

Chapter 1 Reclaiming Māori education

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Introduction

At the height of its power in the 19th century, the British Empire encompassed 11.5 million square miles and ruled over a quarter of the world's population (Waitangi Tribunal, 2012). The Empire's expansion at the expense of indigenous people in the New World was driven by trade, capitalism and consumerism. When Great Britain annexed New Zealand under the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, it had considerable experience in the techniques of domination, subjugation and domestication of indigenous populations in North America, Canada and Australia.

Like its Greek and Roman predecessors, the British Empire portrayed itself as civilised and painted the people it encountered in the New World as savage, uncivilised and inferior. The British racial hierarchy placed Europeans at the top and 'natives' at the bottom. Although the culture of New Zealand's tangata whenua, with its hunting, fishing, gathering and gardening economy, was a sustainable design for living, it was almost destroyed by the colonial enterprise of converting the natives from barbarism to Christianity and civilisation. British colonisers saw Māori tribalism and communal ownership of land as the mark of primitive and barbaric people.

The techniques of the coloniser included: trade at the frontier; opening up new lands and resources for exploitation; cultural invasion by missionaries imposing their world view on the natives; treaty-making to gain a foothold on the land; taking advantage of tribalism to divide and rule; military invasion; political domination; confiscation and expropriation of land and resources by legal artifice; and state terrorism and intimidation of non-conformist pacifist populations. For Māori, the most adverse effects of the colonial encounter included population decline, domination of chiefly mana by a foreign power, political marginalisation, impoverishment, and the erosion of language, culture and self-respect.

The consequence of this historical process, enacted in New Zealand from 1840 to 1900, is a structural relationship of Pākehā domination and Māori subordination. Subsequent institutional arrangements, including Parliament and the apparatus of the state, functioned to maintain that structural relationship. This chapter examines how one facet of institutional arrangements, the education system, was manipulated by the power brokers to maintain an unjust social order between Māori and Pākehā.

Mission schools

The Anglican missionaries who arrived in New Zealand in 1814 were the advance party of cultural invasion. Their mission of converting Māori from ‘barbarism to civilisation’ was predicated on notions of racial and cultural superiority. They believed in a divine right to impose their world view on those whose culture they were displacing (Freire, 1972). Rev. Henry Williams thought Māori people were governed by the Prince of Darkness. Rev. Robert Maunsell abhorred Māori practices and thought their waiata (songs) were filthy and debasing. The Catholic Bishop Pompallier, who was admired by Māori converts to his faith, looked down on them as “infidel New Zealanders” (Elsmore, 1985).

Despite their prejudices towards natives, missionaries believed Māori could be raised from their primitive state to civilisation through schooling. The first mission school was opened by a teacher, Thomas Kendall, on 12 August 1816 at Rangihoua in the Bay of Islands (Jones & Jenkins, 2011). Others were established at Kerikeri, Waimate North and Paihia.

Although Māori had *whare wānanga* (schools for teaching their own genealogy of knowledge), they wanted to send their children to the mission schools to access the Pākehā knowledge that produced large ships, powerful weapons and an amazing array of goods. Perhaps schooling would unlock the secret to this material wealth. However, the Māori desire to access Western knowledge was thwarted by missionary control of the curriculum. Instruction in the mission schools was strictly confined to the scriptures, and reading and writing in the Māori language only. Secular and non-Christian knowledge was excluded from the curriculum (Elsmore, 1985). English was not taught because the missionaries did not want Māori contaminated by non-Christian influences (Jones & Jenkins, 2011).

In 1837, when Colenso printed the scriptures in Māori, the Bible became hot property among tribes. Māori believed that knowledge of European culture and material goods was contained in the Gospels. Within a decade a number of Māori in most villages throughout New Zealand had learned to read and write in Māori (Barrington & Beaglehole, 1974). Adults and children arrived at mission stations for lessons. Māori teachers spread literacy to remote tribes well in advance of the missionaries. Rev. William Williams went to Poverty Bay in 1840 to establish a mission station and found that people there could already read and write (Elsmore, 1985).

Although interest in missionary teaching waned when prosperity remained elusive, Māori made use of their ability to read and write to communicate by letter with other Māori. From the 1830s letters were delivered on horseback to all parts of the country. Community leaders also put up *whenua rāhui*, *tapu* and trespass notices on posts and houses (Jones & Jenkins, 2011). The spread of literacy in Māori communities enabled learned men in the traditions of their *hapū* and *iwi* to write their genealogy of knowledge in family manuscript books. But the transition from oral to written transmission of knowledge was an enterprise fraught with ambivalence and potential danger. In Māori epistemology, humans are born into the world with no knowledge. All knowledge emanates from the gods, who embedded it in the natural world to be discovered by humans. For this reason, the pursuit and transmission of knowledge was a sacred enterprise confined to *whare wānanga*.

Aperhama Taonui, who taught in the mission school at Mangungu in 1848/49, wrote *He Pukapuka Whakapapa mō ngā Tūpuna Māori*, which recounted the history of Hokianga ancestors from Kupe and Nukutawhiti to their modern descendants. Taonui learned the genealogies as a young man and was instructed not to write down the names of deified ancestors because they were tapu. There was also the danger that such a manuscript might end up in a box among profane things. When Taonui wrote the book, he understood it was for the edification of Pākehā scholars and feared that if other Māori saw the book it could arouse animosity and resentment.

Authors of family manuscript books resolved the problem by treating them as tapu and secreting them away from the public gaze, as the whare wānanga had been in the past. Some authors did put their knowledge out in the public domain. They were the modernisers, educated first in whare wānanga by their elders, then taught to read and write in the mission schools. Their writings paved the way for the writing of tribal histories in the 20th century. Perhaps the most influential of these modern-day tohunga was Wiremu Maihi Te Rangikāheke of Ngāti Rangiwewehi hapū of the Arawa confederation of tribes. Born in 1815, he was instructed in the genealogy of tribal knowledge by his elders. At 20 he also learned to read and write at Te Koutu mission.

Te Rangikāheke was a prolific writer. He set out his genealogy of knowledge in 21 manuscripts, and contributed to 17 others, authoring a total of 800 pages. His writing was based on the technique of genealogical recital, complemented by a narrative recounting of events at various levels of the whakapapa (genealogy), from the creation of the universe to the descent of man from the gods and the migration of his ancestors to Aotearoa New Zealand.

Te Rangikāheke was also a political realist who embraced modernity. He attached himself as an adviser to Governor Grey to teach him Māori language, traditions and customs so that he would be a good governor for both Māori and Pākehā. Unfortunately, Grey did not live up to Te Rangikāheke's expectations. Instead, he exploited Te Rangikāheke's manuscripts, which became primary sources for his publications *Kō ngā Mōteatea me ngā Hakirara o ngā Māori* and *Kō ngā Mahinga ā ngā Tūpuna*. The latter was translated and published as *Polynesian Mythology* without citing Te Rangikāheke as a source.

Besides being a plagiarist, Grey was an unredeemed assimilationist. There was no room in his notion of governance for a dual administration of two cultures in one nation.

Schools for assimilation

The existence of the tangata whenua (people of the land) as the dispossessed owners of the soil was problematic for the coloniser. Assimilation was Governor Grey's solution to the Māori problem. His Education Ordinance of 1847 subsidised church boarding schools with a view to isolating Māori children from the "demoralising influence" of their villages. The aim was to assimilate Māori as quickly as possible into European ways (Barrington, 1970). Grey subsidised the church schools with the proviso that instruction was conducted in English. Māori was excluded from the curriculum. The system was reinforced by the Native Schools Act 1858, which gave an annual grant of £7,000 to boarding schools teaching in English.

The Government's motives for funding mission schools included civilising the natives and pacifying the country. It was thought that the schools would enhance the moral influence of government. They were also expected to develop ideas of individual ownership of property and displace communal ownership, thereby making Māori land more accessible (Simon, 1998). The Government also wanted the mission schools to provide industrial training and labouring on the land and gardens. The underlying objective was to prepare Māori for a future as a labouring underclass. The school inspector Henry Taylor declared:

I do not advocate for the natives under present circumstances a refined education or high mental culture ... they are better calculated to get their living by manual than by mental labour. (Simon, 1998, p. 11)

The mission schools became a tool of government to assign Māori to an underclass—the British brown proletariat, below the meanest of white men.

In 1867 William Rolleston reported to the Government on the progress of 13 Native Schools founded by the Anglican, Catholic and Wesleyan missionaries. Rolleston criticised the schools for failing to eliminate "Māori communism" and for emphasising religious instruction ahead of other subjects. He was also critical of the churches for

not establishing a general system of primary schools (Walker, 1990). Rolleston's report encouraged the Government to introduce the Native Schools Act 1867 to establish primary schools in Māori communities. The Native Schools were controlled by the Department of Native Affairs. Māori leaders had to ask the Government to establish a school in their district and provide sufficient land for the school, but had no say in the curriculum. The genealogy of Māori knowledge was excluded and disqualified as inadequate, low down in the "hierarchy of knowledge" (Foucault, 1980).

Despite elimination of their own culture from the curriculum, Māori leaders supported the Native School system in the hope that their children would gain access to the benefits of the New World. By 1907 there were 97 Native Schools in rural Māori communities. Social life in tribal hinterlands was now centred on the new triad of school, church and marae.

The Inspector of Native Schools drew up a Native School Code in 1880. The Māori language was confined to the junior classes to induct infants into school routines. Thereafter it was progressively displaced by English as the medium of instruction in reading, writing and arithmetic. Although children became proficient in the three Rs, the authorities underestimated the strong resistance of Māori culture to assimilation. In 1897 the Inspector of Native Schools attributed poor progress to Māori difficulty with the English language. He instructed teachers to encourage children to only speak English in the playground. Teachers translated this into a general prohibition of the Māori language in school precincts. Subsequent generations of Māori, right up to the mid-20th century, claimed the prohibition was enforced by corporal punishment.

National system of education

The Education Act 1877 established a national system of secular and compulsory primary schools administered by 10 regional boards controlled by the Department of Education. The Native Schools were transferred from Native Affairs to the Department of Education. The objective was to phase out the Native Schools in communities that had become 'Europeanised', a euphemism for assimilation. However, the Māori desire to have their own schools increased the number of Native

Schools to a high of 166 well into the 20th century (Simon, 1998).

Despite the increase in Native Schools, by 1909 there were more Māori pupils attending Board schools than Native Schools. Over the next 50 years Māori attendance at Board schools increased as people migrated to towns and cities in search of work. There, the pressure to assimilate was irresistible. School demanded cultural surrender, the denial of Māori language and culture. For the majority of children, school became a site of resistance, an arena of cultural conflict exacerbated by teachers steering pupils towards manual labour and domestic service. Few went on to high school; most dropped out to join the workforce as manual workers. This dismal outlook was ameliorated by church boarding schools determining their own curriculum.

Hukarere

Napier's Hukarere Native School for Girls, established in 1875, was a joint venture between the Anglican Church and the Department of Native Affairs to Christianise, civilise and assimilate Māori. It aimed to domesticate girls for their future role as mothers and housewives. In addition to their lessons, they were expected to help prepare meals and do laundry, gardening and general housekeeping (Jenkins & Morris Matthews, 1995).

The school curriculum emphasised reading and writing in English, and rudimentary arithmetic, geography and sewing. Māori culture and tikanga (customs) were replaced by Pākehā beliefs and social practices. On leaving school, some girls went into domestic service and some went home. A small number trained as nurses, going against the prevailing educational objective of confining Māori to underclass status as labourers and manual workers (Jenkins & Morris Matthews, 1995).

Te Aute College

In 1854 Samuel Williams founded Te Aute College for Māori boys, near Pukehou, for the Anglican Mission. Initially the school struggled, but it changed for the better when John Thornton was appointed principal in 1878. Thornton prepared senior students for the matriculation exam to enable them to go on to university. The curriculum at Te Aute included English, arithmetic, algebra, Euclid, physiology, Latin, science, chemistry, Greek, French, geography and New Zealand law.

In the late 1800s three to four students a year were passing the matriculation examination. In the vanguard of Māori graduates was Apirana Ngata BA, LLB (1894). He was followed by Māui Pōmare MD (1899) and Te Rangihīroa (Peter) Buck MD. The appearance of Māori graduates so early in the colonial encounter constituted a challenge to the nexus of power and knowledge monopolised by Pākehā. All three of these modern pillars of Māori society became members of Parliament, determined to improve the lot of their people. The power-brokers in education moved to quench the flame lit by Thornton.

George Hogben, Director of Education, focused the curriculum of Native Schools on hand work, and manual and technical instruction. He wanted Te Aute to replace Latin, Euclid and algebra with agricultural and manual training (Calman, 2015). Official attempts to restrict the curriculum of Māori boarding schools were made even more explicit in the 1906 report of the Royal Commission of Inquiry into the Te Aute and Wanganui Collegiate School Trusts. William Bird, Inspector of Native Schools, argued that the objective of Māori education was to fit pupils for life among Māori and “not to mingle with Europeans and compete with Europeans in trade and commerce”.¹ Bird also approved changes to the curriculum at Hukarere, replacing academic subjects with needlework, cooking and domestic work. When the school trustees resisted the instruction to tailor the curriculum towards instruction in agriculture, Bird suspended scholarships for the matriculation programme.

Hogben and Bird’s control of the curriculum in Māori schools created a two-tier system of education that affirmed Pākehā dominance and Māori subordination. In 1931 T. B. Strong, Director of Education, reinforced policies laid down by Hogben and Bird. Teachers were not to encourage Māori pupils to take arithmetic beyond their present or even possible future needs (Simon, 1990). Māori education should train boys to be good farmers and girls to be good farmers’ wives. The policy of tracking Māori away from high-level academic training created the 50-year hiatus between the first and second wave of Māori graduates.

Native district high schools

When the first Labour Government came to power in 1935, its education policy aimed to provide secondary education for every child

“of the kind for which he is best fitted and to the fullest extent of his powers” (King, 2003, p. 335). High schools would be free of charge. The Education Department responded to the policy by establishing Native District High Schools located in rural Māori communities and controlled by the Department. The curriculum included metalwork, home management, cookery, decorating and infant welfare for girls.

In 1945, when Māori parents realised their children were being short changed, they requested that School Certificate courses be provided. Government policy meant the Department had to comply. Before leaving office in 1949, the Labour Government abolished the pejorative term ‘native’: Native Affairs became Māori Affairs and the Native Schools became Māori District High Schools.

Although Māori were able to influence the curriculum for the first time, the dynamic of Pākehā control at the chalk face hardly changed. With Māori urbanisation in the 1950s, more Māori were enrolled in Board schools than in Māori schools. For Māori children, schools became sites of resistance and culture conflict, exacerbated by teacher attitudes and low expectations.

Māori teacher training

Meanwhile, a breakthrough was made in reversing the policy of shutting Māori out of the professions. There was little chance the 166 Native Schools in isolated tribal areas, where Māori was still the first language, would become ‘Europeanised’. Māori junior assistants from the community were employed in the infant school to help monolingual Pākehā teachers induct pupils into school routines. Teacher trainees were reluctant to be posted to Native Schools as probationary assistants. Headmasters recommended able junior assistants for teacher training to fill the shortfall in PAs. The Department of Education was obliged to institute the Māori quota system for teacher training, with trainees bonded to teach for 3 years in Native Schools.

The first intake of students under the Māori quota was admitted to Auckland Teachers’ Training College in 1939, but their training was disrupted by the outbreak of war. Those who returned from the war completed their training and started teaching in the Native Schools.

The shortage of teachers in the post-war years led to an expansion of the Māori quota to upwards of 60 students a year at Auckland and

Ardmore Teachers Colleges. Others were trained at Wellington and Palmerston North. These teachers constituted the second wave of graduates and intellectuals who engaged in the praxis of liberating Māori from educational subjection. Their objective was to carefully incorporate elements of Māori culture (including art and songs) into their classrooms while avoiding a Pākehā backlash.

Whakapapa of the gaps

Apirana Ngata, the most influential Māori leader of the 20th century, was the first to recognise the economic and educational gap between Māori and Pākehā. His solution was to promote a Māori farming and land development scheme. However, many of the farms were too small to be economically viable. By 1939 most landless Māori had to look for labouring work outside their tribal areas.

In education, Ngata understood the relationship between power and knowledge and the role of the state in generating knowledge. To ensure Māori knowledge would have a place in education, Ngata had established the Māori Ethnological Research Board in 1923 to promote the study of Māori language, culture and traditions, and to publish the works of Elsdon Best, Peter Buck and Henry Skinner (Māori Ethnological Research Board, 1929). The Board also published *Tē Wānanga*, a Māori counterpart to the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*. *Tē Wānanga* ran for three issues in 1929/30.

In 1926 Ngata had proposed to the University of New Zealand that Māori language be included as a subject for the Bachelor of Arts degree. Ngata's strategy to overcome opposition was to designate Māori a foreign language. When the proposal went before the University Senate, opponents argued that Māori was not a written language. Ngata responded by citing a considerable body of literature. The University's Board of Studies capitulated and approved Māori as a foreign language for the BA degree, but did not implement the proposal. Ngata campaigned for the next 20 years to establish a lectureship in Māori, but his attempts to secure funding failed.

Māori studies

Ngata never gave up the fight to have Māori language and culture taught in universities. The breakthrough came at the Young Māori

Leaders Conference he sponsored at Auckland University College in 1939. A resolution was passed for the establishment of a Māori social and cultural centre to promote Māori adult education through Auckland University College, Teachers College and the Auckland Museum (Young Māori Leaders Conference, 1939). The outbreak of World War Two delayed action on the solution for a further 10 years.

In 1949 Maharaia Winiata was appointed Māori tutor in adult education at Auckland University. This first foot in the door of the academy was augmented by the 1951 appointment of Bruce Biggs as a junior lecturer in Māori in the Anthropology Department and Matt Te Hau in adult education. The trio pioneered the establishment of Māori studies at Auckland University. Winiata and Te Hau focused their pedagogy on cultural reconstruction and the validation and incorporation of Māori knowledge in the academy. Their courses in Māori language, culture, history and the arts of carving and weaving were held off campus on marae in Māori communities.

In 1951 Professor Ralph Piddington, head of anthropology at Auckland University, sought approval from faculty to teach Māori language. In doing so, he had to deal with the colonial mind-set rooted in the view of European superiority over natives. Piddington produced a pile of Māori text books to refute the claim that Māori was an oral, not a written, language. He argued that teaching the native tongue was essential to the discipline of anthropology, and his motion for the Māori language to be taught was passed.

At the outset the core business of Māori studies was teaching te reo Māori (the Māori language). The admission of Māori into the academy paved the way for the introduction of cultural studies as increments to the language programme. Māori studies expanded to include kawa o te marae (marae protocol), whaikōrero (oratory), waiata (songs and chants), pakiwaitara (legends), tribal traditions, and the arts of whakairo (carving), tukutuku (decorative fibre work) and raranga (weaving). Māori studies has since been extended to include topics such as Māori politics, the Māori response to colonisation, Māori resource management, indigenous studies, the Treaty of Waitangi and the settlement of Māori land claims against the Crown.

The Hunn Report

The 1960 Hunn Report on Māori Affairs made explicit for the first time in an official document the gaps identified by Ngata between Māori and Pākehā:

- Māori life expectancy was 15 years lower than that of Pākehā
- there was a ‘statistical blackout’ of Māori in higher education
- Māori unemployment was three times that of Pākehā (Hunn Report, 1961).

Although Hunn’s findings were useful, he did not question the moral integrity of an education system that tracked Māori away from the professions and into manual work. Nor did he see structural inequality in the distribution of power as the root cause.

The Ministry of Education responded by establishing the Māori Education Foundation and the National Advisory Committee on Māori Education (NACME). To make education more congenial to Māori, NACME recommended the inclusion of “taha Māori” (Māori dimension) in the curriculum and the establishment of bilingual schooling. These initiatives had limited success because their application in so-called mainstream schools was managed mainly by Pākehā teachers and officials labouring under the influence of Hogben, Bird and Strong’s earlier policies.

Māori responses to the gaps

In response to the findings of the Hunn Report, the growing body of Māori in the teaching profession adopted a co-operative and reformist strategy to education. No one questioned the moral integrity of education provision for Māori and its underlying agenda of subordinating Māori as an underclass of manual workers. They assumed there was a level playing field for Māori and devised their own strategies to close the education gap, including:

- the establishment of homework centres
- the formation of Māori education-advancement committees
- raising funds for the Māori Education Foundation
- establishing play centres for early childhood education.

Māori enthusiasm for the play centre movement was based on its kaupapa of parental participation. In 1963 Alex Grey, education lecturer at Auckland Training College, visited Māori communities throughout the North Island, promoting the play centre movement. Over 500 Māori play centres were established nationwide and affiliated to the New Zealand Play Centre Federation. In theory, play centres were expected to make up the so-called deficits in Māori children, who were thought to be culturally deprived and spoke a restricted language code. It was thought they would give children a head start for primary school. In 1966 it was evident nothing had changed. The report of the Māori Education Foundation noted that over 85 percent of Māori pupils left secondary school with no qualifications. In 1969 the figure was still 79 percent, despite a decade of effort and financial input.

By this time there were several hundred Māori teaching in both primary and secondary schools. They initiated action from within by stepping up the teaching content on taha Māori in social studies, promoting school visits to marae (meeting houses), and, in the 1970s, establishing marae on school campuses. Teacher efforts to create a more congenial cultural environment for Māori students in mainstream schools were complemented by the efforts of Tūroa Royal, Advisor to the Officer for Māori Education in the Ministry of Education.

In 1971 the National Advisory Committee on Māori Education produced a seminal report written by Tūroa, recommending that:

1. cultural differences be understood, accepted and respected by children and teachers
2. the school curriculum must find a place for the understanding of Māoritanga (the Māori way of life)
3. special measures must be taken to achieve the goal of equal opportunity (Codd, Harker, & Nash, 1985, p. 75).

These resolutions enabled the Minister of Education to reverse the policy of excluding the teaching of Māori language in primary schools.

In the 1970s, to circumvent opposition to the insertion of Māori language and culture into the school curriculum, Māori intellectuals redefined assimilation and integration as taha Māori. Marae were established on school campuses to make schooling more culturally welcoming to Māori students. Māori language and cultural competitions

expanded the footprint of Māori culture in previously monocultural Pākehā schools. The more embracing concept of biculturalism replaced the ideology of integration advocated by the Hunn Report.

Biculturalism is predicated on the fact that the new nation created by the Treaty of Waitangi is founded on two cultures. The base culture is that of the tangata whenua, the people of the land, whose mythology and tribal traditions connect them to their signifying symbols on the landscape. The overlying culture is that of the coloniser, who attempted to obliterate Māori culture by assimilation. The recovery and efflorescence of Māori culture in the second half of the 20th century negated the policy of assimilation by demonstrating that two cultures can co-exist and interact creatively to the benefit of both.

Generation 2000

Māori academics had their own agenda for cultural recovery through education. Leading the movement was Whatarangi Winiata, Professor of Accounting at Victoria University of Wellington. In 1975 a survey of his iwi, Ngāti Raukawa, found that most young people around Ōtaki on the Kāpiti Coast were unable to speak te reo Māori. Whatarangi devised a programme called Whakatupuranga Ruamano, Generation 2000, setting targets for language learning and entry into the professions. The pedagogy of Māori-language immersion at marae venues leaned heavily on the traditional values of whanaungatanga (kinship) and manaaki (support) from kaumātua (elders) fluent in Māori. Kaumātua taught for free, supported by kaiāwhina, (voluntary teachers). The reo rumaki (language immersion) programme began attracting adult learners from other iwi, and entry had to be limited to members of the Ātiawa, Raukawa and Ngāti Toa Rangatira (ART) confederation of iwi.

Kōhanga reo

As objects of cultural subversion through schooling, Māori had a radical potential to reform education, the portent of which surfaced in the Māori play centre movement. Māori mothers attending play centres in urban areas realised their children were being socialised to become brown Pākehā. Some withdrew their children from play centres to establish informal play groups in their own homes, where children

would be socialised as Māori. This early breakaway movement provided a ready-made constituency for an authentically Māori preschool system of early childhood education.

In 1979 the most obvious effect of schooling on Māori culture was Richard Benton's gloomy prediction of Māori-language death (Benton, 1979). Māori leaders responded in 1981 by establishing *kōhanga reo*, preschool Māori-language nests. The Māori-speaking *kuia* (nannies and aunties) did the teaching, helping young mothers learn the language as well. Within 5 years, 550 *kōhanga* were established in rural and urban Māori communities, overseen by the Department of Māori Affairs. The *Kōhanga Reo* Trust and its constituents determined the curriculum and cultural procedures of *kōhanga*. In 1990 *kōhanga reo* numbers peaked at around 800. By 1993, 50 percent of Māori infants in early childhood education were in *kōhanga reo*.

In 1990 the Ministry of Education wanted an integrated system of early childhood education. It took control of *kōhanga* from Te Puni Kōkiri, the successor to Māori Affairs. *Kōhanga* were required to be staffed by teachers trained and qualified in early childhood education. The requirement triggered a decline, with over 400 *kōhanga* closing their doors. By 2006 the *Kōhanga Reo* Trust was desperate to arrest the decline and promote a recovery, and eventually lodged a claim against the Ministry of Education with the Waitangi Tribunal.

The Tribunal called for a moratorium on policy decisions from the Ministry on *kōhanga reo* pending discussions between the Trust, the Minister of Education and the Minister of Māori Affairs. An independent adviser was appointed to oversee the implementation of the recommendations in the Tribunal's report, released in October 2012.

Māori Educational Development Conference

The Māori Educational Development Conference at Tūrangawaewae marae in 1984 was a turning point in Māori understanding of the role of education in maintaining Pākehā domination and Māori subordination. The trigger was David Hughes's seminal paper on the School Certificate examination as a cause of unnecessary failure, and his challenge of the 50 percent pass/failure rate. School principals argued with the School Certificate Examination Board that the bright pupils who took academic courses in mathematics, science or French were unfairly

penalised by the 50 percent pass/failure rate convention. This led to progressive lifting to 80 percent of the pass rate for academic courses.

Hughes's analysis of School Certificate examination results over a 10-year period revealed that the raw marks had been manipulated through a complicated formula of scaling to give pass rates of up to 80 percent for academic subjects. However, to maintain the convention of an overall 50 percent pass/fail ratio, the scaling formula lowered the pass rates for non-academic subjects such as art, woodwork and technical drawing. Māori language was classified among the non-academic subjects.

Confirmation of Hughes's thesis concerning the "subject hierarchy" pass rate came from Māori-language teachers, whose students did well in on-course assessment but more than 50 percent failed the School Certificate examination. In one year the pass rate in Māori language fell to 39.1 percent (Walker, 1990), a stark exposure of how the elites controlling the education system continued to determine negative outcomes for Māori.

Kura kaupapa Māori

The 300 delegates at the Māori Educational Development Conference concluded that the strategy of trying to reform a morally flawed education system to accommodate Māori culture over 25 years was a waste of energy. The conference resolved to establish alternative primary schools modelled on the precedent set by *kōhanga reo*. Three independent *kura kaupapa Māori* schools were established: Hoani Waititi Marae in 1985, Te Kura Kaupapa Māori ō Waipareira in 1987, and Te Kura Kaupapa Māori ō Maungawhau in 1988. The special character of *kura kaupapa* was their objectives of language and cultural maintenance. The *kura* trialled the teaching of the primary curriculum in the Māori language.

Te Aho Matua were the six principles underlying *kura kaupapa*:

- te ira tangata—the human essence of a child with physical, spiritual and emotional needs
- te reo—how *kura* can promote the advance of the Māori language
- ngā iwi—the tribes through which children make sense of their world and their place in it
- te ao—the world of light, where children come to understand fundamental truths about reality

- āhuatanga ako—learning that is congenial to the child and its whānau and is conducive to the requirements of the national curriculum
- ngā tino uaratanga—the values defining the character of kura kaupapa for transmission to children (Te Rūnanganui o ngā Kura Kaupapa Māori o Aotearoa, 1998).

In 1990 the proponents of kura kaupapa persuaded the Ministry of Education to fund a pilot scheme for six kura kaupapa Māori. Fortuitously, this coincided with policy changes in education under *Tomorrow's Schools*, which provided funding for a new category of schools with a “special character”. Over the next 17 years the number of kura kaupapa nationwide increased to 71. At their inception kura were essentially primary schools, known as kura tuatahi, catering for children from Years 1 to 8. But there were also composite area schools in largely rural Māori communities catering for children aged 5–18. When these were converted to kura kaupapa they were designated kura arongatahi. In 2008 there were 15 schools in this category.

The gaps continue

In 1991 the *Ka Awatea* report (Henare et al., 1991) found that the gaps the Hunn Report identified 30 years earlier remained. The report proposed establishing commissions in education, health, employment and economic development to address the gaps, but this was criticised as creating a “super ministry” for the benefit of Māori. *Ka Awatea* was stillborn when the Government denied the programme funding and sacked the Minister of Māori Affairs, Winston Peters.

Undeterred, Te Puni Kōkiri (the Ministry of Māori Affairs) revisited the gaps issue in 1998. Its report, *Progress Towards Closing Social and Economic Gaps Between Māori and Non-Māori*, found that the gaps were as entrenched as ever. For example, although life expectancy had improved, Māori health overall had deteriorated. Furthermore, despite increased Māori participation in education, disparities between Māori and non-Māori persisted for most indicators of social status (Te Puni Kōkiri, 1998).

In 1999 incoming Prime Minister Helen Clark announced Labour’s objective to close the gaps between Māori and non-Māori. Clark

signalled her commitment to Māori by establishing and chairing the Gaps Committee, which was criticised for favouring Māori ahead of other deprived sectors of the population. ‘Closing the gaps’ was subsequently dropped from the political lexicon and replaced by the nebulous ‘capacity building in Māori communities’.

Conclusion

The 2003 report *Decades of Disparity*, published by the Otago Medical School and the Ministry of Health, found that the mortality rate gap between Māori and non-Māori had increased between 1980 and 1999. Besides epidemiological risk factors, the report blamed social and structural factors for this growing disparity. The widening gap was seen as a downstream effect of the restructuring of the economy: “Inequalities between Māori and non-Māori had widened in employment status, education, income and housing, the key social determinants in health and social well being” (Ajwani, Blakely, Robson, Tobias, & Bonne, 2003, pp. 46–50).

This whakapapa of the gaps from the 1930s through to 2003 confirms the disparity as a structurally entrenched artefact of New Zealand’s colonial history. Māori responded to the Hunn Report with co-operative strategies to make schooling more congenial to Māori culture. This included supporting the play centre movement, inserting Māori language and culture into the curriculum and establishing marae on school campuses. These transformations set the stage for the emergence and development of a truly liberating pedagogy in the form of *kōhanga reo*, *kura kaupapa* and *wānanga*.²

Since neither the Government nor its officials in the Ministry of Education had the stomach to deal with the gaps, it was up to the victim to do so. Māori, of necessity, must struggle to close the gaps and liberate themselves from Pākehā hegemony, as they have done in education for most of the 20th century. The downstream effect of *wānanga* has turned Māori on to education so that more people now aspire to gaining a *tohu* (qualification). The “blackout” identified by Hunn is being dispelled by a new dawn.

The noble purpose of education—to nourish the minds and hearts of children to realise their human potential in the world bequeathed to them by their ancestors—was perverted by the coloniser to subordinate

Māori as an underclass below the meanest of white men. With the exclusion of Māori language and culture from the curriculum, schooling became an arena of conflict and resistance, with the majority of students dropping out of school with no qualifications to join the workforce as domestics and manual workers. Schooling was doing exactly what it was designed to do when the Hunn Report in 1960 noted there was a “blackout” of Māori in higher education, a Freudian slip perhaps baring the truth that triggered Māori reaction.

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Endnotes

- 1 *Appendix to the House of Representatives*, 1906, pp. 95–96. Retrieved from <http://atojs.natlib.govt.nz/cgi-bin/atojs?a=p&p=browseall&e=-----10--1-----0-->
- 2 The three wānanga providing post-secondary education have distinctive objectives. These are: Te Wānanga o Raukawa, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi and Te Wānanga o Aotearoa.