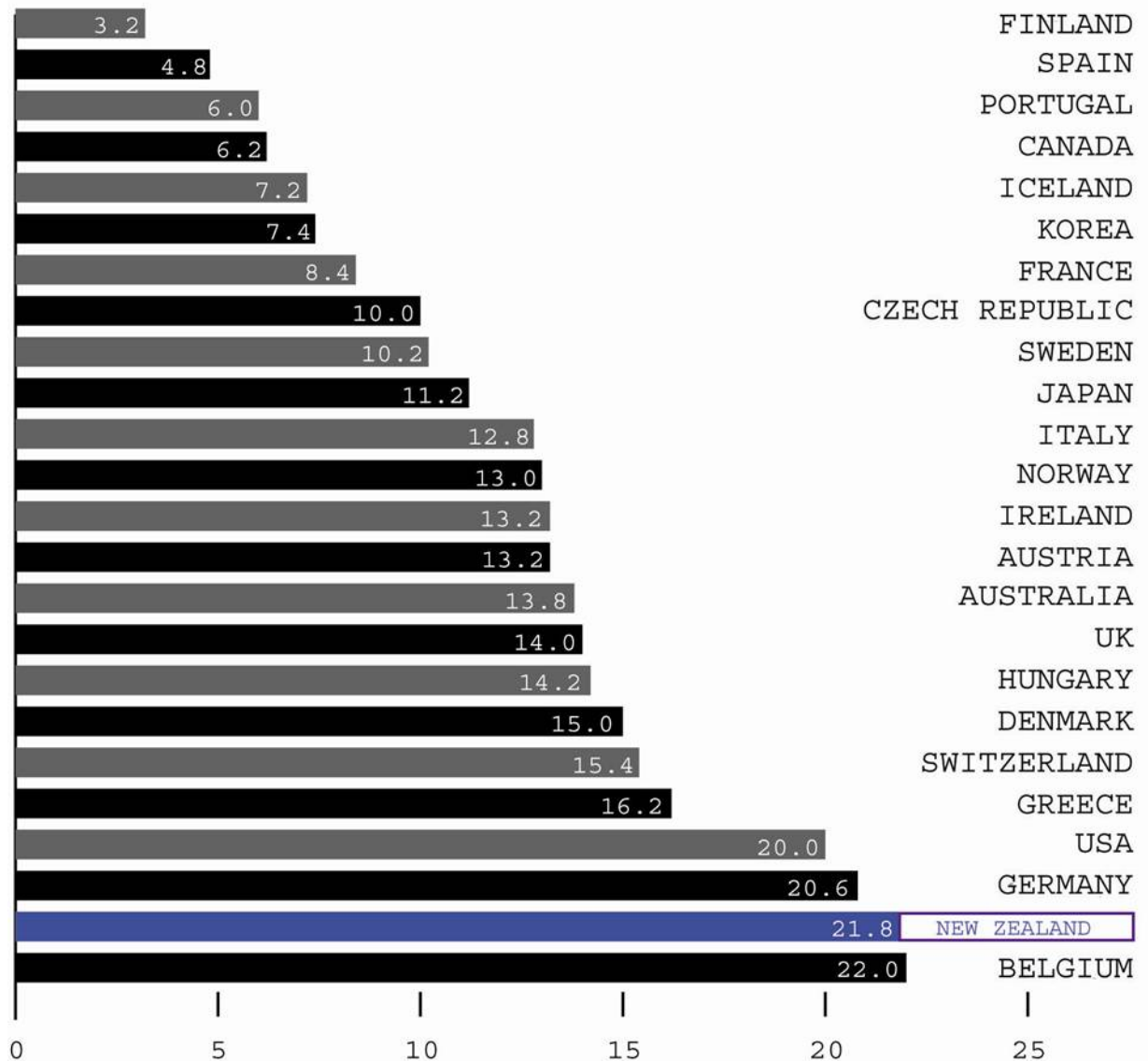
International reports indicate that New Zealand has a ‘high quality, low equity’ education system:



OECD chart.⁶

[The UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre's *A League Table of Educational Disadvantage in Rich Nations* (2002)⁷ (see below) ranks countries by the extent of the difference in achievement between children at the bottom and at the middle of each country's achievement range. It shows the average rank in five measures of relative educational disadvantage in the areas of reading, maths and science literacy and achievement.]

EDUCATIONAL INEQUALITY



Who inhabits the low end of our spread-out achievement spectrum, or the ‘gaps in achievement’, or ‘the tail’, as it is sometimes called? “... *Maori and Pasifika students... tend to be over-represented amongst low achievers.*”⁸ Only 4% of Maori school leavers attain an A or B bursary compared with 22% of Pakeha leavers⁹. More than one third of Maori school leavers have few or no qualifications compared with 14% of Pakeha.¹⁰

The repetition of these ethnically-coded statistics, and the worried return to them, by

so many of us for so many years, parallels their intractability. In this apparent *cul de sac*, *explanations* and *theorizing* are seen as distracting, and even pointless. A focus on *solutions* can be the only really legitimate response when we seek to eliminate this difference about which we properly feel such discomfort.

Popular solution #1: the repression of ethnicity

“We are one people... [but] there has been a divisive trend to embody racial distinctions into large parts of our legislation... In this country, it should not matter what colour you are, or what your ethnic origin might be”. (Don Brash, Orewa speech, January 2003)

A popular solution has found its voice this year in the attempted radical annihilation of ethnicity as a category of analysis in education. Let's not allow ethnicity a hearing, except when mentioning fun things like food, or exotic dancing and other rituals! Well, this is *one* way of eliminating troubling differences. It is possible that the energy for sidelining ethnicity comes from the yearning of many in New Zealand to remove strangeness, to take away the worrying possibility of unknowability¹¹ (and this is not a characteristic unique to us). I have referred to this energy as ‘a passion for ignorance’¹². We seek to collapse difference into the familiar - a contraction which is mistaken for equality.

This familiar equality is accomplished, as Don Brash, Trevor Mallard and others have argued, through asserting our essential *sameness*: it is not enough that we are all human, we are all now *indigenous*. Or, if you don't like that, we are all *settlers* in Aotearoa. Or, as New Zealand poet Brian Turner put it: ‘[Let us] recognise the worth and strength – and the reality – of hybridisation. Isn't this what just about all of us are, *hybrids*?’¹³

In education, to a large extent we *have* become hybrids, by becoming *diverse*. We are now *all* diverse. In this familiar, shared, space in education we are collectively diverse individuals, differentiated only by a variety of ‘learning needs’. The job of education researchers and educators becomes clear: to identify and address in practice the *learning needs* of each individual, ‘regardless of ethnicity’. Those inhabiting the

‘achievement tail’ become simply individuals with significant learning needs.

What a relief. This view of ‘the tail’ bleached of ethnicity offers a far more comfortable prospect than one soiled with an apparently insoluble and complicated difference. We can *understand* ‘learning needs’; we can quantify, standardise, measure and assess them, and then we can instruct teachers to address these known things. The spectre of unknowability is kept again at bay, and optimism restored.

Against this view of the whole population as a diverse group of ‘learners’, is the insistent and discomfoting voice of Maori researchers and thinkers in education, repeatedly asserting the significance of ethnic identity and cultural specificity. This was particularly clearly stated as the first goal of education by Professor Mason Durie at the Hui Taumata Matauranga (probably the most important Maori education conference) in 2001: that education should be consistent with enabling Maori to live as Maori¹⁴.

But in a determined bid to cling to our comforting sameness, many Pakeha remain deaf to this voice, and to the significance of difference. We repeatedly and firmly assert the prior importance of *shared* learning needs and shared needs for educational achievement. Many who take this position make an important point. But such confident homogenisation makes it *less possible to think* about the complexity of cultural differences in education, and makes it far harder to ask whether and how cultural identity and collective histories are implicated in learning. And if we are all undifferentiated where it counts (i.e., if we merely have a range of learning needs), we do not need to consider the possible educational significance of the *quality of relationships between peoples*.

The effect of de-emphasising cultural/historical difference is to bring Maori and Pakeha into a tight, close, merged relationship. This is the *desired* effect: ‘to come together’. Ultimately, however, this sublime relationship can only ever be a fantasy when few Maori actively return what they see as a dangerous and even deathly embrace. Why would they? To be the same is to disappear! To be merely another one in the ‘diverse’ crowd is to risk losing one’s cultural identity and one’s political footing.

If we ignore Maori and Pakeha identities as significant in education, we all lose a chance to examine the point at which they meet. One of the effects of a focus on sameness is that it reduces opportunities critically to re-consider the boundaries of the categories ‘Maori’ and ‘Pakeha’.

It is the case that a significant proportion of the population who have both Pakeha and Maori ancestry find they cannot clearly delineate Maori and Pakeha identities¹⁵. This is sometimes seen as meaning these categories should be discarded, or collapsed into a catch-all hybridity (such as the category ‘New Zealander’). Such a collapse annihilates boundaries. And because relationships by definition occur *across* boundaries, without them we cannot even *critically* examine the complex and shifting relationships entailed in using categories of ethnic identity.

Popular solution #2: Collecting evidence about ‘what works’

Ignoring ethnic difference, or having ‘a passion for ignorance’ about ethnic difference, has become particularly popular *outside* education – although, as I have suggested, it has many adherents within education.

But *inside* the field, another orthodoxy is also at work in relation to our familiar couple: ethnicity and unequal educational achievement.

In addressing practice, and looking for solutions to inequitable achievement patterns, this new orthodoxy might be seen as a *new* passion (one that dispels ignorance, rather than embraces it) – a passion for *evidence*, and *evidence-based practice*. In particular, we now seek valid and reliable knowledge about influences on achievement, which will then guide what teachers might do. As the Ministry of Education puts it: To ensure the best forms of teaching practice we need research to produce ‘an evidence base that is trustworthy about influences on learner outcomes’ (p1, Alton-Lee 2004).

I have some enthusiasm for this idea. Calls for evidence require us to orient ourselves to practice in a simple, decisive way, by asking: what works? Finding out ‘what works’ has tautological appeal, in the same way as seeking ‘excellence’ and ‘quality’

has appeal. The only possible response to this mom-and-apple-pie call for trustworthy research evidence has to be ‘well, yes’. We *do* need to find out what will have a positive effect on learning, and then do it. According to the proponents of this approach, it is alarming how many of us in education do not do this¹⁶. If only it were so simple!

I suggested previously that we think about *how we can think* in education. In this regard, calls for evidence are interesting in a slippery sort of way: they both *open up* and *close down* possibilities for thinking about our current preoccupation, educational inequalities.

Carefully defined, collected and reported evidence *opens up* some radical possibilities. In its best sense, *evidence*-based practice is an alternative to *authority*-based practice. *Evidence*-based educational practices should be better than practices based in convention, belief, and habit for determining what should be done in schooling. Therefore, ‘evidence’ about what works should be able to make trouble for dominant cultural and ideological assumptions. An evidence-based approach should be able to undercut the beliefs, guesswork, the ‘we know best’ approach and the plain prejudices – which have historically shaped mainstream schooling for Maori and other groups.

But ‘authority’ has struck back, as it does. Debates about what might be included as evidence have been effectively shut down, at least in the United States, by the central funding agency definition of legitimate evidence in education as resulting only from certain sorts of methodologies – ‘experimental comparisons’¹⁷. This reduces the possibility that other forms of research will affect what teachers can and should do, and how they might think. [For critical discussion on evidence and evidence-based practice in education, I commend to you *Qualitative Inquiry*, vol. 10, 2004]. In New Zealand we have not yet formally narrowed our focus quite so dramatically as in the United States. But we need to remain alert to the dangers of the apparently sensible arguments for ‘really useful’ and ‘reliable’ educational research. The enthusiasm for ‘trustworthy’ or reliable research can default easily to a *certain sort* of scientific

research which explicitly *opposes* an opening up of what might count as evidence. It can narrow down *what we might be able to think* in education as significant to change.

The proscribing of evidence is a response to the mountains of apparently inconclusive research publications and reports that fail to provide practical guidelines for ‘fixing’ the inequalities which create such anxiety for schools and for governments. We might want to ask whether the primary role of educational research *should* be ‘fixing’ government anxieties; or whether we should also be encouraged to generate some critical questions about those anxieties, or more important, whether we should be encouraged to look in unlikely places for addressing them. Generating critical questions becomes less possible when pragmatic politicians require educationists and researchers increasingly to become technicians, rather than intellectuals, and when teaching is changed from being an intellectual endeavour to a technical process of facilitating learning¹⁸.

What I am saying here is that to *close down* the question of what counts as evidence is to narrow how we can *think about thinking* in education at a time when we most need pluralizing agendas, new courage and a new empirical curiosity about what might be useful for conceptualising and addressing our anxieties. When ‘evidence’ insists on closed technical questions rather than open and critical ones, we ensure increased intellectual stagnation in the field of education. Such narrowing also encourages us to remain ignorant of theoretical developments in other fields. In the social sciences, Ulrich Beck invites us to think outside what he calls ‘zombie categories’ (he gives examples of family, class and nation-state. In education I would want to add such notions as the undifferentiated learner, and diversity)¹⁹. Zombie categories are those which may have been alive and kicking in the past but which now simply hang around, as zombies do, distracting us and limiting thought. He insists that social scientists engage in a broadening of the reasoned imagination in response to the contradictions, uncertainties and multiplicity of modern life.

Tired educationists, sceptical about some sociologists’ postmodern enthusiasm for complexity and uncertainty, may well retort: ‘complexity and contradiction are all very well. But we deal in the *real* problems of inequality, not the complicated stories of cultural and social life. We don’t need a new imagination to respond to a

changed world; we need more clarity and certainty because our *old* problem of inequality has not changed’.

Perhaps precisely *because* our problem does not change signals the need to heed Beck and others. In place of staring disconsolately at educational inequalities and worrying about how to fix them, we might attempt to generate a more multi-faceted sense of what counts as worthy of attention and therefore what might count as evidence in this field.

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I said earlier that the interconnected definition of Maori and Pakeha achievement is today taken as a measure of progress in education. Let’s return to that idea with a more critically open mind, and attempt to enter the relationship between Maori and Pakeha in education in quite a different way – in a way that does not insist that one is defined in terms of what the other might lack.

I am staying *with* the relationship; I do not want to detach Maori and Pakeha. Educational practice is *always* finally about the affective relationships between people. Those relationships are where we find education’s most important and difficult questions. The significance of any educational talk about practice, including discourse on evidence, lies in the *relationship to other groups of people* it makes possible.

For illustration let’s return to the relationship between Marsden and Ruatara; let’s enliven the thin little story I told at the beginning about the origins of the first school in New Zealand, in order to indicate a more voluptuous sort of account we could tell more often in education, even to inform what counts as evidence of ‘what works’. This expanded and more nuanced story does not shy away from ‘what to do’; it centres practice in all its multiplicity. We can read off it hints about ‘what we might do’ or ‘what makes sense’, in the present.

Re-reading the present in the past

I said that the popular account of the events of 1814 instructs through its silences. The silences are multi-layered, but the most simple emanates from the *orientation* or the *perspective* of the narrative. As we might expect (and this parallels the character of most education narratives still), it is a commentary told from a Pakeha vantage point. This may not *in itself* be a problem; the original Pakeha accounts are magnificently evocative in their detail. But – as with the dominant story of educational inequality – the single vantage point is so sadly and fatally one-dimensional! Missing is a fascinating story of human relationships and interactions in which Maori are the central players.

Re-visiting this story of the beginnings of the educational relationship between us allows us to identify elements of Maori - Pakeha relationships which speak in imaginative ways to both past and contemporary educational achievement patterns in New Zealand.

The story can be fragmented into three moments of engagement (these re-interpretations were made with and by Kuni Jenkins)²⁰:

MOMENT ONE: the relationship between Ruatara, a young chief, and Marsden

Marsden had a school in Sydney, which Ruatara had visited. Ruatara explicitly invited Marsden to come to set up a school in his *rohe* (area) so that his people could begin to engage with the Pakeha social economy which had so impressed Ruatara. Ruatara had visions of planned streets, wheat fields and flour mills at Rangihoua.

The benefits of a school for Ruatara resided not simply in the one-way *consumption* of European technological know-how, but also in bringing Maori and Pakeha into what Maori believed would be permanently reciprocal and equitable political and economic interactions.

‘Friendship’ in its strongest and most subtle sense – *whakahoahoa* – was such an interaction. For both Marsden and Ruatara, friendship and trust were essential to

achieving their mutual desires to make a real intervention into Maori society, through a relationship between them and therefore between their peoples. The result of that relationship was a schoolhouse, built at Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands. Ruatara did have some serious doubts about the wisdom of inviting Marsden and his people to his country, having heard the arguments in Sydney that the white settlers would enslave and exploit the indigenous people of New Zealand as they had done in Australia. But he finally had to rely on an optimistic view of his friendship with Marsden.

To investigate the basis of successful schooling in New Zealand, we would need to consider more than the mere facts of Ruatara's invitation or Marsden's plan to come to New Zealand. We would need to look also to the intangible relationships which gave *meaning* to those and subsequent events.

MOMENT TWO: A 'sham fight': Ruatara brings Marsden to the New Zealand

When Marsden eventually arrived in New Zealand he was accompanied by some important Northern chiefs, including Ruatara. As protocol required, these chiefs had fetched their *manuhiri* [visitors]. This was to guarantee the *mana* [authority] and safe arrival of the visitors. By arriving with Ruatara, within his *ruruhau* [guardianship], and being introduced into the Maori community in the company of the three *rangatira* [chiefs], Marsden and the missionaries were immediately seen as people of rank, people to be listened to, people who should be befriended.

Nicholas, Marsden's companion, wrote in detail about a spectacular event which took place on 24 December 1814, a couple of days after the arrival of Marsden's ship in the northern New Zealand harbour by Rangihoua. In the early morning, wrote Nicholas, 'A *fleet of canoes crowded with men...*' approached the ship *Active* where Marsden, Nicholas and the other missionary settlers and their families were. The scene was '*marked with a wild grandeur of the noblest description*' and with a '*force of distinctive sublimity*'. The chiefs in the canoes were standing up, with their cloaks draped dramatically over their shoulders, and their hair decorated with white gannet feathers was tied in bunches on the crowns of their heads,.

To Nicholas, who recorded the scene later in his journal, the sounds and gestures of

the fierce and tattooed warriors were terrifying and wild, as if they were intent on attacking the ship. But Nicholas and Marsden recognised their friend, the chief Korokoro, standing in one of the canoes and were reassured somewhat. Korokoro came on board the *Active*, with gifts, then hurried the two men onto a canoe and bought them towards the shore, where Ruatara and his warriors were assembled. There was then, according to Nicholas, a spectacular ‘*entertainment*’: a vigorous ‘*sham fight*’ involving hundreds of warriors.²¹

But for Maori, this was no sham fight. The people were engaged in a serious and highly significant ritual of encounter: a major *powhiri*, and its associated *wero* [challenge]. This moment of arrival was charged with tension, where the *tangata whenua* [indigenous people] were in a very deep sense unsure of the future, aware of potential danger, and not yet committed to any relationship with these strangers who had come to live with them.

If we see on the beach a ‘sham fight’, a theatrical entertainment for the new arrivals, it is *impossible* to think of another, most significant event occurring there. If we are enabled to see and understand the *powhiri*, we are able to see Pakeha entering the political and social realm of Maori, on Maori terms, with Maori expectations enabling their entry.

With the *entertainment* story, we perceive the arrival of the colonisers to do their colonising thing, being charmingly and naively greeted by the enthusiastic natives. With the *powhiri*, it becomes possible to perceive a Maori-controlled situation in which the first school was to be established, and on which its success depended. At this crucial moment of arrival and change, Maori and Pakeha can be understood as participating with each other in a *powhiri*, an engagement intended cautiously not to welcome in some simple sense, but to demystify, and *integrate*, outsiders.

Nicholas had set his face towards an entertaining, if frightening, welcome; he was not able to detect *evidence* of obligation and mutuality which for Maori was – and remains – so important to the educational relationship.

MOMENT THREE: Ruatara's lesson: The sermon and the haka

That spectacular *powhiri* on the beach is not usually seen as the first moment of arrival for official western education in New Zealand [which is not surprising: the 'sham fight' is recorded as such in all the historical accounts we could find. The *powhiri* interpretation is that of Kuni Jenkins, confirmed by Professor Patu Hohepa]. The beginnings of the arrival of European education is more likely to be seen as the religious service held the next day, Christmas Day, on the slopes above the beach.

The service was an impressive pedagogical event, apparently humming with evidence of Marsden teaching and his Maori audience listening and appreciating. The story goes that Marsden read a religious service, preaching from St Luke, to between 300 and 400 attentive people, gathered on the grass near the bay. Marsden spoke. "Behold, I bring you tidings of great joy...". But who heard him? No-one at Rangihoua understood much English; Marsden did not preach in Maori. Few people present would have been able to understand Marsden's words.

So it was Ruatara, the interpreter, who was the speaker, the teacher, that day. Ruatara's words were not recorded, so neither we nor Marsden can know what he said to the people. Ruatara's interpretation would have been the words he wanted his people to hear. His words would have been passionate, of necessity building on Maori knowledge of the spiritual realm. Ruatara would probably have talked of the implications of Marsden's arrival for the material lives of the people. He would have made a link between the new ideas about the European *atua* and the production of food and other goods.

So 'what worked'? What counted as successful pedagogy on the occasion of Marsden's lesson? Marsden was, in a sense, merely Ruatara's helper – assisting Ruatara to bring new knowledge and ideas to his people. What the people heard and apparently accepted were Ruatara's ideas for change, not the ideas and words of the teacher and interloper who did not and could not connect directly to them.

As Marsden and the other Pakeha left after the sermon, the gathered people rose in an impressive *haka*²². Nicholas recorded²³ this as a joyful gesture of what he called ‘confidence’ in the Europeans. Given the dynamics of the situation, and no doubt the passion and conviction of Ruatara, it is likely that the people were expressing fierce support for their leaders, and determined confidence in their authority as they set a new direction for the group.

Looking in different places

We could probably go on in this way, re-examining in some detail the various meanings and dynamics of shared educational events and practices, right up to the present ... But it is probably worth taking stock of the point of the exercise. It is not my intention in retelling these stories to invoke a sort of flabby relativism. I am not simply saying: ‘Listen, there is more than one story about the past’. I am not insisting merely on ‘hearing the silenced voices’ or ‘making spaces for multiple readings’. Hearing the different voices can result merely in a paralysing cacophony, or the bland buzz of diverse, undifferentiated sounds.

The retold stories underline the idea that ruling desires and the lines of power are not easily drawn. The stories of the scenes on the hillside above the beach and at the powhiri the day before, indicate how what was ‘really happening’ eludes the grasp. The originally straight-forward pedagogical scenes become interminably kaleidoscopic, constantly shifting in meaning and significance.

While the idea of shifting meaning might inspire some of us, for educators who seek certainty and clarity, it is merely an irritation. Despite the title of this conference, educators usually seek telescopes, or microscopes, not kaleidoscopes. We tend to like to see things with clarity and with certainty; after all, messy and shifting does not seem to help with *solutions*. I have a lot of sympathy for this. In general, I am impatient with the tendency for kaleidoscopes to become a paralysing, distracting spectacle – so I am *not* suggesting kaleidoscopic multiplicity for the sake of it. I am suggesting that different interpretations might lead us to *look in different places* for the clarity and directions we seek. In the three retold moments of ‘the relationship’, ‘the powhiri’ and ‘the sermon’ we are led to ‘see’ lines of power and effectiveness

and attention and success in places we did not expect them to be. We are drawn to consider elements of successful educational interactions we might not have considered significant: friendship, engagement, emotion, trust, and optimism (as well as caution, fear, uncertainty).

So different stories can illuminate new possibilities. Also, re-reading these small tales suggests we approach the relationship between Maori and Pakeha as one within which, for each, education takes on different meanings and has different histories, and therefore *a different present*.

At the same time, these and subsequent events in education were and are deeply *shared* and are the product of our relationship. So difference cannot be the *only* way to understand these stories about education. We are invited in these stories to look both along two parallel or related lines to the past, and simultaneously to look over at one another.

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To return to evidence: Conservative notions of evidence cannot hold competing stories. A conservative notion of evidence seeks what is true, rather than engaging in debates about truths and their effects. And here is the danger of this: good ideas are rare in education, and good ideas are a product of bringing into proximity quite disparate assumptions, evidences and practices. In other words, good ideas come from looking in unexpected places.

Integration

I think the story of Marsden and Ruatara is one of hope. It must have been such an exciting time! If only Pakeha had been able to enter into that relationship which was so full of promise. Unfortunately, as we know, Maori were stymied in their desires for high-quality schooling. They were thwarted in their expectations of a *relationship* which they approached (and continue to approach) in order to engage equitably – in intellectual, practical, political as well as social terms.

Historians of education²⁴ tell us Maori hopes that schooling would give access to the highest levels of Pakeha economic, social and political intercourse were largely (with an interesting exception – Thornton’s Te Aute school near Gisborne) frustrated by the early missionary teachers’ inability to teach at the political level and intellectual depth required by Maori, including these early teachers’ general unwillingness to teach the English language. The later and continuing neglect by settlers to learn and speak te reo Maori and to become conversant with Maori tikanga, also kept (and keep) the two groups radically separated. In addition, the (general) refusal of Pakeha to become integrated into Maori society, even though increasing numbers were becoming related through children, reduced the chance of the integrated relationship Maori originally sought.

It may be that the ambivalence now displayed by many young Maori towards mainstream schooling, reflected in the sad story of the inequality tail (or ‘gaps’) I told earlier, bears strong traces of this history, where the integrated, reciprocal relationship Maori expect/ed is not on offer, and the ‘shared’ educational interactions turn out to be impossible.

The proper education of a teacher

A further fragment of the ‘first school’ story provides another provoking invitation to continue to consider critically the question of ‘evidence’ about ‘what might work’ in a productive educational relationship between our peoples.

For several reasons, Kendall’s school stayed open for only two years. It might therefore be called a failure [in fact, it has been called a failure²⁵]. But as Kuni Jenkins pointed out to me: Those two years were long enough for the teacher to learn many things and to become properly educated. He became fluent in *te reo Maori* and became involved culturally and politically in tribal interactions, mediating relationships between Pakeha and the Maori of his area; many local Maori admired Kendall, and said he was no longer a missionary but a real ‘New Zealand tangata’²⁶. Kendall’s journals give examples of his increasing ability to work in relation to *mana* and cultural protocols. Despite our ambivalence about Kendall’s provision of access to muskets and other weapons, he acted within the local structures of loyalty and codes of behaviour, in the interests of the group with which he was establishing a close relationship.

As a man educated in Maori things, Kendall was learning how to properly communicate and co-operate, and therefore to be of use to the people. While the Church Missionary Society was dismayed at Kendall's loss of Christian values, Maori may well have seen him as having gained much: as being one of the few Pakeha who had gained an ability to relate to others with real understanding.

So here is the other possibility: because the teacher became educated, even if the children ran wild, the school had been a success.

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I have not mentioned colonization, although I should have. I tell stories from our shared educational past, and I am most interested in the ways we are constantly positioned in relation to each other, but I have not this time used the socio-historical frame of colonization. Educational achievement statistics for Maori and Pakeha can and must be seen as a historical product of the fact of colonization and its economies. I have avoided calling upon colonization today because when I do, I find myself too easily telling an oppositional story. I have become suspicious of my oppositional stories; they have the habit of often leading to certainties, to position-taking, and therefore to closing down the possibilities for more careful, critical, and restless thinking. Colonisation continues in New Zealand, as it has in the past, as a complex combination of oppression and engagement; without ignoring the oppression, I want to focus on the difficult *engagement*, because it is in *this* part of the struggle I find hope – and a counter to my radical pessimism.

To conclude: What I have offered is an approximation of something I might hope to say more clearly in the future²⁷. My talk today has evoked historical events and actors not in an attempt merely to historicise or to tell another, better story about our educational past. The small stories merely offer some rather intriguing moments through which to think about our relationship to each other and to education.

I speak in the interests of plurality and curiosity, and out of scepticism about the constantly repeated (and it has to be said, colourless!) assertion in educational talk of the individual, and of individual learning needs, when that talk encourages ignorance

of other possibilities for thought. [Although I am keen on plurality, I am uncomfortably conscious of the ways that the terms ‘Maori’ and ‘Pakeha’ are homogenizing. Each contain within themselves multiple histories and politics and each able to be unpacked and entangled in countless ways²⁸.]

I also speak with a critical eye on the effects of ‘inequality’ as it continues to capture the discursive relationship between Maori and Pakeha in education. Inequality-talk seems to assume we are all just diversely located within its frame: Maori too much near to bottom, Pakeha too much near the top. This one frame overwhelms other, more difficult, talk about the ongoing, cultural, and historical, negotiated relationship between us.

And I speak also with some cautious enthusiasm for the idea of ‘evidence’, and ‘evidence-based practice’ – but not locked into the narrow confines of experimental science. In positive terms, if we are forced to refer to good evidence about ‘what works’ in education, we are forced to challenge orthodoxy, prejudice and ignorance. Seeking evidence should force us to become critical of complacency (including complacency about how we think about equality). But when calls for evidence for improved educational practice arbitrarily favour a particular, technical form of evidence; and if demands for evidence make it harder in education to speak about the significance of meaning, of power, and of human relationships; and if multiple forms of evidence are ruled out in the interests of a single truth, the radical potential of evidence-based work is lost²⁹

I have to confess to not being particularly optimistic about a happy fate for plurality and complexity in education at the moment. Driven by anxiety about difference, we seem *happiest* imagining education in terms of the modern pragmatic emancipation narrative. This emancipation story-line goes: problems identified, solutions suggested (and tested!), practices put in place, problems solved.

And who am I to sniff at such happiness [when it is also my own]?

It’s just that this redemptive narrative never comes to its conclusion, although we push on as though it will ... given the right evidence, the right techniques, the right tricks. We assume there is a straight, rational line between research and practice when there is not; we push on as though there is evidence that evidence-based practice

works, and it is not yet clear that that is invariably the case³⁰. And, of course, we continue hoping against hope that education's power is *magnificent*.

Rather than impossible redemptive fantasies, to form the future we seek, we most need research programmes which demand creativity, which produce a mix of answers, and which can call forth surprising as well as uncomfortable insights from a range of places. We cannot do this separately from our various, entangled, and often contradictory, histories in New Zealand education. Nor can we do it forgetting Linda Tuhiwai Smith's reminder at the beginning of her book *Decolonising Methodologies* that, because of its link to European imperialism and colonialism, '... 'research' is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world's vocabulary'.³¹

I want to end with a paradox which draws the future and the past together. It is a paradox within which education is necessarily caught, and which demands constant thought. It keeps our various desires for equality in motion, and does not allow them to settle into a fixed story about today's apparent differences. The paradox is expressed by Deb Britzman in a psychoanalytic take on education when she says: 'education must imagine the future with the resources of the present made from the conflicts of past desires'³².

No reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā anō hoki tātou.

¹ A. Jones & K. Jenkins (2004) 'Pedagogical Events: Re-reading shared moments in educational history'. *Journal of Intercultural Studies*, 25, 2. pp. 143-160

² I must also thank Professor Erica McWilliam, friend and intellectual companion, for her conversations about this paper.

³ Michael King (2003) *The Penguin History of New Zealand* Auckland: Penguin, p. 141

⁴ Ian Pool (2004) 'Knowledge-wave meets baby-blip wave: How secondary schools will play a key role in NZ's future.' Paper to NZPPTA Conference, Wellington, April.

⁵ *New Zealand Schools 2003: Report on The Compulsory School Sector*, Wellington: Ministry of Education, p. 12.

⁶ See OECD (2001) *Knowledge and Skills for Life* Appendix B1, Table 2.3a, p. 253; Table 2.4, p. 257

⁷ UNICEF Innocenti Research Centre (2002) 'A League Table of Educational Disadvantage in Rich Nations' Report Cards, 4; IRC Publishers (www.unicef.org)

⁸ See note 5.

⁹ Ministry of Social Development (2004) *The 2004 Social Report: Te purongo oranga tangata*, Wellington: Ministry of Social Development, p. 41

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- ¹⁰ Ministry of Education School Leaver Statistics, 2002
- ¹¹ Alison Jones (1999) The Limits of Cross-Cultural Dialogue: Pedagogy, Desire and Absolution in the Classroom *Educational Theory*, 49/3, pp. 299-316.
- ¹² Shoshana Felman () passion for ignorance
- ¹³ Brian Turner 'Mine or Ours?' *New Zealand Listener* 29/11/03, p. 35
- ¹⁴ Mason Durie (2001) 'A framework for considering Maori advancement' Opening Address. Hui Taumata Matauranga, Turangi, February.
- ¹⁵ Paul Callister (2004) 'Seeking an ethnic identity: Is New Zealander a valid ethnic group?' Working Paper.
- ¹⁶ In 2002 a US \$18.5 million web site called What Works Clearinghouse was developed see www.w-w-c.org.
- ¹⁷ Robert E. Slavin (2002) 'Evidence-based education policies: Transforming Educational Practice and research' *Educational Researcher*, 31, 7, p. 15; see accounts in *Qualitative Inquiry* (2004) 10, 1 and 2.
- ¹⁸ See Stephen J Ball (1995) Intellectuals or technicians? The urgent role of theory in educational studies. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 43, 3, ,p. 255-271
- ¹⁹ Ulrich Beck (2004) 'The Cosmopolitan Turn' in N. Gane *The Future of Social Theory* London, New York: Continuum, p. 145
- ²⁰ The original accounts of these 'stories' are taken from Marsden, see n 12, and Nicholas, see n 11.
- ²¹ J. L. Nicholas (1817) *Narrative of a voyage to New Zealand: performed in the years 1814 and 1815 in company with the Rev. Samuel Marsden* London: Black and Son pp. 195-198
- ²² J. B. Marsden (1913) *Life and Work of Samuel Marsden* (edited by J. Drummond) Christchurch, Wellington & Dunedin: Whitcombe & Tombs, p.83
- ²³ J. L. Nicholas, p. 206
- ²⁴ Judith Simon (ed) (1998) *Nga Kura Maori: The Native Schools System 1867 –1969* Auckland, Auckland University Press; Judith Simon. & Linda Tuhiwai Smith (eds) (2001) *A Civilising Mission? : Perceptions and Representations of the Native Schools System*, Auckland: Auckland University Press; Kuni Jenkins (2000) *Haere Tahi Taua: An Account of Aitanga in Maori Struggle for Schooling*. Unpublished PhD thesis, University of Auckland.
- ²⁵ Judith Binney (1968) *The Legacy of Guilt: A Life of Thomas Kendall* Oxford University Press, p. 43.
- ²⁶ Binney p. 99
- ²⁷ I took this phrase from Stephen J Ball (1995) 'Intellectuals or technicians? The urgent role of theory in educational studies'. *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 43, 3, ,p. 255-271. p. 255.
- ²⁸ See particularly the work of Avril Bell in this regard, for instance Avril Bell (2002) 'Memories of Entanglement.' Proceedings of the Second International Conference on Cultural Policy research Wellington, New Zealand, January, pp. 51-57.

²⁹ See also P. Lather, (2004) 'This IS your father's paradigm: Government intrusion and the case of qualitative research in education'. *Qualitative Inquiry* 10, 1, 15-34.; also B. Flyvberg (2001) *Making social science matter: Why social inquiry fails and how it can be made to succeed again*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

³⁰ L. Trinder (2000) A critical appraisal of evidence-based practice. In L. Trinder & S. Reynolds (eds) *Evidence-based practice: A critical appraisal* (pp. 1-15) London: Sage

³¹ Linda Tuhiwai Smith *Decolonising Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*. London and New York: Zed Books, 1999.

³² Deborah P. Britzman and Jen Gilbert (2004) 'What will have been said about gayness in teacher education' *Teaching Education* 15, 1, pp. 81-96