The Dragons are Coming: Stories to Live and Learn By

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For Nanny/ies – the matriarchs
who nurture

Abstract

The classroom hums with history. Every lesson, every bell, every row of desks carries the weight of narratives passed down through generations, shaping what schooling is—and what school refuses to become. This PhD thesis is presented in the practice-orientated format with two interwoven components: the artefact, which comprises an anthology of 18 original short stories, and this exegesis. Supplementing these texts are original images: photographs, drawings and icons. This doctoral project arises from frustrations I have experienced in my practice as a teacher and teacher educator in and for the schools of Aotearoa New Zealand. It is a compulsory schooling system that undergoes continual reforms but persistently produces inequitable outcomes for children. With this thesis, I have sought to use creative writing to explore what lies beyond, beneath, behind, and between enduring narratives about schooling in this country, rather than following more traditional approaches to educational research.

The anthology presents a series of stories of diverse genres and narrative structures. Developed through the study of narrative theory and short story writing, these stories serve as provocations, unsettling the taken-for-granted, and inviting readers to critically engage with underlying assumptions about education. Various layouts, photographs, and drawings have been used to enhance the text of the short stories and the presentation of the website. The anthology is informed by posthuman philosophies that offer conceptual tools to challenge human exceptionalism and individualist notions of agency. The stories invite new ways to engage with old and enduring problems in education through leaving invitational lacunae for readers to participate in the construction and deconstruction of the text, to align with the story collection which they hold as part of themselves.

The exegesis forms the second component of this doctoral project. It elucidates the design of the project and provides a theoretical foundation to consider enduring narratives of education in Aotearoa New Zealand today. In addition to the text, photographs are used in Chapter 2 to represent material figurations, in Chapter 5 to illustrate thoughts about time, and in Chapter 6 to represent the time between starting and completing the doctoral project. Other text types included in the exegesis are the timeline of events in the appendix, and Māori textual forms: the pepeha of introduction in Chapter 1 and the proverbial whakataukī in Chapter 6. The exegesis operates as a dynamic engagement with the ideas, methods, and emergent possibilities of the research, rather than being a traditional linear explanation. After establishing the historical, political, and social

context of compulsory schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand, it investigates two key concepts in schooling: concepts of time; and the persistent allure of silver bullet solutions.

Together, the anthology and the exegesis offer a contribution to educational research that is both theoretical and creative, inviting readers to engage with education not as a fixed system to be reformed, but as an evolving assemblage where new possibilities might be imagined and enacted.

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List of Abbreviations

AI	Artificial intelligence
CRT	Classroom teacher release
ECE	Early childhood education
FNMPHPQ	Feminist new material post humanist post qualitative
IPPC	Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change
IT	Information technology
ITE	Initial teacher education
MMP	Mixed Member Proportional
MoE	Ministry of Education
NZCER	New Zealand Council for Educational Research
OECD	Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development
PD	Professional development
PLD	Professional learning and development
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization

Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare that this submission is my own work and that, to the best of my knowledge and belief, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the acknowledgements), nor used artificial intelligence tools or generative artificial intelligence tools (unless it is clearly stated, and referenced, along with the purpose of use), nor material which to a substantial extent has been submitted for the award of any other degree or diploma of a university or other institution of higher learning.

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Chapter 1: Introduction

...to the Researcher

Tēnā koe, ko wai au? [1]

Ko Ōhuiarangi te maunga

Ko Tāmaki te pūwaha

Ko Ngāti Pākehā te iwi

Nō Tāmaki Makaurau ahau

Ko Natalie Clark tōku māma

Ko David Clark tōku pāpa

Ko Kevin Isom tōku tāne

Ko Naomi rāua ko Olivia aku tamāhine

Ko Philippa Isom tōku ingoa

Nō reira, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā tātou katoa

'Ehara taku toa i te toa takitahi, engari taku toa he toa takitini'
'My success is not mine alone, my success is the success of many.'

I am Pākehā (a non-indigenous settler/coloniser of Aotearoa, New Zealand). I am ninth generation of my family to live on this land and seventh generation born to this land. My maternal ancestors came by sea from England on the Thomas Sparks in 1842, two years after the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi.

I like to imagine what my forbears may have encountered here, had Te Tiriti o Waitangi been enacted from the beginning, and the type of life I might be living nine generations later. Today, I live with the privilege afforded me through colonisation and attempt to wrestle with decolonisation and support Indigenisation. This process requires authentic collaboration, the enactment of two worldviews together, not to homogenise but to harmonise (Stewart, 2023b; Tawhai, 2023; Te Maro,

[1] This exegesis begins with a form of pepeha in the tradition of Māori who are tangata whenua (Indigenous people of the land). In this context, the use of pepeha does two things: it locates me within Aotearoa New Zealand and in relation to my family—meaning it serves as an invitation to the reader to make connections with me, and it expresses my resistance to the colonising practices that have attempted to erase te reo Māori (Māori language) and te ao Māori (Māori worldview). As tangata te tiriti (a person of the treaty), I take my responsibility to Te Tiriti o Waitangi very seriously. In te ao Māori, whose I am (the land and people I belong to) is more important for the reader to know before they learn about what it is this research will do.

2018). As a singer, harmonisation is a practice with which I have a deep connection, where an unexpected chord progression and resolution can create interest.

Singing is a craft that I have honed from childhood where singing with others has always brought me joy. I have participated in ensembles from cathedral choirs, to jazz bands, to musical theatre, to contemporary Christian worship bands. The defining factor of these musical experiences, no matter the genre, is that musicians need to work together and really listen to the other parts to be able to sing or play their part well. Pivotal to my singing and harmonising experience was joining with Pasifika brothers and sisters in church, and the good natured teasing I received about my white singing. Learning to hear and participate in new harmonies with some unexpected chord progressions and resolutions was hard, but over time my white notes were modified to work with the harmonising of another cultural tradition. What we heard together was a new resonance emanating from the spectrum of our voices. When I look at colonisation, I see an attempt to make everything into an atonal dirge with the silencing of complex and beautiful possible harmonies. My continued hope for Aotearoa New Zealand is to decolonise with a chorus of resonant and powerful voices through singing alongside each other as we listen to each other.

I am a teacher

On finishing high school, I went straight to Auckland College of Education, where I completed a four-year concurrent Bachelor of Education and Diploma of Primary Teaching. I completed my qualification in December of 1997, when I was 21, and took up my first teaching position in 1998. I wanted to be like Mrs Parsons who had taught my Standard 2 class how to read music and play the recorder well (yes, it can be done!); or Mr Taylor-Smith who introduced me to the joy of reading when he read us *The Hobbit*. On graduating from Auckland College of Education in 1997, I was (naively) confident that I had a well-developed philosophy of education. My philosophy was shaped by the work of influential teachers like Mrs. Parsons and Mr. Taylor-Smith, alongside the writings of Alison Jones (1991), Paulo Freire (1972, 1985) and the newly published textbook *The Politics of Teaching and Learning in Aotearoa-New Zealand* (Coxon et al., 1994). I entered the teaching profession determined to bring equality to education and change the world.

However, what I considered to be a well-developed philosophy of education was built on unexamined assumptions such as the unquestionable authority of the teacher, a belief in the merit of the individual's labour (meritocracy), and a view of the child as other.

Since my first teaching position in 1998 at St Thomas's School, with a class of enthusiastic Year-5s, I have engaged in education across ages and environments. Following my provisional certification teaching years[2] at St Thomas's School, I moved to a private girls' school to teach Science and Technology in the primary years. I stepped away from classroom teaching to have children and retrained as an antenatal educator, teaching in that sector for seven years. Antenatal educator training and experience broadened my understanding of education, in particular, teaching and working with adults. Upon returning to the school classroom, I initially took on relieving roles, covered classroom teacher release (CRT), and taught specialist Art classes before transitioning back to full-time classroom teaching in a Year-8 Team Leader position.

With these diverse roles in education came a variety of opportunities to be involved in new initiatives such as developing curriculum, implementing 1:1 devices, and initiating modern learning environments while ensuring the necessary pedagogical shifts for their success. These initiatives invited critical engagement with research and stakeholders which started to challenge some of my taken-for-granted assumptions about education. My passion for inclusive education led me to research and introduce assistive technologies to support learners with additional needs. I became an Apple Distinguished Educator for the implementation of such technologies and the enactment of equitable classroom practices. My teaching practice and understanding of education further expanded when I worked as a Game Learning Activator for Scarlet City Studios while also serving as an adjunct lecturer in initial teacher education (ITE) at Laidlaw College. When redundancies at the game studio occurred, I transitioned into a full-time teacher educator role at Laidlaw College, a move that coincided with my journey to complete a Master's in Educational Leadership which significantly escalated my critical engagement with previously unexamined assumptions about education. After two years as the Bachelor of Education (Primary) lead at Laidlaw College, I was appointed to an ITE lectureship role at Te Kunenga te Purihuroa – Massey University, where I have been since the end of 2019. I have worked across the full scope of ITE in a Bachelor of Education (Primary), Graduate Diploma of Learning and Teaching (ECE, Primary, Secondary), and Bachelor of

[2] Aotearoa New Zealand requires qualified teachers to be registered and certified. Registration is granted on completion of an initial teacher education programme and new teachers also receive a Provisional Practicing Certificate. On completion of a two-year induction and mentoring programme, which is supported by a fully certificated mentor teacher, a provisionally certificated teacher becomes fully certificated.

Arts (Education), during which I learned through and with pre-service teachers of the taken-for-granted and uncritically accepted enduring narratives of compulsory schooling.

Through this journey across education, I have come to realise that a philosophy of education is not a static unexamined set of statements about education, but an ongoing process of questioning. It emerges from the evolving intersection of theory and practice moderated by an understanding of wider social and political circumstances (Chambliss, 1996; Haynes et al., 2014; Marshall, 1983). Rather than committing to a philosophy of education, my commitment is to working philosophically, challenging my assumptions with thinkers such as Audre Lorde, Black poet and activist who wrote, "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (Lorde, 2018, p. 19). In defiance of Western patriarchal forms of research, Lorde (2018) advocates for reclaiming powerful inclusive feminist practices such as poetry, felt knowing, the erotic, and the nurturing of one another (Lorde, 2018).

Teaching pre-service teachers is a privilege. Just like myself so many years ago, pre-service teachers are passionate about the profession that they seek to enter and they want to do their very best for the children they will eventually teach. This doctoral project is for teachers – those officially in the profession, and those in the liminal spaces of teaching, who are often unacknowledged and either unpaid or under-paid for their work teaching children and young people. This project invites engagement in what might traditionally be called professional development (PD). In this project, it is PD enacted in defiance of traditional outcomes-based PD and instead enacts a Rancièrian (1991) vision of education where the knowledge to be learned is not that of the teacher but that which is revealed through the journey of the learner.

Paradigm by/in which I live

The paradigm which informs all that I do and think is based in the Christian faith and my commitment to be a follower of Jesus; a faith and commitment which is outside of my immediate family's tradition of atheism. My faith and commitment inform the nature of (my) reality and how I can know what I know about the world and the ways in which I am becoming. The nature of reality and knowledge are matters of ontology and epistemology, or in the tradition of posthuman philosophy, of onto-epistemology which recognises that ontology and epistemology are inextricably linked (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2016). Karen Barad (2007) suggests that the nature

of reality and knowledge of the world through interaction can be better described using the concept of intra-action:

> That is in contrast to the usual "interaction," which assumes that there are separate individual agencies that precede their interaction, the notion of intra-action recognizes that the distinct agencies do not precede, but rather emerge through their intra-action. (p. 33)

My knowing is dynamic on account of there being constantly emerging intra-actions with Nature. I use a capital 'N' for Nature here to indicate Nature's immanence in and through the world. Like Spinoza (2020), for me Nature also stands for God (Braidotti, 2013; Juniper & Jose, 2008). Spinoza argued that Nature is God and there is an ongoing invitation to participate in creation with God; that God is not separate from creation (transcendent) but still present in Nature (immanent). However, God is not only immanent. The Bible (*The holy bible: New international version study bible*, 1985) describes God, in the form of Jesus, transcended to heaven and in his place is left the Holy Spirit, God's immanence. Therefore, God is both immanent and transcendent and as humans are made in the image of God, perhaps I too am both immanent and transcendent—present in all parts of creation and separate from it at the same time. I am intimately connected through Nature to all of creation (immanence) while also remaining a distinct being, where my uniqueness in the web I inhabit is important (Biesta, 2013). Additionally, I am in a continual process of becoming through ongoing intra-actions.

I believe in a creator God. This is the nature of my reality. It is grounded in faith which cannot be proven in any rational way. There are many tomes of Christian apologetics which would attempt to convince readers of the existence of God, but, as I once heard my youth pastor say, "if you can talk someone into God, someone else can talk them out of God". Faith in a creator God who is both immanent and transcendent is an internal conviction with an outward expression that can be seen in my actions, relationships, and my sense of purpose in the world.

With an onto-epistemology that places all of creation, human and more-than-human, as never apart from the creator God, each intra-action becomes an encounter with the creator God. Even Camus' Sisyphus (Camus, 2005) finds that his existence becomes less meaningless as he participates in life with an immanent creator God. While Sisyphus is destined to push a rock uphill for all eternity, he does so with the creator God and the *potentia* that such a partnership might bring. From this ontology, the absurd meaninglessness of eternal labour contains hope. Hope here being the knowledge that, even when you cannot see it, the creator God plays life along with us, bringing

uncertainty to anything that initially appears eternal. The *potentia* of the immanence of the creator God in all things ensures eternal change, not eternal repetition—a shift from a question of 'what is' to one of 'what-is-becoming' (Murris, 2021).

In addition to human interactions, this onto-epistemology is the foundation of more-than-human interactions. When Jesus enters Jerusalem and the Pharisees tell him to rebuke his disciples for shouting their praise, he says, "I tell you, if these were silent, the very stones would cry out" (*The holy bible: New international version study bible*, 1985, Luke 19:40). This speaks again of the immanence of the creator God and those mycelial connections in~with~through all of creation. There need not be an awareness of connections for them to affect material intra-actions between all human and more-than-human participants of the world: they just are.

My onto-epistemology then theorises the self as coming from all things while also being separate, being at once both a subject and object of existence. Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) metaphor of the self as rhizome provides a good description of how this might be further conceptualised. Rhizomes are made up of many nodes with connecting shoots. The nodes and shoots are both needed for the structure to be considered a rhizome. The shoots connect, and pass along messages and nutrients through these nodes. The self as rhizomatic refers here to one's existence as both shoot and node, with constant non-directional movement oscillating from subject to object of self and all others, both human and more-than-human. If you have ever had the pleasure of trying to remove a rhizomatic plant from your garden you will know that it is nearly impossible to tell where it begins, and you will be hard pressed to find the end of it without digging up the entire garden (and most likely your neighbour's garden as well). As an individual subject, it is equally difficult to find the beginning or end of ourselves. Uncritically, I could assume that I began on the day that I was born, and I will end on the day I die. However, science has determined that the possibility of me existed in the cells of my ancestors well before I was born, and my connections beyond my death are not only genetically in my children but also in others with whom I have communed. There is a quantum entanglement (Barad, 2007) of thought in my academic family tree: the threads that give rise to new growth in the pre-service teachers with whom I work, and the students that they then work with, which are all intimately entangled with all aspects of their own genome and social connections. It does not take much imagination to envision the infinite complexity that is the rhizome of self~other~all.

...to the Research

This research project is born out of my frustrations with a school system which makes continual changes (curriculum, pedagogy, policy, funding) with the promise of better educational outcomes for all while continuing to produce inequitable results in favour of those with higher socio-economic status and alignment with Western cultural practices. A school system that espouses equity and inclusion but does not provide the resources or the room for unique harmonies to sound. My interest lies particularly with the experience of ākonga Māori (Māori students), and the ways in which their unique harmonies are silenced in the normative practices of compulsory schooling and its taken-for-granted processes of replication and production of the educational atonal dirge.

Educational change in the name of reform is ongoing and part of a school system effected by the electoral cycle in Aotearoa New Zealand. For example, with the change of Government in 2023 came a raft of educational reforms from ECE through to the tertiary sector in what could be described as whiplash speed. However, as significant change can take a generation to see (Beeby, 1992) the paradox is that more change can lead to less actual change due to insufficient time or resources to make the desired change. It is rather bleak out there for teachers in compulsory schooling with a recent study reporting that 85% of teachers have thought about leaving the profession (Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa, 2024) with the top five reasons driving teachers out of the profession being "workload, stress or burnout, lack of resources to support teachers, lack of work/life balance, and a lack of resources to support learners" (p. 1). Despite this bleak outlook, this doctoral project does not aim to simply critique the school system or propose yet another so-called silver bullet for education. Instead, it creates invitational spaces for teachers to reflect on enduring narratives of education and reconsider their work philosophically, envisioning a school system that provides a place for all to flourish.

This research project comprises of two parts, an anthology of original short stories and an exegesis where the writing of fiction partners with the reading of educational philosophy and theory. Over time, educational theorists have suggested and critiqued enduring narratives in education such as hierarchical structures of control, winning and losing (winners and losers), and the 'truth' of meritocracy. Theorists have also suggested ways in which such enduring narratives might be addressed (see for example: Dewey, 1916; Freire, 1972, 1985; hooks, 1994; Illich, 1996; Postman & Weingartner, 1969). However, current student experiences of school remain largely unchanged,

despite research that acknowledges that an inequitable education system continues to exist in Aotearoa New Zealand (McNaughton, 2024).

This project uses the practice of creative writing culminating in an anthology of short stories designed as an invitation to critically consider beyond, beneath, behind, and between enduring narratives which are enacted in schools. The short stories invite connections and conversations for readers to re-think taken-for-granted assumptions about education. I think with the posthuman philosophies of Karen Barad (2007), Rosi Braidotti (2013), and Donna Haraway (2016) in particular, to develop a non-linear and cyclic process of thinking with theory and a practice of writing that captures what is in the process of becoming. The result is an anthology of original short stories inviting new ways to engage with old and enduring problems.

The specific question which has served as a guide for this doctoral project is: 'What original stories can be told to invite previously unimagined ways to engage with enduring narratives of education in Aotearoa New Zealand today?' There is a yellow sticky note on my office wall with this question written in orange marker, quite faded now and well-worn by my gaze. The words 'previously unimagined' are what captured my imagination. The process of creating original short stories is very much concerned with the imagination but draws from what has been experienced both in real life and through the consumption of various other media, fiction and non-fiction (Le Guin, 2004). To consider what had not yet been imagined, I wondered what *had* been imagined in education in general, and more specifically, in compulsory primary schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand. What I encountered encouraged me to develop the scope of my project to elucidate the previously unimagined as it appeared that everything in the design and implementation of compulsory primary schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand was not as a result of imagination but rather as a reaction to perceived societal issues. Compulsory schooling was designed as the answer for such issues as the necessary assimilation of Māori, the requirement that we form loyal citizens, the production of workers for the economy, the need to combat juvenile delinquency, just to name a few (Beeby, 1992). This is not to suggest that the enactment of education in Aotearoa New Zealand's primary schools lacks imagination; rather, it is to suggest that the framework underpinning it was constructed through a specific and rational consideration of societal needs, rather than being constructed with imagination. This particular rational consideration of what is required of primary schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand is embedded in colonial patriarchal norms and guided by a belief

in the superiority of Western knowledge systems (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Stewart, 2023b; Tawhai, 2023).

This doctoral project puts to work post-qualitative inquiry and posthuman philosophy. These ways of knowledge-ing (Taylor, 2021) are an alternative (and perhaps an antidote) to Western rational scientific knowledge systems. It is important to note that although coming to these ways of knowledge-ing is novel to me, I do not claim alternative knowledge systems as a novel idea. Marginalised Indigenous knowledges hold much wisdom which has remained unseen under the exercising of colonial patriarchal norms (Bishop & Glynn, 1999; Pasley et al., 2024; Stewart, 2023b; Tawhai, 2023).

When considering the posts in educational research, Stewart et al. (2021) pose the question: "[d]o we want to work with and write about people as we find them, in all their remarkable complexity, or are we willing to pretend that 'people' in education can be adequately represented by numbers, or in terms as crude as the standard descriptions of homo economicus?" (p. 1054). I choose 'remarkable complexity' and embrace the impossibility of knowing everything but a willingness to think with the unknown. I turn away from humanist positivist traditions to a posthumanist rhizomatic rendering of encounters in~with~through Nature.

The word 'people' or 'human' is worth defining here as history has subjugated some humans to the non-human category when considering rights and freedom (Pasley et al., 2024). I use the word human to include all humans regardless of gender, race, size, age, location, education, (dis)ability. Posthumanist philosophy "critiques [humanist] assumptions of an essentialist subject, a 'person' with an 'identity'" (Stewart et al., 2021, p. 1051). This definition of a human is not scientific nor stable, which Stewart et al (2021) suggest is the reason that the posts remain on the fringe of research practice and theorising. However, if the homogenisation of globalisation is to be resisted, centring of diversity of both human and more-than-human participants of the world is central to continued flourishing. A resistance to the recipe-isation of people in society as a whole and in education is the particular focus of this doctoral project.

Māori philosophy has supported me to find a language with which to think (Stewart, 2021a). It is where I started to think with theory in a more deliberate way (St. Pierre, 2021), to uncover and interrogate tacit understandings or taken-for-granted 'truths'; of which many were perhaps truth-

myths (Stewart, 2023b). As Pākehā, I make no claim to Māori philosophy but work with it as an enactment of the invitation of Te Tiriti o Waitangi. Māori philosophy is a mirror that reflects back the absurdity of Western practices of education, a window to look through to what might be, and a sliding door to journey into a reality that the colonial project has tried to destroy (Bishop, 1990; Stewart, 2023b). This is not a hero's journey of dragon slaying, saving damsels in distress, and bringing home treasure, but a journey of foraging, connecting, rest, and becoming~with (Haraway, 2016; Le Guin & Haraway, 2018; Le Guin, 1989).

Structure of the exegesis

Following this introductory chapter, Chapter 2: Research Methodology, Practices, and Processes, engages with the process of this post-qualitative inquiry, including the theory with which I have been thinking and the material encounters that shape my work. The limits of linear language make it nearly impossible to describe this particular work—there is no beginning nor end, there is no precise nor replicable method (St. Pierre, 2021). Various encounters (both material and philosophical) have led to the production of varied forms of fiction, which may lead back to thinking with theory and materiality. This process is an interrupted, multidimensional, and often messy oscillation beyond, behind, between and beneath theory, materiality, and fiction.

Chapter 3: A Short History of Schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand, looks back into the history and politics of schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand. It is not a complete history of schooling, however, the chapter provides a context for thinking about the previously unimagined. In pursuing this path of inquiry, it became obvious that primary schooling has been designed reactively rather than imaginatively. This chapter also looks at examples of schooling outside of 'whitestream' (Milne, 2013) norms and considers some questions of what education could look like—not as a turn to face the future but as a provocation of what might be pulled from an imagined future into the present. Additionally, the chapter critically considers the professional development of teachers. While writing Chapter 3, I constructed a timeline to support my critical consideration of compulsory schooling in the context of shifting political and world events. The timeline can be found in the appendix.

Chapter 4: The Dragons are Coming, seeks to draw a possible imagining of compulsory primary schooling beyond enduring narratives into the present by engaging with the notions of time and silver bullets in compulsory schooling. This chapter works in and with the ruins of colonisation and

patriarchal norms of school in Aotearoa New Zealand and "[r]ather than finding despair, paralysis, nihilism, apoliticism, irresponsibility, or immorality in the decay and devastation of the ruins … feminists [I] have found possibilities for different worlds that might, perhaps, not be so cruel to so many people" (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000, p. 1).

Chapter 5: The Stories Beyond, Behind, Between, and Beneath the Anthology is where the intention and impetus for writing each of the stories in the anthology is discussed. Additionally, the chapter is prefaced with a discussion about the influence of authors and what an author may or may not be able to expect from their writing. As with the non-linear experience of writing this doctoral project, readers may choose to read this exegesis in a non-linear way. If this is desired, Chapter 5 is a good place to begin foraging.

Finally, Chapter 6: Conclusion, concludes the exegesis with one more short story and a reflection on what this doctoral project might offer to the community involved in compulsory schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand.

A word about dragons

When discussing this doctoral project, a friend and colleague asked, "so what's the connection with dragons?" I laughed and said, "nothing in particular and also everything". In literature across cultures, dragons are mythical creatures used to bring forth both terror and wonder. They are portrayed in great diversity where interactions with mortals are on their own terms and often in unexpected ways. The interaction of Bilbo and Smaug (Tolkien, 1995) happens through word play and the materiality of the vast hoard. The bonding of dragons in Anne McCaffrey's (1968) *Dragon Riders of Pern* is a sympoietic or collective creation (Haraway, 2016) relationship on a colonised planet. And in Ursula le Guin's *Earthsea* series (2018) dragons are beings which possess the language of making; they speak life and becoming that is incomprehensible to humans but none-the-less is affective. Although I am born in the Year of the Dragon and there have been times in my life when I have been called a dragon, I do not claim to be a dragon, rather it is aspects of dragon-ness that are appealing to the work of this doctoral project; terror and wonder, word play, sympoiesis, and affective language of making. The unexpected attributes of dragon-ness serve as a reminder to look beyond, between, behind and beneath the obvious as I participate in this doctoral project.

Chapter 2: Research Methodology, Practices, and Processes

This project explores the use of fiction to research enduring narratives in education. This research does not fit with traditional quantitative and qualitative modes of educational research because it does not use data or participants that are common in traditional educational research. Therefore, I went looking for research modes that challenge research traditions and that might be put to work in educational research. What I found was post-qualitative inquiry (St Pierre, 2020) and critical posthumanism (Braidotti, 2013). It is hard to say how or when I discovered 'the posts', but I would like to say that they were always already part of my continual becoming which I was previously unable to name or articulate. Engaging with scholarship in the area of 'the posts' has provided a language with which I can talk about how fiction might be used to think productively, ethically, and in new (to me) ways about enduring narratives in education.

In enacting a post-qualitative creative research methodology, much of my reading and research has had me engage with the post-qualitative approach and critical posthumanist theory as forms of exploration of feminism, new materialism, post-colonialism, affect theory, and the influence of postmodernism in the move away from traditional modes of research. This exploration has affected the emergent design of the study and the way in which I engage with educational theory and philosophy.

This chapter elucidates the reasons why I have chosen to engage with 'the posts,' particularly post-qualitative research and critical posthumanism. It also defines my understanding and engagement with terms that I have found productive to my thinking and theorisation. Additionally, this chapter theorises the practices and processes that I have engaged with in the production of the artefact and exegesis. At times I have found the post-qualitative resistance to traditional methods as paralysing as it has been liberating as there is a certain comfort to be found in a well-worn path when one is a novice cartographer. However, the challenge of and desire for novelty over replication has been the impetus to endure. I constantly remind myself that in taking a stance that rejects binaries and universal truths, my previously entrenched binary thinking of being right or wrong is continually challenged so I can consciously put it aside and invite something new to flourish.

Post-Qualitative Research

When I started to explore post-qualitative research in the literature, I found an invitation to engage in novel ways of research that aligned with the ethical stance of my personal paradigm, as outlined in Chapter 1. Post-qualitative research critiques systems of social injustice and the taken-for-granted hegemony of Westernised thinking (Eaton & Smithers, 2020; Gildersleeve, 2018; St Pierre, 2018; Stewart et al., 2017; Wu et al., 2018) and can be used as a means of resisting the influence that the globally embedded neoliberal economic system has on all aspects of life (Ball, 2016; Eaton & Smithers, 2020; Nguỹễn, 2017). In addition to this resistance, post-qualitative research can be used to explore new ways of thinking, with the intention of decentring Western patriarchal systems by working in the margins and liminal spaces (King, 2005; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000; Stewart et al., 2017; Stewart, 2021a; Wu et al., 2018). The focus of post-qualitative research is on critical reflection and raising questions rather than trying to identify a singular answer to a research question or a single truth (Hughes et al., 2018; Nordstrom, 2018; St Pierre, 2018; St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000; Stewart et al., 2017; Stewart, 2021a; Wu et al., 2018).

In exploring various 'methodologies' to find resonance with a creative process for this doctoral thesis, I found Elizabeth St Pierre's writing and research to be a key source of theory and justification for pursuing post-qualitative research. St Pierre invented the concept of post-qualitative inquiry, explaining it is one which

> … refuses method and methodology altogether and begins with poststructuralism, its ontology of immanence, and its description of major philosophical concepts including the nature of being and human being, language, representation, knowledge, truth, rationality, and so on. Its goal is not to find and represent something that exists in the empirical world of human lived experience but to re-orient thought to experiment and create new forms of thought and life. (St Pierre, 2020, p. 1)

The way of the post-qualitative researcher is to "think with theory" (St. Pierre & Jackson, 2014, p. 717). To this end, St Pierre encourages researchers to read a great deal, both widely and deeply, and to use theory to critique their taken-for-granted assumptions and further develop critical ways of thinking (St Pierre, 2018). Using theory to critique often taken-for-granted assumptions, a post-qualitative researcher can move from the question of 'what is?', to one of 'what if?' (Flaxman, 2008). In the foreword for his translation of *A Thousand Plateaus* (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987), Brian Massumi advocates for a similar shift in thinking. "The question is not: is it true? But: does it work? What new thoughts does it make it possible to think? What new emotions does it make it possible

to feel? What new sensations and perceptions does it open in the body?" (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987, p. xv). With these ways of questioning 'what is' in mind, an opening emerges to engage with old problems in new ways, inviting *poiesis*—bringing into being something that did not exist before. Additionally, there is the invitation to embrace *sympoiesis*, which is the creation of something new together with other human and non-human partners (Haraway, 2016).

St Pierre (2001) encourages the post-qualitative researcher to step away from the comfort of familiar theories and structures of thinking, towards those that can challenge why we think the way that we do. "A different theory, a different discourse, different statements and questions about living, different grids of normalcy and regularity could produce me differently, for better or worse" (St. Pierre, 2001, p. 142). In much the same way as learning a new language provides new ways of thinking about the world, thinking with diverse theories offers the same type of experience. What could appear to be disparate and different elements of thinking across theories come together to produce new thinking, which resists the replication of knowledge in favour of novel ways of thinking. The research is conceived as an assemblage of becoming that includes the human researcher together with non-human aspects of research creation (De Landa, 2016). This way of reading and thinking is conceptualised as a feminist new materialist practice of figurative (rather than scientific) diffraction (Barad, 2014) where difference/s are seen as productive. In this project, diffraction has not only occurred through engagement with theoretical texts, but also through engagement a variety of fictional texts, shared experiences with others (human and non-human), material figurations (see section below *Material Figurations as Process),* and my own fiction writing process.

A defining factor of post-qualitative research is the shift away from a pre-determined epistemology and ontology. This shift is often referred to as the ontological turn where the determination of 'what is' is replaced by what-is-becoming (Murris, 2021). Patti Lather (2016) describes this shift as a "post-epistemological science in the quest for the science possible after the critiques of science" (p. 125). Rather than capturing 'what is,' it is through dialogue, material interactions, thinking with theory, layering, embodying, moving with, and resisting claims to make a difference, that we keep becoming (Lather, 2016; Murris, 2021; Taylor, 2021). Post-qualitative research "works with theory to imagine and accomplish an inquiry that might produce different knowledge and produce knowledge differently" (Lather, 2013, p. 635).

Post-qualitative research positions the researcher and all research as an integrated part of the web of research (Latour, 2014). The researcher assemblage is inextricably part of becoming and that research is vastly more complex than what is said/unsaid, enacted/not-enacted by the researcher where the value of the product might be found in the process (Haraway, 2016; Taylor, 2021). It is a research process that has not been predetermined but is predicated on an ethical stance to follow where the reading of and thinking with theory leads. It is not a passive following; the researcher is active in the decisions made to follow certain lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) in the process of knowledge-ing. Carol Taylor (2021) explains,

> … [t]he *-ing* suffix is important. Knowledge-ing acknowledges the processual nature of knowledge-making. It shifts from knowledge as a thing – separable, contained, over and done with – to knowledge as a doing, an unfolding, a process that is open, nomadic, unfinished and perhaps unfinishable. (p. 30)

'Unfinishable' in the context of this doctoral project has at times felt very scary and there have been many times when I have needed to remind myself that the current project is one piece of a much bigger multidimensional and infinitely connected puzzle. A post-qualitative research methodology refers to a stance which recalls that there was knowledge that came before the current project and knowledge-ing that will extend beyond the project but that what is becoming, in process, can be captured along the way. Taylor (2016) conceptualizes this as 'the practice of the plunge' which is a

> … [l]etting go, diving, freefall, surfing, swimming, waving and drowning… Plunging is a messy, ungainly and sometimes dangerous business: there are no methodological handholds or niches for secure knowing. Yet one of the forces that traverse and propel us in the not-known of posthumanist research in education is potentia: energy, vitality, the constitutive desire to endure. (p. 20)

In letting go and practising the plunge, as scary as it can feel, there is an invitation to wonder "How can FNMPHPQ [feminist new material post human post qualitative] approaches catalyse the affirmative power of *potentia* to provoke radical experiments?" (Taylor, 2021, p. 33). Such experiments are not beholden to prescriptive and particular methods but to emerging processes such as knowledge-ing.

There is a growing body of literature by post-qualitative researchers committed to expanding the representation of diverse ways of thinking, engaging with the layered and complex nature of narrative, metaphor, and poetics, and embracing the unpredictable journey and outcomes that may arise from this work (Farquhar & Fitzpatrick, 2019; Freeman, 2017; Le Fevre, 2019). One such practice is the use of 'faction,' the intersection of fact and fiction as a powerful tool for researchers

to “trample on the traditional boundaries of research representation and dissolve the usual distinctions between academic and creative writing … stories are powerful tools in our world-changing toolbox” (Bruce, 2019, pp. 57-58). Esther Fitzpatrick and Sandy Farquhar (2019) argue that in an academic world driven by outputs and measurement, faction—blending poetics and metaphor—can serve as a reminder of what it means to be human, to engage with both human and non-human others, and to remain in a constant state of becoming. To embrace a messy and creative exploration of enduring educational narratives, I have chosen the short story format for its exceptional flexibility and range. Drawing on metaphor and poetic elements (Barrett, 2009; Evans, 2014; Jansen, 2018), the short story form allows me to engage in the language of making and re-making—to write about life and becoming in ways that may surprise the reader.

Post-qualitative inquiry has been criticised for its apparently *laissez-faire* approach in advocating anti-method (Wolgemuth et al., 2022). Questions have also been raised about the reliability of results from post-qualitative research (Boysen, 2018). However, much of the criticism levelled at post-qualitative inquiry is from scholars who favour a positivist research paradigm, which assumes there are definitive answers to research questions established through the use of particular methods. Post-qualitative inquiry is not anti-methodology and method but resists predetermining methodology and method to instead invite the emergence of methodology and method. The researcher engages with theory and the material, listening carefully to ‘hear’ what the material is telling them to do next in the course of the research process. Post-qualitative inquiry does not seek right/wrong answers to questions but demands experimentation whereby “living theory produces new researchers and new worlds, subjectivities previously unknown, life yet to be lived, and worlds not yet experienced” (Smith, 2019, p. 5). It can be argued that in claiming to be a post-qualitative researcher predetermines the methodology and method of the research even if that methodology and method is to not predetermine them. In order to be post-qualitative as a researcher, is there a need to reject all labels and to exile oneself from any established research tradition (Bhattacharya, 2021)?

The resistance of post-qualitative research to traditional methods can be likened to navigating an unfamiliar city without a map. However, others who have ventured into this terrain before me have been willing to share insights about their journeys, providing valuable guidance on which paths may be worth exploring. Extending this metaphor, engaging with locals can unveil lesser-known, authentic experiences that are not commodified for mass tourism, shared only with those who

approach with respect and with an intention to preserve what is valued. Aligning myself with a research community that fosters innovation rather than replication offers a sense of security. Such a community embraces "the freedom to play with methodological knowledge, recognizing the contingency of this knowing and the possibility that such play might produce further different ways of knowing, being, and doing" (Smith, 2019, p. 9).

Posthumanist Philosophy in Educational Research

Posthumanism as a philosophy is used to consider diverse ways to conceive of teachers, learners, and the very purpose of education. Rather than the transmission of knowledge from teacher to student, learning is acknowledged as a complex network of inter-related players (Latour, 2014). Posthumanism presupposes education to be a highly complex web with many intra-actions (Barad, 2007), nodes where multiple threads meet, threads that double back, with no clear starting or finishing point, always becoming. Posthumanism then troubles the taken-for-granted humanist epistemology and ontology of knowing and being to an onto-epistemology of becoming (Murris, 2021). At the heart of this ontological turn is "doing knowledge differently" (Kuby, 2021, p. 11) which might also be conceived of as engaging with old problems in new ways.

> It is the dream of producing socially relevant knowledge that is attuned to basic principles of social justice, the respect for human decency and diversity, the rejection of false universalisms; the affirmation of the positivity of difference; the principles of academic freedom, anti-racism, openness to others and conviviality. (Braidotti, 2013, p. 11)

Posthumanist philosophy troubles the assumptions of humanist philosophy which is predicated on Eurocentric ideas and a particular human ideal as expressed by the Vitruvian Man (Braidotti, 2013). Humanism holds a belief in objective truth and universalist claims about the individual human subject (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2016). In contrast, posthumanist philosophy considers human becoming more expansively than humanism has previously framed what it is to be human. Posthumanism is not intended to remove the human or go beyond the human, but to be more inclusive of what it is to be human and to see and invite the participation of the more-than-human as equal partners in becoming (Braidotti, 2013; Mahon, 2017; Smart & Smart, 2017). Posthumanism is the rejection of the fixed archetypal idea of the human; white, adult, abled bodied, cis-gender male, to be inclusive of all cultures, ethnicities, bodies, ages, and genders (Haraway, 2016). In exploring the marginal and liminal spaces of enduring narratives in education the non-human and more-than-human participants are important in the act of *poiesis* and *sympoiesis*.

Posthumanism considers the material actors in educational research in addition to the human ones, and that matter does in fact matter (Barad, 2007). For example, space, environment, time, temperature, furniture, resources, and accessibility are a few of the material actors present in education. The expansive definition of human, more-than-human, and matter come together in a web of becoming that Karen Barad calls agential realism—reality as comprised of intra-acting phenomena where reality emerges from the intra-actions within and between phenomena, some with quantum subtly and some in very obvious ways. The idea of intra-action highlights the connectivity in agential realism where complete objectivity is impossible as phenomena are part of the process of bringing all matter into reality. *Meeting the Universe Halfway* is Barad's (2007) book that requires 396 pages plus notes and appendices to fully explain agential realism and the related concepts. My copy is highly annotated in an effort to grasp how she proves, through quantum physics, what I have always already known through my belief in a God who created the universe—all matter is connected and affects all other matter from quantum particles to star creating nebulae, although we will never know or see most of these connections.

In posthumanism, researchers are urged to "put aside the pursuit of knowledge", to think beyond "patterns of doing in ways that reproduce what is already known" (Taylor, 2021, pp. 32-33). Taylor goes on to say that the very metaphor of the 'pursuit of' knowledge places knowledge in some kind of race in which we must catch it. Rather, knowledge-ing is the art of noticing through "the capacity to look around rather than to look ahead, to dwell-with and think-with, to ponder and attend to, to follow and to listen" (p. 32). The role of educational research with posthumanism might be to forage in places that have previously been ignored including that which is being created collectively, not just by humans but also through interactions between humans and the more-than-human (such as technology, animals, ecosystems, and artificial intelligence). These collaborative and cross-disciplinary processes, referred to as 'transversal activities' (Braidotti, 2013) highlight the interconnected and dynamic nature of knowledge creation and support the linguistic shift from knowledge as a noun to knowledge-ing as a verb. Posthumanism is a "practical philosophy [that] has to be applied; it cannot be imitated. You have to *do* something" (Braidotti & Regan, 2017, p. 175).

Posthumanism rejects the binaries of humanism as they can constrain understanding of the world by imposing rigid divisions that fail to reflect the complexity, interconnectedness, and dynamic nature of existence. Posthumanist thinking seeks to replace dichotomies with more nuanced and

relational approaches. For example, a traditional Western binary such as man or woman is enfolded into a continuum of becoming and extends what it means to be human (Haraway, 2016). With the rejection of binaries comes the rejection of either/or and extends becoming to "and, and, and" (Braidotti, 2013). In education, this may see the rejection of hierarchical binaries such as pass/fail, qualified/unqualified, liberal/conservative, academic/vocational, and teacher/student. Education may then imagine a more expansive enfolding way of becoming with no pre-determined outcome or end point. The *Finite and Infinite Game* philosophy of James Carse (1986) sits with(in) this posthumanist philosophy. Finite games are those where the aim is to win (requiring the binary opposite of a loser), whereas the aim of an infinite game is to keep playing. Posthumanism supports (re)imagining the practice of education to move to an infinite type of play where the game remains invitational for all players to keep playing for as long as they choose.

Despite the expansive and inclusive positioning of posthumanism, posthumanist thinking requires humility to maintain the intended expansive and inclusive position. This is especially pertinent to any claims of individual 'new' thinking which will more than likely be found to already exist in ancient human wisdom (Pasley et al., 2024). Donna Haraway (2016) explains, "[t]he need is stark to think together anew across differences of historical position and of kinds of knowledge and expertise" (p. 7). The power in thinking with posthumanism is in seeing and embracing difference and working together towards something that might be relationally new rather than claiming a particular truth that is new to an individual. There is a call from those who have been marginalised to not only theorise with posthumanist philosophy but to put it to work (Braidotti & Regan, 2017; Haraway, 2016; Pasley et al., 2024).

> Instead of theorising the different ways tenured professors are no different from trees, rocks, animals, water, and the cosmos, a term like 'posthumanism' might be recalibrated toward the hopeful possibility of a humanity that dislodges the settler logics of progress and development[3]. (Pasley et al., 2024, p. 26)

Post-qualitative inquiry enacted with posthumanist philosophy through the writing of short stories is the emerging design of this doctoral project. The resulting compost of knowledge and ideas (Haraway, 2016) is both surprising and nourishing to my on-going thinking about education in Aotearoa New Zealand.

[3] Through the use of *et al.* the citation conventions of APA 7th invisiblise the presence of Noah Romero, the Filipinx (Ilokano and Visaya) scholar who penned these words. You can discover more about Noah and his work here https://www.hampshire.edu/academics/faculty/noah-romero

Theorising the Anthology of Short Stories

A significant part of this research project has involved the study of fiction writing and developing my skills as a fiction writer. By researching the features and techniques of fiction writing, I was able to apply the resulting knowledge to create my anthology of short stories. The research into fiction writing looks specifically at; narrative theory, the writing of short stories, the role of fiction in education, and the choice/s of genre.

Narrative theory

Narrative theory or narratology refers to the analysis of works constructed by authors and the effect they have on the reader (Alber & Heinze, 2011; Bal & van Boheemen, 2009; Birke & Köppe, 2015; Ogata & Akimoto, 2016). Human beings both conceive of their on-going life experience in terms of narrative and are also affected by those narratives (McMenamin, 2018; Strawson, 2015). The narratives that shape our lives are not limited to a single story, but include "big stories like religion and politics and little stories like the way we do things within our family and communities. The stories we live in shape our sense of who we are and what we feel we can or ought to do" (McMenamin, 2018, p. 3). Through a posthuman lens, stories are conceived of as; short stories, layered stories, imbricated stories, rhizomatic and nomadic stories with consideration of diverse representation and attention to the human and more-than-human characters.

In addition to life stories, "our fictions have power, they shape our memories of the past and they create memories of pasts we have never had, of experiences not even remotely like anything that we have experienced" (Hanley, 1991, pp. 3-4). Fictional works can be used to offer a way to imagine possible, probable, plausible and preferable futures (Sardar, 2013) thereby giving the reader a way to imagine "moving toward a future which itself has a future" (Carse, 1986, p. 95).

Fiction invites the reader into different ways of thinking about the present (McMenamin, 2018; Rath, 2012). Jean Rath (2009; 2012) uses a particular form of writing called "mystory" (2009, p. 149) and "autoethnographic layering" (2012, p. 442) to query "taken-for-granted meanings by positioning uncertain scripts of and for the self in ways that leave invitational lacunae within and between the textual layers" (p. 442). Rath's work of fiction is not intended to be a final answer or set of instructions, but an invitation to participate in the construction and deconstruction of the text to align with the story collection which the reader holds as part of themselves. 'Mystory' and

'autoethnographic layering' stories are not progressed in a linear way, rather they are revisited as present and possible future visions in a cyclic iteration and integration of relationalities in time and space. Although this is an intentional technique used in Rath's writing, it is also widely accepted that all fiction is read through the filters and life experience of the reader (Copland, 2014; Rancière, 2018). Reading the same text at a different point in time will convey different meaning and significance to the reader dependent on their on-going life experience.

Laurel Richardson also theorises the practice of writing as a construction of self and the world.

> Writing was the method through which I constituted the world and reconstituted myself. Writing became my principal tool through which I learned about myself and the world. I wrote so that I would have a life. Writing was and is *how* I come to know (Richardson, 2001, p. 33)

She goes on to emphasize writing as a feminist research practice which invites the coalescence of the political and personal where, through writing, she came to a deeper understanding of "gender-scripts" (Richardson, 2001, p. 34). It is through my writing that I have come to a deeper understanding of previously unarticulated beliefs about education. Fiction writing has invited me to abandon my known self and think with alternative versions of how I might encounter the world (Rancière, 2018; Richardson, 2001).

Narrative theory advocates for writing as a means to explore diverse experiences and ways of knowing, particularly when approached with openness and curiosity. Ursula Le Guin advocates for the power of fiction in relation to the writer when explaining what she was trying to teach people through her work, saying, "you're not giving directions, you have no directions to give. You are just trying to strike a spark, but what fire that spark lights is up to the person whose spark it is" (Le Guin & Haraway, 2018, 58.05).

Short story writing

The era of the classic short story as entertainment and genre in its own right stems from the late-1800s and into the first quarter of the 1900s (Goyet, 2014; Rohrberger, 1966). Since then, short stories, often referred to as short fiction to distinguish them from the classic form (Goyet, 2014), have been used as a tool of the oppressed with the form "linked to marginal people, women, or outsiders, all of whom are plagued by a sense of exile and existential isolation" (Pâtea, 2012, p. 8). The appeal of the short story genre is the eschewal of explications, instead letting the story lay down

an invitational space to question and explore what may be taken-for-granted common sense notions (Barrett, 2009; Evans, 2014; Jansen, 2018; Rancière, 2018).

Short story literature theorises the techniques and rules for developing the craft and then directs would-be writers to intentionally break the rules in order to disrupt their reader (Barrett, 2009; May, 1994, 2002; O'Connor, 1965; Rohrberger, 1966; Vonnegut, 2000). Layering the posthuman lens with the short story format produces fiction that can mirror life in its messy, multilayered, web-like assemblages where time can be played with through metaphor and characters which are always already human and more than human assemblage (Braidotti, 2013; Goyet, 2014; Haraway, 2016; Rancière, 2018; Smith, 2018). The short story seems especially suited to exploring the decentring of the human subject, given its own status as a liminal, 'minor' or 'humble' genre and its long tradition of exploring human-animal relations (Goyet, 2014, p. 135; Rancière, 2018).

Like many forms of writing, the short story format employs the use of metaphor and aspects of poetry (Barrett, 2009; Evans, 2014; Jansen, 2018). These same literary techniques resonate with post-qualitative research, where metaphor and poetics are not just stylistic choices but essential tools for representing complex, layered ways of knowing (Kuby, 2023). As a result, there is a growing body of literature describing the practices of post-qualitative researchers committed to expanding the representation of diverse ways of thinking, the layered and messy nature of engaging with narrative, metaphor and poetics, and the unpredictable journey and outcomes at which researchers engaged in this work may arrive (Farquhar & Fitzpatrick, 2019; Freeman, 2017; Le Fevre, 2019).

The role of fiction in education

Fiction offers to education mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors (Bishop, 1990). Stories are sometimes windows, offering views of worlds that may be real or imagined, familiar or strange. These windows are also sliding glass doors that readers have only to walk through in their imagination to become part of whatever world has been created or recreated by the author. When lighting conditions are just right, a window can also be a mirror. This analogy coined by Rudine Sims Bishop speaks specifically of how fiction can be used in education by those who work with Afro-American children. It can also speak more widely to using fiction as a means of seeing ourselves as we are and as we might be (McNair & Edwards, 2021). Literature transforms human experience and reflects it back, and in that reflection lives and experiences can be seen as part of the larger human experience (Bishop, 1990).

Representation in fiction matters—not only in the stories being told but also in who gets to tell them. There are a range of identity markers that can be reflected and/or experienced through fiction. Bishop's (1990) work focuses on ethnicity and culture but equally identity markers such as gender, (dis)ability, and socio-economic status provide resonance in the reading of fiction. To be able to engage with mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors in fiction, there needs to be diversity in the telling of stories. Fiction should not tell only one story, but a range of stories (Buchanan & Fox, 2019; Ness, 2019).

Fiction can be used in education as a tool to explore, reflect on, and engage with the broader human experience (Roberts, 2013). Education is, among other things, a process of learning to see the world otherwise, and literature has the capacity to promote precisely this form of human becoming. "By attending to particulars—the concrete details of setting, relationships, interaction, conversation, deliberation, struggle and triumph—novels and plays can teach in ways that are either difficult or impossible [to teach] through conventional non-fiction texts" (Roberts, 2013, p. 356).

Although there are many benefits of using narratives in education, there is also a body of work which cautions teachers on the use of narratives for their potential to blur the lines of fact and fiction that may lead to the rise of belief in plausible fictional 'facts' (Jones, 2019). When using narrative in education, Jones (2019) cautions teachers to combine the use of fictional texts with support to determine the trustworthiness of information through active extra-textual information gathering. Fiction is not typically positioned as a truth to be interrogated. Instead, it serves as a provocation to inspire questions and foster curiosity.

The use of Science Fiction in Education is an example of how fiction has been used to enter into ethical discussions and to arouse curiosity about science (Berne & Schummer, 2005; Brokerhof et al., 2019; Charalambos et al., 2015; Gilbert et al., 2005; Karadeniz & Degirmencay, 2020). Science Fiction stories can be used as a provocation to discuss the possible and probable in science and to encourage further engagement in content. This use of Science Fiction might be conceptualized in Bishop's (1990) mirrors, windows and sliding glass doors analogy as an example of a sliding glass door. Science Fiction serves as an invitation for students to step across the threshold into an unfamiliar reality and explore the possibilities it holds.

The use of narrative in education goes beyond simply delivering content; it fosters critical engagement and deeper understanding of relationships and the world. The posthumanist lens provides theory with which to consider the complex web of intra-actions within the reader that then reach out to their wider rhizomatic connections when engaging with narrative (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013; Mathies, 2020; Taylor, 2021). Narratives guide learners to "explore different perspectives … understand complex social issues and wicked problems" (Gouthro, 2019, p. 184). Narrative in education can be part of the complex, messy, multilayered and web-like assemblages that form part of the human experience.

The invitational qualities of narrative in education connect with Haraway's (2016) invitation to become children of the compost. Engaging in a diverse range of educational experiences, including narrative, the resulting compost is transformed from individual parts into life-giving earth that can then be part of transforming what is to come. It is only in diversity that compost is rich; in the inability to see individual parts, it is available to be used in further terraforming. This is not to suggest the homogenisation of all human and non-human, but that excellent compost is only possible through the diversity of components.

The choice/s of genre

The etymology of 'anthology' is a gathering of flowers (Collins, n.d.). When I consider the anthology of short stories, I find it poetic to imagine it as a gathering of flowers. Not a homogenous gathering, but a bouquet comprising a variety of colours and species that come together with riotous joy. Structural protea juxtaposed with perennial tulips and annual celosia—each flower is selected for the effect they evoke. This anthology is a bouquet of short stories—structural sci-fi juxtaposed with suggestive romance and thoughtful children's stories. Just as each type of flower has a specific aesthetic and attributed meaning, such as red roses symbolizing love, each story genre carries its own aesthetic and meaning that shapes how it is interpreted within the cultural and historical context of its time (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). Genre can affect a reader as much as word selection and sequence.

In conceiving of the anthology, I initially thought that a specific genre might be what united the stories. As genre can affect a reader, including through its capacity to polarise, I decided to write across genres whilst exploring the various effects genre has on organising and generating stories. For example, one of my small group of test readers refused to read anything sci-fi as it was not 'her

thing'. In an effort to offer as many on-ramps as possible into the anthology, I found myself considering the multitude of pedagogical practices I employ as a teacher to engage students in learning and conceiving of genre in the same way. Each genre is a pedagogical invitation to think of the text with the genre, as genre also works to shape meaning (Bawarshi & Reiff, 2010). Ursula Le Guin writes across genres in an effort to be inclusive and not to make assumptions about the reader (Le Guin, 2004). This is an aspect of her fiction writing I wish to emulate. While not every reader will enjoy all the short stories in the anthology, it is designed to offer something for everyone, with the hope that this inclusive approach will create a diverse and engaging experience—just as it did for my reader who is typically not interested in sci-fi.

Theorising the Thesis

In addition to the anthology of short stories, this exegesis is the second component of the doctoral project. The exegesis both elucidates the design of the project and delves into the philosophical thinking of enduring narratives of education in Aotearoa New Zealand today. Although the anthology of short stories and the exegesis are presented as separate components of this research, the creation of both pieces are co-dependent. At times, the stories have lead me to the research literature, whereas at other times, the stories are led by the literature. As an example, I have a file of readings and notes about the notion of time, which sprang from a fictional thought experiment about time. I wondered if what had been revealed about time through this fictional thought experiment was indeed indicative of how time has been conceived of and weaponized in schools. Time as a means of control. Time progressed in only a linear scale. Time as a tool of the coloniser. My theorising of time has included reading and thinking about the effect of a global pandemic on the use of time, time as a commodity, and how other authors have used time.

The exegesis is conceived of as a series of agential cuts which slice across time and space of process to examine and theorise (Barad, 2007). Agential cuts are temporary stabilisations of phenomena that allow theorisation of specific aspects of their emergence while recognizing the inherent instability of all things, including how the very act of paying attention to something influences it. The process for academic writing, which has led to this exegesis, was designed to support the ideas explored in the short stories in much the same as my process of creative writing was (see the following section for a discussion of the creative process). It remains iterative as the creative informs the theoretical and the theoretical informs the creative in the milieu which is life.

As I continue to read theory, practice writing, and engage in all other aspects of life which influence my thinking, reading, and writing (both academic and creative), I take advice about writing from the likes of Ursula Le Guin and Patricia Grace. They both encourage the writer to first write from where they are, that writing is a craft and it is learnable. Le Guin tells aspiring writers to ditch the "kick ass hero woman, I'm getting a little tired of her" (Le Guin & Haraway, 2018) and instead write with complex characters who do not fulfil the fantasy of the male (humanist) gaze but carve their own unique story. They both implore writers to read a lot so they know what they are doing, to take pleasure in being funny about something awful (and many educational processes and outcomes are truly awful), and above all, ask oneself, is this a story that invites your reader to journey? Not a classic story of a hero's journey (Palumbo, 2014), but rather stories of daily foraging, visiting, and revisiting places to see what else may have emerged as the seasons change.

Design of the Study, Practices and Processes

Writing the anthology and exegesis has been a non-linear and cyclic journey of foraging through theoretical readings and the practice of writing, all while remaining attentive to what emerges and takes shape along the way. The acts of reading~thinking~writing sit within a web of relationships, experience, on-going paid work, engagement with kura, my own practice as a teacher, my varied and enmeshed identities of mother, friend, wife, follower of Jesus, board member, dog owner, Aucklander, reader... Not only do the variety of relationships and identities provoke thinking and writing but in the posthumanist new materialist tradition, the location in which they are played out also have an effect (Murris, 2021). Living amidst enmeshed identities, relationships, and locations, from time-to-time provocations that lead to thought experiments arise. They have come in the forms of a question, a conversation with a colleague or friend, a piece of media, a tweet, an article, a long hot shower, a slow cup of coffee, a walk on the beach, in the wind… This returns me to reading theory and the practice of writing. Or, the practice of writing and the reading of theory (Leavy, 2013; Rahela, 2016; Richardson, 1990; Stewart, 2021b) where knowledge is produced by the human and more-than-human assemblages.

My writing, both theoretical and creative, emerges from thinking beyond, behind, between, and beneath previously identified enduring narratives in education such as meritocracy, the use of space, pedagogical models, purposes of education, and the effects of policy. In the inquiry process, I have moved from asking closed questions and expecting an answer to searching for the

unanswerable or the imbricated answers that lead to more questions and wondering further with theory and the practice of creative writing. The questioning and inquiry process is a dance between theory and creativity and has included for me; drawings, note taking, stories, texts, poems, books, articles, movies, conversations, teaching (insert all of life's doings here). These actions do not come neatly one after the other but in layered web-like assemblages as thinking is becoming through a creative process. I capture this becoming in three main ways; the notes app on my phone (I have several doctoral thesis project threads which I regularly add to), my well used notebooks where the process of writing by hand adds another dimension to my thinking, and conversations with colleagues and friends which I diarise. Again, none of these primary activities come neatly one after the other and the thread of a thought/story can usually be found in all three places.

The creative process

Creative processes are intensely personal and quite circumstantial (Brabazon et al., 2020; Freire, 1972; Kara, 2013). For example, Ursula Le Guin (2004; 1989) not only discusses the influence that time and location has on her writing but also the effects of hormones, relationships, and spiritual practices. For Stephen King (2000), these personal circumstances include the gift of space and time from loved ones that allows him to write. For him, this meant a small laundry room as a workspace and the additional labour of his wife, followed by the patience of his children, who sacrificed time with their father so he could pursue his craft. Patricia Grace (2021) emphasises place as pivotal to what you can think and write. Her memoir begins:

> I'm sitting by a big window in the lounge, a spot chosen because it's where the sun's coming in. I have always preferred to write in the living areas of the house: at a table, or, as now, notebook propped on my lap, pencil in hand. The pencil is 'grip plus', propelling, 2B lead. The notebook? Hard cover, two hundred pages, mostly used. There's an office elsewhere in the house. It's where I keep stuff, print out, copy, scan – but for pencil and paper, typing up, I like light, movement of trees, life going on, lawnmowers (but distant), kids, birds. I believe it gives energy and toughens concentration. (Grace, 2021, p. 11)

My creative process for developing narratives is heavily influenced and refined through my time working at Scarlet City Studios developing *The Aetherlight* (Scarlet City Studios, 2016), a point-and-click steampunk adventure game which is an allegory of the Bible. During the two years I spent with the studio, I worked with a design team to write story arcs which were then tied to game play and embedded learning. We started with a 'wire frame' as a proof of concept. This included many conversations, research, and debates until we had a skeleton that we could all work with, in our respective specialist areas. The team would then work to put flesh on the bones to see how the

story and game play might interact. This was an iterative process to refine ideas which included research, user testing, and feedback at every stage. We dissected it, rebuilt it, and looked at it for various different purposes such as theological elements, game play, embedded learning, age appropriateness, fun, and 'the reveal'. All of that design planning could never completely predict how it felt once it was in the game where there was further refining and balancing. I learned to hold initial ideas and first drafts very lightly. I also learned to keep a 'file of the forgotten' for stories and ideas that might have their time at some other time.

Prior to working at Scarlet City, my writing and creative process was *ad hoc*. Working with the team at Scarlet City brought my writing into an intentional space which initially felt extremely restrictive and I often felt frustrated, as did the game designers and programmers working with me. However, we worked it out together and the iterative process became one of joy that included not just working on the project together but playing together (literally, we played a lot), Nerf gun wars, eating together, bringing our families together, celebrating together, grieving together—building a community of trust around our work together. This is why, although a doctoral qualification is considered a solo endeavour, other people are integral to my process through shared conversations, digital interactions, and feedback to iterate and refine my theoretical thinking and short story writing. Many of my Scarlet City family are still connected and give feedback to each other's on-going projects. I also have my UK Bookclub colleagues, and a group of posthumanist doctoral students and early career researchers who are excellent generative thinking partners. A small group of test readers have provided invaluable initial thoughts and feedback on the short stories which has informed my editing decisions. In addition, I have supportive colleagues and friends here in Aotearoa New Zealand who are not shy with their critical feedback for which I am very thankful.

Another thread in the web of this creative project has been and continues to be an epic adventure of reading fiction. Immersion across genres including, as examples, the work of Ursula Le Guin and her speculative fiction with a feminist bent; C.S. Lewis and Albert Camus as exemplars of philosophical writing with outworking and speculative thinking in the form of fiction; and advice for writers from Margaret Attwood and Stephen King. There are the short stories by Philip K. Dick, Kurt Vonnegut, Patricia Grace, and Bruce Stewart, and numerous edited collections, including the classic Readers Digest tomes of such famous writers as Oscar Wilde, Aldous Huxley, Ernest Hemmingway, Leo Tolstoy, H. G. Wells, and Katherine Mansfield. The literary works, especially the short stories,

written by all of these authors help to inform my practice of creative writing, with some aspects to be emulated, and others that could best be actively rejected.

While I have always enjoyed reading, I have previously read with little appreciation of the craft except in the pleasure of the final product. As I studied the craft of writing, I began to read with a deeper appreciation for how authors developed characters or made the setting central to the narrative. I learnt a lot about writing from stories that I did not enjoy (such as what I considered some of the patriarchal and racist writing of H. G. Wells) as much as I learnt from the stories that I did like (such as harnessing the benefits of the shared understanding of a trope in Oscar Wilde's [1991] *The Decay of Lying*). Returning to Ursula Le Guin's (1979) advice to writers, "[w]riting cannot be shared, nor can it be taught as a technique, except on the most superficial level. All a writer's real learning is done alone, thinking, reading other people's books, or writing—practicing" (p. 204). Through the study of the short story genre and reading many examples, together with much practice and an iterative writing process, the anthology of stories which is presented as the artefact demonstrates a developed writing style.

Identity of a Writer

One of my greatest challenges has been the process of becoming a writer and integrating this identity into my sense of self (Braidotti, 2013). A posthuman understanding of becoming is as a continual process where one never actually becomes something but is instead always already becoming (Braidotti, 2013; Taylor, 2021). There are aspects of my identity that have provided clear indicators during the journey of becoming. For example, becoming a teacher had a qualification and registration that then declared I was a teacher. Becoming a mother (for me) involved giving birth. Becoming a wife had a ceremony and a legal agreement. But becoming a writer is not so clear cut. Am I a writer when I write? Am I a writer when people read my stories? Am I a writer when I am published? For the longest time, I could say that I wrote, but not that I am a writer. The identity of writer eluded me. And then several experiences coalesced such that my becoming and the identity of writer converged. This emergent identity feels like a new pair of jeans not yet worn in, but I am fairly certain that in time they will become my favourite pair.

The becoming of my writer identity can be traced, somewhat ironically, to four particular instances when death impacted my life and consciousness.

Death's visitation #1

In the first year of my PhD journey, my Nanny died. She was 90 and had a massive stroke which she should not have survived. Nevertheless, she survived for a further seven days until she breathed that last final rattly breath. I found myself organising her memorial service and taking the role of the celebrant because we didn't want some stranger talking about her life. And so I wrote her life, a mesh of my memories and those of her family, friends, and a treasure trove of documents we found in her closet. It was both the easiest and the hardest thing I have ever written; this being, to capture Nanny this one final time in order to leave everyone with a story through which she could be remembered and through which family and friends also found themselves. I put to work everything that I had been studying about good writing; the characters, the setting, the pace, leaving places for the reader (or in this case the listener) as "invitational lacunae within and between the textual layers" (Rath, 2012, p. 442). Choosing what to leave out was just as important as choosing what to put in. Following the service, I was both embarrassed and delighted with the positive response from many of Nanny's rest home friends, asking if I would do the same for them when their time came. However, it was the comments from those who knew her best—whose vivid memories were stirred by the story—that began to form the foundation of my journey towards becoming a writer.

Death's visitation #2

Death came into my life again in the second year of my PhD journey; this time it was my sister. Our relationship had been tentative at the best of times and estranged at the worst of times. She was an alcoholic, and not the happy kind. When she died, my parents were out of the country and decided not to return for her funeral but they asked me if I would speak on behalf of our family. "You always have the right words," Mum said. But for me there was a conundrum, I do not lie. I remembered the story I had written for Nanny's memorial, but that was easy because the memories were all warm. Somehow the story for my sister needed to be honest yet generous. In this instance I leaned into metaphor, likening her to the Coppertone Kid on the old sunscreen ads. Without having to say anything, the collective understanding of advertising did the honest work for me. Following that performance (there is no other way to describe it), and while sipping tea at the wake, many people commented on my story. But there was one person in particular who came and asked if I was a writer. He said that he was not a fiction writer but a journalist and knew good writing when he heard it. This simple question and statement further facilitated my emergence as a writer.

Although in life my sister took much more than she ever gave, her final gift to me contributed to my story of becoming a writer.

Death's visitation #3

Death showed up again in the third year of my PhD journey. This death story started with a celebration of life at my friend's 50th birthday. I didn't know many people there and decided to experiment a little with my identity. I had been reading *Manifesto On Never Giving Up* (Evaristo, 2021) in which Bernardine Evaristo talks about the shift in her identity from an actor to a writer. Part of this shift for her was to act as a writer, to embody what she thought a writer was and how a writer behaves. With this in mind, that night at the 50th birthday party I determined that I would be a writer. When people asked what I did, I said that I was a writer. I was surprised by the acceptance of my claim, people asked what I wrote and I told them I wrote short stories. Some were keen to talk about the genre and some were keen to share their favourite short stories.

I had designed and made the cake for the party using the concept of *kintsugi*—the Japanese artform of fixing broken ceramics with gold which in turn makes something which was broken more beautiful and valuable than it previously was. My friend, whose birthday it was, had been a bit broken in life but as with *kintsugi* she had been repaired with gold making her more beautiful and valuable than before. She asked me to tell the story of the cake when the cake was brought out. After the story, several people who I had told that I was a writer commented that they would like to read my stories.

While we were celebrating my friend's 50th and during the developing affirmation of my becoming a writer, her grandmother had a fall leading to a brain-bleed and death. "Hello again, Death, I see you have brought me another opportunity". My friend asked me if I would write a story for her grandmother's funeral, "like the *kintsugi* story," she said. Could I? There was no doubt in her mind that I could and I had claimed at her party that I was in fact a writer. So we sat down together for 45 minutes and she told me about her Nanna G. I ended up with 12 bullet points, just fragments of memories to work with… Twenty-four hours later, I provided her with a 1000-word eulogy about Nanna G, proving to myself that the principles of writing that I had been studying, and the writing practice that I had been cultivating, had brought me to being~becoming a writer.

Death's visitation #4

Charlotte, my UK bestie was also visited by Death and this common experience brought us together to imagine how Death, academic, and creative writing could come together. Epistolary (letter writing) emerged as a possible method by which we might use our digital communication about and to Death to analyse our processing of death. This resulted in a presentation at the European Congress of Qualitative Inquiry and publication of the paper in the conference proceedings where we listed Death as a co-author (Marshall et al., 2022). We didn't think we would get away with having Death as a co-author, but it turns out that the editors were very interested in invitations to think in unique and compelling ways with an affective metaphysical concept not often acknowledged in the production of academic scholarship. While it may seem unconventional, there is a growing body of literature in the area of Death Studies (see e.g. OMEGA – Journal of Death and Dying). As an experimental piece of writing, it helped me to think with genre, scholarship, theory, and creative writing in collaboration with Charlotte. As one of the quotes to Death in our data reveals, death is not the end, it is a beginning: "Dear Death // Bad news, you actually brought life…" (Marshall et al., 2022, p. 19).

Patches added to my writer's cloak

There have been other moments in life that have added to the cloak of my becoming as a writer. Like when someone in the conversation thread of my UK PhD Pals said, "She's the writer of the group". Or when a colleague said, "written like a real writer" of my practicum reports. Or when a friend said, "do your magical fiction story thing so people recognise themselves in it but aren't offended". I have left behind the idea that surface features such as bad spelling defines me as a writer and my propensity for 'captain obvious' writing of needing to tell my reader what to think. Instead, I use the tools at my disposal and my study of the craft of writing to create texts that not only invite readers to reflect on enduring educational narratives but also serve as the vehicle through which I engage with these narratives. In turn, this process opens space to think beyond, between, beneath, and behind the obvious—to imagine the previously unimagined.

Material Figurations as Process

In addition to the life that death has brought and the general milieu of the everyday, material figurations are an important process in my knowledge-ing. They are as important as reading and writing. Material figurations are objects with which I have been able to think with aspects of theory, my more-than-human thinking partners in becoming (Tien, 2024). I became aware of this practice as a way of thinking whilst reading Haraway (2016) and her description of string figures, tentacular thinking, and the coral reef project. I was drawn into the practice of hyperbolic crochet based in non-Euclidian geometry with which I was then able to think with concepts of non-linear time. This became a literal "knitting together [of] theoretical abstractions" (Lundberg, 2012, p. 291) as I crocheted 10,000 stitches of variegated yarn to make *Mastery.*

Figure 1

Mastery

Photos of hyperbolic crochet in process.

Figure 2

Non-linear Time

Photo of completed painting.

The experience with crochet reminded me of the painting *Non-linear Time* I had completed when first starting on my doctoral journey. It was inspired by the non-linear communication of the aliens depicted in the movie *Arrival* (Villeneuve, Director). (2016). This led me to the short story by Ted Chiang (2002) which had inspired the movie. His story structure manages to eschew a linear narrative to oscillate through time, a device that I was very keen to play with in my own writing.

Thinking about layering and imbrication of concepts and experience saw me sitting on my couch for several hours with polystyrene eggs and push pins making *Dragon's Eggs.* The physical experience of lifting one of the scales (push pins), and disrupting all of the scales on the egg, led me to think more about the imbrication of systems, people, policies, practices, science, knowledge, and knowing. There is a particular heft to the *Dragon's Eggs* in that when I pick one up whilst participating in the process of writing, it nudges my thinking in a particular way. This is not just an abstract theory, but work and thinking that is grounded in material reality (Neimanis, 2017).

Figure 3

Dragon's Eggs

Photo of completed Dragon's Eggs.

Figure 4

Subjectivities

Photo of completed Subjectivities hanging from the ceiling.

Above my desk on the left hangs *Subjectivities;* a physical representation of the complexity of the work of thinking beyond, behind, between, and beneath the taken-for-granted and visually represented aspects of society (Dahl, 2017). It is an attempt to figure an approximation beyond common three dimensional thinking. Physically it was difficult to make with the string passing through all of the 104 points once, never connected on the same edge, and not touching as they pass though the interior. I gaze at it often. Perhaps its gaze is also on me.

These are but four examples of material figurations that I have constructed and with which I think. Material figurations are a complex tracing of embodiment in and with the world.

Conclusion

This doctoral project exists as a continuous unfolding, embedded in the 'and, and, and' of life's complexities (Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2016; Mika, 2017). It is not separate from life but intricately

woven into its rhythms and demands. While I have sometimes mourned what has felt like only stolen moments spent on this work—moments carved out of motherhood, work, friendships, and the weight of daily life—these moments have revealed themselves as liminal spaces. They represent the beyond, behind, between, and beneath. Beyond the roles I embody. Behind the obligations I fulfil. Between connections I nurture. Beneath the surface of routine. These in-between places shape what can be thought and imagined, offering a fresh page for imagining the previously unimagined of school. In these spaces, the idea of school is reborn, remade, redefined—always already in progress, inseparable from the entanglements of life that make its existence and emergence possible.

Chapter 3: A Short History of Schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand

Compulsory schooling is historically located, contextual, and political (Freire, 1972, 1985; Jones, 1991, p. 2; Rancière, 1999). The following review of the literature related to this topic brings into focus some of the history of compulsory schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand in the context of the wider political and social happenings. Within an overall commitment to posthumanist philosophy and post-qualitative methodologies, more conventional approaches to research and writing are still useful on occasion, such as in this synoptic account.

Accordingly, this literature review pursues a conversation across historical accounts, research, philosophical works, education policy, and works published in media. Its purpose is to provide a runway for the lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) taken to the previously unimagined, which is explored through both the fiction presented in the anthology of short stories and in the following chapters.

School in Aotearoa New Zealand

This research is specifically interested in the institution of compulsory primary schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand which sits within a broader landscape of education. Even though compulsory schooling "results in a form of Education (although a highly proscriptive form) … one can have an education without ever setting foot in a school" (Kupferman, 2018, p. 909) or in any other institution. Education, defined as some kind of doing which is situated in a particular place (Biesta, 2013), might happen in the context of compulsory schooling but might also happen across diverse locations and interactions. Depending on what is being done and in what location influences the education which happens, if it happens at all. In its broadest sense, "education is not preparation for life; education is life itself" (Dewey, 1916, p. 239). Dewey was concerned with the democratisation of society through critical education which includes school as an aspect of education but also the inclusion of daily life imbedded in the community and society at large (Dewey, 1916). Dewey claimed that democratic education was concerned not with *what* to think but with *how* to think. This seems particularly pertinent in the context of society today where vast quantities of information are readily available; the ability to parse and process this information is a skill of critical thinking, which might be considered a necessary component in learning *how* to think. However, like any educational tool, the teaching of *how* to think might just as easily be used as a means of control as teaching *what* to

think if there is an uncritical replacement of the word rather than asking questions such as “what does it mean when we replace “what” with “how”” (Gibbons, 2014, p. 19).

The term ‘education’ used in everyday discourse in Aotearoa New Zealand refers to the group of institutions which are overseen by the government of the day to administer education. Aotearoa New Zealand has a Ministry of Education (MoE) which oversees the provision of education from early childhood education (ECE) through to tertiary education in its various forms. This includes compulsory schooling currently required for children 6-16 years of age as enforced by the Education and Training Act 2020. With education being controlled by the government, it is inherently political and influenced by policies produced by the governing party/parties, ofttimes in response to perceived economic and social need rather than education for education’s sake (Beeby, 1992; Openshaw & Ball, 2006; Openshaw et al., 1993; Vlieghe & Zamojski, 2019).

When education is controlled by the government, it is inextricably partisan and embedded in a particular agenda even if it is espoused as being for the common good of society (Bowles & Gintis, 1988; Locatelli, 2018; Ministry of Education, 2007, 2023d). This partisan aspect of compulsory schooling was visibly enacted in 2024 when a change in government, in late 2023, brought sweeping changes to a nearly completed refreshed national curriculum. The refreshed curriculum process started in 2018 with extensive stakeholder consultation which asked what stakeholders wanted and imagined for education in Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2024). The implementation of the refreshed curriculum, based on very wide consultation, has now been halted with new prescriptive changes currently being written by small government selected advisory groups that do not appear to be representative of Aotearoa New Zealand (Briggs, 2024; Gerritsen, 2024).

For the purposes of this research, ‘school’ is used to refer to the compulsory schooling institutions within which most children in Aotearoa New Zealand are educated. Although school is currently compulsory between the ages of 6 – 16, most children start school on or near their fifth birthday. Education encompasses the wider partisan philosophies and constructs which determine the education of people in Aotearoa New Zealand, led by the MoE.

The Society within which Schools are Situated in Aotearoa New Zealand

Schools are embedded in society and in Aotearoa New Zealand there is a particular collective narrative about what it means to live in this society. Aotearoa New Zealand, the land of the long white cloud, God Zone, has been shaped by idyllic representations written into our "shared mythology" (King, 2003, p. 41). Originally crafted to attract colonists, these narratives continue to perpetuate a particular image of the nation (Consedine & Consedine, 2005; Jones, 2020). This idyllic myth of New Zealand as a nation with the best race relations in the world (Sinclair, 1971) and one that 'punched above its weight' in contributions to the war effort and economic progress (King, 2003; Tolerton, 2013) has endured in the contemporary imagination. Although there is a kernel of truth in the stories that have shaped Pākehā consciousness and belief in this country, ofttimes the experience of tangata whenua is missing from the stories that are told.

School has been part of establishing the shared mythology of an idyllic country. Until recently, growing up as a 'Kiwi' in New Zealand meant that you would probably have learnt in school that New Zealand was discovered by Captain Cook and then the Māori people signed the Treaty of Waitangi to cede sovereignty to the British Monarch (Consedine & Consedine, 2005; Smail, 2024; Tawhai, 2023). However, this truth-myth (Stewart, 2023a), perpetuated through a selective historical narrative, is now being addressed by the new Aotearoa Histories Curriculum, which invites exploration of the intentional and destructive processes of colonisation and its on-going effects on tangata whenua (Consedine & Consedine, 2005; Ministry of Education, 2023d; Smail, 2024; Tawhai, 2023).

In contemporary society, Māori are over-represented in poor health outcomes, prison statistics, lower education outcomes, and numbers living in poverty. These statistics can be linked to the practices and processes of colonisation which saw land confiscation and the erasure of Indigenous knowledge including the deliberate destruction of te reo Māori (Consedine & Consedine, 2005; Harris et al., 2006; New Zealand Government, 2023; New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2021; Office of Treaty Settlements, 2004). The 1970s is seen as a turning point for Māori with hard fought and won battles resulting in the establishment of the Waitangi Tribunal to hear and resolve historical grievances (Smail, 2024). Kōhanga Reo was also established at this time to nurture and support the knowledge of te reo and te ao Māori which is foundational to the flourishing of Māori culture (Ministry of Education, 2017). Māori have been steadfast in their commitment to

demystifying historical accounts of colonisation and to challenging widely accepted myths. As a result, many Pākehā have come to recognise Te Tiriti o Waitangi—the treaty made between their ancestors and Māori—and now seek to engage with it in a way that honours its original intent (New Zealand Human Rights Commission, 2022).

Aotearoa New Zealand currently has a coalition government comprising of National, ACT, and New Zealand First. In 1993 a Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) voting system was voted in with the first coalition government formed at the 1996 elections. New Zealand politics is dominated by two major parties: Labour (left leaning policies) and National (right leaning policies). However, smaller parties have greater power with MMP as they can hold the balance of power that enables one of the major parties to govern (Miller, 2015). Education is generally a political rallying point for elections as everyone is involved in education in some way; as consumers, workers, or as people reliant on education to produce a particular kind of citizen (Angerame, 2014; Bowles & Gintis, 1988; Reimers, 2020). At a political level there is a crisis in education with a shortage of teachers, the growing complexity of the work, pay disputes, lack of funding for required inclusive education just to name a few of the issues (Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa, 2024; NZEI Te Riu Roa, 2023). However, at the chalk face, kaiako (teachers) meet the needs of ākonga (students), their whānau (family), and communities in diverse and creative ways while continuing to advocate for a better service within the wider system (Alansari et al., 2023).

Cultural and ethnic diversity shape society in Aotearoa New Zealand. Tāmaki Makaurau, Auckland (the largest city) is now classified as a super diverse city with the current census data expected to show a city where the majority of its residents are born outside of Aotearoa New Zealand (New Zealand Government, 2023). Cultural and ethnic diversity, although not quite to the same extent, are similar throughout the major cities across the motu (country). For rural areas, the experience of diversity is not as significant with Pākehā making up the majority. Cultural competence is required by teachers to meet the needs of such diversity when children attend school (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024). Being culturally responsive is a requirement of all registered teachers in Aotearoa New Zealand as this aptitude is fundamental to honouring the commitment to “whakamana: empowering all learners to reach their highest potential” (Education Council New Zealand—Matatū

Aotearoa, 2020, p. 2) as well as to the expression of manaakitanga[4], pono[5], and whanaungatanga[6]—each value essential and inseparable from the others.

Wealth distribution is unequal across Aotearoa New Zealand with Statistics New Zealand confirming that the top 10% of households hold approximately 50% of the wealth (New Zealand Government, 2023). Around 150,000 children are classified as living in poverty across Aotearoa New Zealand (New Zealand Government, 2023). Living in poverty comes with the added complexities of the cost of schooling (transport, uniform, stationery) and often transient living situations due to high demand and prices of rental accommodation all of which impacts educational outcomes (Child Poverty Action Group, 2020; Children's Commissioner, 2022; Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand, 2022). Often children living in poverty are also living away from the support of extended family due to inaccessibility of housing. These factors are barriers to accessing school which in turn can affect children's futures (Campbell, 2006).

From January 2023, the MoE shifted from the decile system of funding schools to the Equity Index Tool in an attempt to address equity issues. A report produced by New Zealand Council for Educational Research (NZCER) highlights that schools have "different understandings of terms like "equity", "equality", and "inclusion"" (Alansari et al., 2023, p. 3), which can become a barrier for enacting equity measures to support ākonga who are affected in their education through low socio-economic status. Although the report highlights many areas where schools are addressing barriers to education, it also recommends that a shared understanding of the terms should be developed to enable further removal of barriers and support the vision of equitable access to education across Aotearoa New Zealand (Alansari et al., 2023).

It is estimated that one in four children have a physical, sensory, learning, mental health or other disability (New Zealand Government, 2023). Schools in Aotearoa New Zealand are required to be inclusive under the Education and Training Act of 2020, with many types of additional support available to achieve this goal listed on the MoE's website (Ministry of Education, 2023c). However,

[4] Hospitality, kindness, generosity, support – the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others.
[5] Be true, valid, honest, genuine, sincere.
[6] Relationship, kinship, sense of family belonging – a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging. It develops as a result of kinship rights and obligations, which serve to strengthen each member of the kin group. It also extends to others to whom one develops a close familial friendship of reciprocal relationship.

access to additional support is difficult in many areas and it is not uncommon for children with disabilities to attend mainstream schools without additional support (Child Poverty Action Group, 2020; Children's Commissioner, 2022; Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2023). The lack of support for children with additional needs not only impacts the school experience of the child and family but it also impacts the work of teachers (Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa, 2024).

Education is not the only foundational area in society facing funding issues and in desperate need of staff. Health is another area of concern which is politicized in much the same way that school has been (Bagshaw et al., 2022). Health and education are fundamental to the flourishing of society and a basic human right (Committee on the Rights of the Child, 2023). Both are being affected by underfunding and inequitable access for children and their whānau (Child Poverty Action Group, 2020; Children's Commissioner, 2022). Poor health of families and children can, in turn, affect education due to increased absences and disconnection from school (Child Poverty Action Group, 2020).

Aotearoa New Zealand sits within a larger geo-political context. No country or people group has been exempt from the effects of the COVID19 pandemic across health, the economy, and education (Bourke et al., 2021; Children's Rights Alliance Aotearoa New Zealand, 2022). Around the world there are on-going disputes between Indigenous people groups and colonisers (Associated Press, 2024), a war between Russia and the Ukraine affecting (among other things) global grain supplies (Kottasová, 2022), a war between Israel and Hamas with devastating effects on civilians including unimaginable consequences for children (Haq et al., 2024), the politics of major global powers such as the United States of America and China seeking economic domination (He, 2022), all on the backdrop of a planet that is telling the human population that it will not cope with 'progress' for much longer (Haraway, 2016). The economic framework of capitalism which relies on constant growth and a supply of raw materials to support that growth is not sustainable (Irwin, 2008). Modelling shows the accelerated degradation of climate stability through the warming of oceans and the atmosphere leading to dramatic weather events which will (and already have) disrupte food production, the land on which we can live, and the bio-diversity on which we rely (Wheeler & Von Braun, 2013). Education has a significant role to play if humans are to continue to flourish as a species (Robinson, 2023). Perhaps Hannah Arendt's (1961a) argument for education, that is distinguished from other aspects of life such as family, politics, and work, whereby education can be brought back to those areas with critical clarity makes good sense.

History and Purpose of Education in Aotearoa New Zealand

The New Zealand schooling system was formalised and politicized with the introduction of the 1877 Education Act making school compulsory, secular, and free for all 7 – 13 year olds (Butterworth & Butterworth, 1998; Codd & Openshaw, 2005; Openshaw et al., 1993; Rata & Sullivan, 2009; Simon & Massey, 1994). Prior to the 1877 Education Act, European schools in Aotearoa New Zealand had been established first by missionaries with the first Education Ordinance enacted in 1847 by Governor Grey to support existing mission schools. From here, schools continued to grow with the opening of the first secondary school for boys in 1856. In 1858 the Native Schools Act established state funded European schools for Māori children who had to attend as boarders to ensure assimilation (Rata & Sullivan, 2009; Simon & Massey, 1994). Arthur Butchers (1929) describes the development of education in the colony:

> The river of education in New Zealand runs through many channels as it hurries the nation's childhood into the ocean of life. In the beginning the waters ran in independent little streams. Its source lie back in the isolated European settlements which, in the first half of the nineteenth century, sprang into independent existence in far distant parts of *Ao-tea-roa* – until then for some five centuries at least the unchallenged home of the Maori race. Historical and geographical considerations combined for many years to keep these provincial streams apart. Gathering volume with the passing of years, some of them cut for themselves channels of considerable depth; but after many engineering difficulties had either been solved or avoided, they were all brought together by the epoch-making Education Act of 1877 to form the great river of national education – truly a noble event! (p. 1)

The New Zealand school system was developed with the intention to promote egalitarianism and racial harmony (Beeby, 1992; Shuker, 1987; Simon & Massey, 1994) leading to the Director of Education, Clarence Beeby's, now infamous declaration;

> The government's objective, broadly expressed, is that every person, whatever his level of academic ability, whether he be rich or poor, whether he live in town or country, has a right, as a citizen, to a free education of the kind for which he is best fitted and to the fullest extent of his powers. So far is this from being pious platitude that the full acceptance of the principle will involve the reorientation of the whole education system. (Beeby, 1992, p. xvi)

Egalitarianism is conceived as the acknowledgement of inequality of people and the intent of distributive justice whereby all people get what they need to succeed to their fullest potential. "Put simply, in an unequal society there should be unequal treatment in favour of the disadvantaged" (Clark, 2005, p. 132).

Although the intention of education in New Zealand is to bring equity, there are barriers to participation through the general reproduction of social and economic status, despite children's best efforts (Adams et al., 2005; Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977; Codd et al., 1985; Coxon et al., 1994; Jones, 1991). Intention and purpose are also two different things. In addition to the egalitarian intention, there was another purpose that was to furnish a capitalist society with the production of workers, as seen in other Western systems of schooling (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Marshall, 1983). Underlying assumptions about class and culture were another barrier to the enactment of the egalitarian ideal (Beeby, 1992; Jones, 1991; Marshall, 1983). A belief in the truth-myth of meritocracy also impedes the enactment egalitarianism.

In 1958 Michael Young wrote *The Rise of the Meritocracy.* The satirical fictional essay was supposed to be a provocation of what the future might hold for society and coined the term meritocracy (Young, 1994). The essay is a thought experiment of a possible meritocratic utopia where the elite get what they deserve through their superior intelligence quotient (IQ). *The Rise of the Meritocracy* also suggests the kinds of stories that those in power might tell themselves to both justify their wealth and to placate the majority of the populace by instilling a belief that the successful are deserving of their success (Bloodworth, 2019; Young, 1994). As with many visions for utopia, the meritocratic model of society is a thinly veiled dystopia where the accumulation of wealth is justified through the enactment of merit. It is a sociological farce that might have been better written in 'sarcastica' font because "[w]hat is surprising today is just how many politicians appear to have taken Young's work not as a cautionary tale but as an ideological blueprint" (Bloodworth, 2019, p. 9).

The notion of meritocracy took root in society and continues to be seen in schooling systems which perpetuate the myth that effort and ability lead to achievement (Bloodworth, 2019; McNamee & Miller, 2013; Zhang, 2024). Although pure meritocracy does not appear to leave room for egalitarianism, there is an understanding that for economic benefit that comes from education to be distributed on merit alone, it would need to be done in an established egalitarian environment (Napoletano, 2024). Further critique of meritocracy establishes that meritocracy alone (without distributive justice) leads to a perpetuation of social inequalities with a widening of economic inequality where wealth begets wealth (Zhang, 2024). Additionally, meritocracy requires that merit is measured to appropriately reward those with merit that they might then invest in a better society (Bloodworth, 2019; Young, 1994; Zhang, 2024). However, Zhang (2024) argues that authentic

measurement of merit is only able to "favor those who are the most efficient in the conspicuous and tangible display of merit" (p. 116) and not the ineffable. Characteristics such as hope, love, and belief in others that may then support another's self-efficacy and that may lead to their measurable merit increasing, does not recognise the unmeasurable merit of the other. Furthermore, meritocracy devalues the lives of disabled people who may not be able to achieve a particular measurable merit. To disabled people, meritocracy would say that they get what they deserve on account of their lower IQ and contribution to society (Napoletano, 2024).

School, as a site of social reproduction, has been theorised from Marx (Bowles & Gintis, 1976; Sharp, 2017) to Bourdieu (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1977) to Aotearoa New Zealand's own Philosophers of Education (see for example: Jones, 1991; Marshall, 1983). Social reproduction in schools might be seen as a complex feature of the system rather than as a bug where reproduction happens through policies, pedagogy and persistent perceptions of what a child might be capable of achieving, depending on the way they fit (or do not fit) within the dominant school culture.

Colonisation and education in Aotearoa New Zealand

There is much written about the process of colonisation in Aotearoa New Zealand from the establishment of the first mission in 1814, to the signing of The Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, to the New Zealand Wars as a colonial mechanism for domination (Butchers, 1929; Consedine & Consedine, 2005; King, 2003; O'Malley, 2016). New Zealand historian, Vincent O'Malley contends that New Zealanders need to remember (or perhaps be taught):

> … the story of Māori and Pākehā relationships from first contact onward. And one of the aspects that isn't widely understood is just how much, in the very early years, how entirely reliant Pākehā were on Māori to feed and protect them. European settlement in New Zealand is entirely founded on Māori willingness to engage with Pākehā, to welcome them to this country and to look after them. That phase lasts for a while into the 19th century until Pākehā became stronger and their numbers became ever larger. Then it starts to change. Pākehā assert increasing independence and the desire to dominate Māori. And, in the 1860s when the Waikato War erupts, it's a manifestation of that desire for Pākehā to assert their authority and their dominance over the country. (Husband, 2016, para. 9)

In historical accounts, the use of education is expressed as a taken-for-granted tool of the coloniser (Beeby, 1992; Butchers, 1929; King, 2003). With a narrative of the positive effects of colonisation persisting in Aotearoa New Zealand today, such that in a nationally broadcast interview, the Opposition Spokesperson for Education at the time announced that "on balance, colonisation was good for Māori" (Hogan, 2021). Education as colonisation is perpetuated through structures and

policies which exclude te ao Māori, silence te reo Māori, and develop a binary narrative wherein everything Māori is seen as inferior to everything English/European (Beeby, 1992; Bishop, 2005; Stewart, 2023a; Torepe et al., 2018). Additionally, deficit theorising sees the problem of Māori underachievement as inherent in Māori rather than a possible issue with the system of education located within a colonial society (Bishop, 2005; Burris et al., 2019; Gorski, 2008; Torepe et al., 2018).

Following from the macro societal view of Māori as somehow less than in the social structure, deficit theorising affects the micro level of lived experience locating problems with the child (and whānau). Deficit discourse is so embedded in the education narrative whereby those affected are often convinced that the problem lies with them—this is the expected outcome of successful colonisation (Bishop, 2005). “No attempts are made by these [deficit/pathologising] theorists to see Māori children's cultural backgrounds in any positive light but rather in pathological terms, as problems to be dealt with by an external agency” (Bishop, 2005, p. 71). Bishop posits that this pathologizing of Māori and the resulting deficit theorising stemmed from missionaries who brought with them a belief in the doctrine of discovery—the idea that European peoples, culture, and religion were superior to all others (Miller, 2019).

Ann Milne (2013) offers a child’s colouring book as a metaphor for the continuing colonisation found in schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. In the child’s colouring book, the page is white and the lines are predefined. There is an expectation of how children will engage with the colouring book in what Milne (2013) calls whitestream education. The term “whitestream” is used in resistance to the more common term of “mainstream” to reveal the pervasive centring of Western and Eurocentric forms of education in Aotearoa New Zealand (Pihama, 2019; Tomlins-Jahnke, 2008). In whitestream education, children are to leave who they are at the school gate and assimilate into the expected norm “relegating non-white children to the margins, no matter how many school reform initiatives, new curricula, strategic plans, or mandated standards we implement” (Milne, 2013, p. v).

One particular practice explored by Milne as part of the whitestream mechanism of education is that of assessment. Systems of assessment used in schools are 19th century mechanisms, driven by the modernist ideals to rationalise the social world, and based on the “aspiration that merit and competence should define access to power and privilege” (Filer, 2000, p. x). Systems of assessment are also a key tenant in implementation and perpetuation of a meritocracy (Napoletano, 2024; Young, 1994). A 2012 OECD report described assessment practice in New Zealand as “less focussed

on summative and 'end point testing' and a broad focus on improving both teaching and learning" (Nusche et al., 2012, p. 42). However, many children in New Zealand schools endure comparative assessments to rank and ability group them for learning (Anthony & Hunter, 2017; Hornby & Witte, 2014). Such assessments do not value children's funds of knowledge, where the "richness of children's lifeworld experience tends to exceed that of their school experience" (Hogg, 2011, p. 667) and remains unseen by comparative testing. Nor does such testing value their individual and dynamic learning pathways (Gilbert, 2005; Ings, 2017; Kiyama & Rios-Aguilar, 2017). Despite research to the contrary, streaming and ability grouping of students through normative assessment practices persists in many schools as a taken-for-granted practice of a linear learning trajectory that favours non-Māori over Māori (Pomeroy et al., 2024).

Although colonisation in education is the lived experience for Māori in Aotearoa New Zealand, many non-Māori are unaware of the on-going effects due to the 'white-streaming' of the system that has encouraged collective forgetting of a troubled history (Husband, 2016; Milne, 2013; O'Malley, 2016; Shaw, 2024). The Aotearoa Histories Curriculum was made complusory in 2023 for children in Years 1-10 to address aspects of this collective forgetting and ensure that "all learners and ākonga are aware of key aspects of New Zealand history and how they have influenced and shaped the nation" (Ardern & Hipkins, 2012). Additionally, the national curriculum refresh has required that mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge) be one of the knowledge systems used across all curriculum areas in an effort to decentre the canon of Western knowledge systems. The fierce debate that has ensued has made obvious that there is much work to be done and a long way to travel before many will be ready to let go of universalism to embrace plurality. However, there is a shift in the previously taken-for-granted acceptance of what knowledge is taught in schools and how that knowledge might be taught in culturally sustaining ways (Anthony & Hunter, 2017; Averill, 2018).

Alternative Models of Compulsory Schooling

Education provided through what is not unproblematically termed 'mainstream' education serves approximately 80% of children in Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2023a). The remainder of children attend private schools (including schools such as Montessori, Steiner, and Forest Schools), state integrated schools, Kura Kaupapa Māori, Specialist Schools, or are home schooled. Although alternative models of schooling may not follow the New Zealand Curriculum in

favour of alternative curricular, philosophies, and pedagogies, they are still accountable to the MoE to prove they are providing a suitable education for children.

Māori medium schooling

Māori medium education goes from ECE with kōhanga reo through to tertiary education in wānanga. The compulsory years of schooling are in kura kaupapa (Years 1- 8 or primary school) and wharekura (Years 9-13 or secondary school). The emergence of Māori medium education was born from "flax roots efforts by Māori communities" (Campbell & Stewart, 2009, p. 3) to teach Māori children and guide them in their participation in the world of tikanga Māori (Māori ways and traditions) as well as supporting them to make connections with conventions of Western and other knowledge systems. Kura kaupapa and wharekura are schools by Māori, for Māori, and as Māori intended to support the resurgence of te reo Māori and te ao Māori whilst providing excellent education to address the achievement disparity evident in the 'mainstream' system (Sharples, 1994). They are currently attended by approximately 1.7% of tamariki (children) in Aotearoa New Zealand (Ministry of Education, 2023a). Māori medium schools are not exclusive to Māori but are invitational and inclusive for anyone to be part of this way of learning. Kura kaupapa and wharekura support engagement with the world grounded in cultural identity which honours tikanga Māori while also providing bridges and on-ramps to Western and other forms of knowledge (Jones, 2017).

Kura kaupapa and wharekura do not privilege one knowledge system over another but recognise each for its unique contribution to knowing the world. Universalism is deconstructed and plurality is acknowledged. Take for example the story of the pipi problem told to me by Pania Te Maro. The pipi problem explores the incommensurability of maths and tikanga Māori. This is not to say that Māori cannot do maths, but that maths cannot be shoehorned into a Māori context without considering the tikanga of the question. The question is; I collected 120 pipi (a small shellfish) and we shared them with 4 whare (houses). How many pipi does each whare get? A simple equation for maths: 120 ÷ 4 = 30. But as every kura kid knows, that is not how pipi are shared and as the rōpū (group) who were working with Whaea[7] Pania at the time pointed out, it would depend on what people needed and they would never tell kaumātua (an elderly person) how many pipi they were getting—they might not want any at all. In a Māori context, this is the right answer even though it is not the expected maths answer. This incommensurability is further explored in the short stories

[7] An honorific that is sometimes used for teachers who are women. The translation is mother and/or aunty.

Come and get it! by Georgina Tuari Stewart (2021a) and *Butterflies* by Patricia Grace (1987) both of which juxtapose Western taken-for-granted knowledge (or rules) with Māori knowledge and wisdom.

Compulsory sector Māori medium schooling grew out of kōhanga reo (ECE) which is non-compulsory. Māori communities could see the benefits of Māori medium education for their tamariki and wanted an educational pathway (Campbell & Stewart, 2009). Although there is a desire for Māori medium schooling, it remains outside of the 'mainstream', historically underfunded and difficult to staff in specialist areas due to the loss of te reo Māori in the process of colonisation (Sharples, 1994). If schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand had been established as a true partnership between tangata whenua and the Crown from the outset, it might more closely resemble Māori-medium education today. This approach could have challenged the dominance of the universalist Western education model, fostering a greater recognition of diverse ways of knowing and meaning-making. Such an educational foundation might have contributed to the realisation of a genuinely bicultural nation.

Montessori, Steiner, and Forest schools

Montessori, Steiner, and Forest schools are three examples of alternatives to mainstream education provision in Aotearoa New Zealand. They represent a small percentage of enrolments relative to all other options for compulsory primary education. These schools are usually either private or state-integrated, although some Montessori classes operate within mainstream primary schools. Regardless of the small percentage of children and families that they provide for, they serve as an educational choice. Although that choice can be hampered through the financial cost of attending and limited locations.

Alternative schools follow particular philosophies as a way to support learning. Montessori is child centred and follows the interests of the child (Lillard, 2017), whereas Steiner schools are interested in the wholistic development of the child, heart, will and mind (Dahlin, 2017), while the Forest School claims to be the antidote to an "increasingly digital world" (The Forest School, 2022). What these schools appear to have in common is a resistance to the content driven nature of the "over-crowded curriculum" (Ministerial Advisory Group, 2018, p. 4) in favour of the development of what has been termed "learning to learn" (Cornford, 2002; Ministry of Education, 2020), or the development of metacognition to be able to respond to future needs as they arise. Although

learning to learn is a principle in the New Zealand Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2007), it does not get the same focussed attention in a content driven pedagogical model as it does in philosophically based forms of school.

Specialist schools

Specialist schools are part of the school system in Aotearoa New Zealand for high needs children with complex health and/or learning needs which cannot be supported in a mainstream classroom (Ministry of Education, 2023b). Less than 1% of children attend specialist schools, however they are an important part of the education system as an alternative to mainstream schooling. Staffed with qualified teachers as well as therapists such as speech/language, occupational, and physio specialists, they work together to support learning with a modified curriculum for tamariki.

Specialist schools move beyond the inclusive education model as mandated in the Education and Training Act 2020 to ensure complex and high needs tamariki are cared for safely and with the required skills and expertise beyond that of a mainstream school. Although inclusive education has been held up as the gold standard of the social model of disability, special education is needed for some children where inclusion effectively becomes exclusion (Hornby, 2015).

Many specialist schools in Aotearoa New Zealand have satellite classes within mainstream schools to keep tamariki close to and involved in their community. Specialist schools also support some tamariki in their local school with specialist teaching support and aids that include modification of the environment and the use of digital technologies. This model of inclusive specialist education (Hornby, 2015) is another vehicle to support tamariki while still accessing the specialist education services they need.

Elwyn Richardson's experimental school

Alternative forms of schooling generally exist outside of mainstream schools. However, in 1949 Elwyn Richardson started in his first teacher position at the small country school of Oruaiti in the far north, the story of which is captured in his book *In the Early World* (1972). His story, also documented by Margaret MacDonald (2016), is one of struggle against the system to teach in a democratic way which created interest and engagement in a bi-cultural and inclusive education. Although best known for his use of arts and crafts, his educational philosophy is based on scientific inquiry (Benade & Devine, 2016).

In the small run-down rural school of Oruaiti, Richardson built a thriving community of scientists, artists, and writers who lead their own learning in the milieu of rural life that required (amongst other things) long walks to school and participation in farm activities alongside their studies. Richardson developed a pedagogy that he called 'integrative' which involved discovery through multiple means of observational investigation and critical reflection. The children in Richardson's school were encouraged to think with and through multiple media. Questions did not necessarily lead to answers, but to more questions to be investigated by the community of scholars (Macdonald, 2016; Richardson, 1972).

Oruaiti school was not structured in the same way as traditional schools, instead scholars worked across age boundaries and within a very fluid timetable. Children were encouraged to think beyond obvious or easily observed phenomena via art, maths, literacy, and science and to find what lay beneath, behind and between those often siloed categories. The following quote (Richardson, 1972) captures this integration in practice with peer feedback about a poem:

> 'Moths about the window light
> They tap at the pane
> And swam at the light.'
>
> 'I like that very much. I think Stuart knows a lot about moths. He writes as if he *is* a moth. We would know that the pane is a window, but the only thing the moth knows is "window light". Perhaps it doesn't even know it's a window.' (p. 205)

Beyond learning about things, Richardson's pedagogy was holistic and included an emphasis on learning about ones identity as part of a community (Benade & Devine, 2016). It was at once individual and community discovery, and the interactions between the natural world and the people inhabiting it. It was ethical and sustaining, child centred without being ego-centric, non-prescriptive while being very concerned with good learning. Richardson was able to free himself and his students from the policies of the Department of Education at the time through knowing his community intimately and proving the effectiveness of his pedagogical approach beyond reproach.

Although *In the Early World* (Richardson, 1972) and MacDonald's (2016) historical framing and analysis of the experimental school at Oruaiti hold incredible depictions of the work that was done by Richardson, the children, and the community, there is also the significant effort that was required to gain experimental status. Richardson was the catalyst for this school, but it was the support from the tight knit community that ensured their children, who were benefitting from this 'alternative' type of schooling, would be able to continue. It also remained political due to the position of the

government at the time wanting to promote the Arts and Crafts movement in schools (Macdonald, 2016). It would be easy to romanticise what Richardson did at Oruaiti School, but the foreword to Macdonald's (2016) book tells the reader that the "potent mix of time, place, person and history that contributed to Elwyn's work at Oruaiti seems to have been a perfect storm: the coalescing of the 'right' teacher at the 'right' time" (p. x). Elwyn Richardson's Experimental School is a public example of what might be found happening in schools across Aotearoa where teachers are attending to the needs of the children in their classes while connecting with the aspirations of families and the community.

Teacher Education

Both initial teacher education (ITE) and on-going teacher education (often referred to as professional development (PD) or professional learning and development (PLD)) shape teacher practice in Aotearoa New Zealand. In a society that looks to compulsory schooling to address many of its concerns (Beeby, 1992), and sees teachers as the "most important influences on student outcomes in schools" (Education Evaluation Centre, 2024, p. 3), ITE and on-going teacher education have a significant role to play in shaping the sector.

Initial teacher education

Historically, ITE developed alongside the evolving school system. In the late 1800's, teachers were developed through the pupil teacher training system, imported from England, whereby pupil teachers served an apprenticeship and were qualified once they could replicate the practice of their masters (Ball, 2011; Butchers, 1929). In the following 150 years, ITE has seen many iterations from specialist Colleges of Education to integration with Universities and other tertiary providers, all attempting to balance the need for both theory and practice (Ball, 2009; Beeby, 1992; Marshall, 1983).

ITE is identified as a site for "internalising the norms imposed on them [pre-service teachers] by educational authorities" (Ball, 2011, p. 80). Ball (2009, 2011) theorises this premise through the work of Arnold van Gennep and Michel Foucault, analysing structures of power enacted by institutions to ensure "trainees are educated and socialised in order to become docile, useful and able to teach the young of society" (Ball, 2011, p. 80). As discussed above, schools are sites of continued colonisation through rationalisation of Western knowledge systems (Tawhai, 2023).

Colonisation has been 'baked in' to education in Aotearoa New Zealand (Beeby, 1992) and enacted in the development of teachers through the systematic exclusion of any other knowledge systems such as mātauranga Māori (Pasley et al., 2024; Stewart, 2023a). Recent changes to key educational documents; the Education and Training Act 2020 (Education and Training Act 2020), *Our Code Our Standards: Code of professional responsibility and standards for the teaching profession* (Education Council New Zealand—Matatū Aotearoa, 2020), and *Te Mataioho* (Ministry of Education, 2023d) attempt to address the colonising project of education through a requirement that all education providers give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. All ITE providers have been required to have programmes reapproved in line with *Our Code Our Standards* (Education Council New Zealand—Matatū Aotearoa, 2020) with particular consideration given to the Te Tiriti o Waitangi standard, including an expectation of authentic partnership with local iwi[8].

At the end of 2023, The New Zealand Initiative, an organisation self-described as an independent public policy think tank published a report titled *Who Teaches the Teachers* which purports to "highlight the ideological capture of ITE by those who promote cultural essentialism, identity pedagogy, and constructivism" (Johnston & Martin, 2023, p. 4). The report claims that ITE has always been the territory of those left of centre and if student teachers on entering ITE were not of that ideological persuasion they were still required to conform in order to pass the course. The report sets up a strawman of what the authors call an uncritical acceptance of 'culturalism' which has reduced the content knowledge present in ITE programmes and has in turn perpetuated the inequities in education it seeks to remove. Additionally, the report questions the 'conscientisation' of teachers and teacher educators, claiming that becoming aware of the part one plays in keeping things the same in society is bad for education.

To be a teacher, you need to have something to teach, something that is unique to the teacher that might be offered as a gift to those who wish to be taught (Biesta, 2013). This gift might then be examined and added to the receiver's construction of their understanding of the world. There is an emergence of the teacher when they have something teach. Part of that emergence is to understand their uniqueness and what it is they might have to give as a gift of teaching (Biesta,

[8] As this exegesis is being written and revised, ITE and School Board requirements to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi are being reviewed. Public submissions on various aspects of education are open and it is difficult to keep up with the far-reaching changes that the current government wants to make in the name of equality and the idea that we are 'one people'. The question will always remain, if we are one people, then which one?

2013). In an era of advancing artificial intelligence (AI) which is able to convey and test acquired knowledge, the question might be asked if human teachers can be replaced by AI? Reports such as those produced by the New Zealand Initiative seem to suggest a prescriptive approach to ITE as a way to guarantee a certain educational outcome. This prescriptive approach is used to develop a human type of AI reliant on their programming to teach effectively. However, philosophers and other researchers propose that a pre-determined outcome of education is not education at all.

> [T]he educational interest is, after all, an interest in the coming into the world of what is uniquely and radically new, which means that a philosophy of education must always make place for that which cannot be foreseen as a possibility, that which transcends the realm of the possible. (Biesta, 2013, p. 52)

If this is the educational interest, then it would follow that ITE needs to make space for the previously unimagined, part of which might be to explore what is unknown about oneself, perhaps through opportunities of conscientisation (Freire, 1974).

Philosophy of education "may have something to offer to leading a wise life and thus being a wise teacher" (Marshall, 1983, p. 15). It would follow that the study of educational philosophy is an important aspect of ITE. Contrary to a prescriptive approach to ITE where pre-service teachers only learn *how* to do things, they should also be supported to ask *why*? Becoming a wise teacher is not an event but an on-going process, "a living [of] practical theory with a continual interplay and enrichment between theoretical issues (from the foundational disciplines) and current classroom practices" (Marshall, 1983, p. 18). Good teaching is the synthesis of complex aspects of theory and practice (including cultural considerations) where the emergence of the teacher happens as the synthesis is enacted (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024). ITE should reveal and model such practices so that pre-service teachers are able to participate in what it means to teach, something which should not only entail the transmission of discrete packets of knowledge (Gómez, 2017). One role of ITE is to invite pre-service teachers to critically examine their tacit understandings of education, to see beyond their taken-for-granted assumptions of school, and invite them to imagine school in ways that have been previously unimagined. This is a risky proposition perhaps, but this is the argument made for education by educational philosophers, that education is risky (Biesta, 2013; Marshall, 1983; Marshall, 1988; Palmer, 2007).

The current generation of pre-service teachers have never known anything different in a school system except for the rationalist economic reforms of the 1980s and outcomes based education

(Neyland, 2010). To resist replication, ITE might include an invitation to embrace the unexpected. Replication continues to happen in schools, in part through the ITE programmes that perpetuate that replication, because "educators have a poor sense of who we are and of what education is" (Neyland, 2010, p. xix). Another role for ITE might be to help pre-service teachers to see and understand the effects of scientific management on schools in Aotearoa New Zealand. In turn, this understanding may support teachers entering the profession to critically examine systems that have shaped education prior to their participating in them (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

To teach philosophically "requires a commitment to ideas and to the thinking life" (Gómez, 2017, p. 9). It is not the role of ITE to have pre-service teachers indoctrinated into any particular way of teaching (Egan, 2001), but to support them to think philosophically about teaching to interrogate the taken-for-granted norms presented to them as the education system (Darling-Hammond, 2006).

On-going teacher education

In Aotearoa New Zealand, teacher education does not finish at the completion of an ITE course and initial entry into the profession. In fact, on-going teacher education is embedded in the teacher certification system. To progress from provisional certification to full certification, graduates must complete a two-year program of advice and mentoring within their teaching context. Additionally, fully certificated teachers must engage in a professional growth cycle, which includes a plan for professional development, to maintain their certification (Teaching Council of Aotearoa New Zealand, 2025).

When synthesising teacher PLD literature, Philippa Nicoll Antipas (2024) identifies the three important elements of PLD as connected, collaborative, and cyclical.

> PLD should be intimately connected to what teachers actually do in their classrooms. Further, PLD should be clearly connected to both theory and practice, and to the school's vision for teaching and learning as well as to the change initiatives with which the school is currently involved. PLD should be collaborative: empowering teachers in their choice to learn alone, to learn with their colleagues, and/or to be part of a learning community. Finally, PLD should be cyclical: teachers actively testing, trialling, reflecting, evaluating over a sustained period of time. (p. 56)

This conceptualisation of on-going teacher education has a legacy in Aotearoa New Zealand that was formalised with Clarence Beeby's tenure as Director of Education in the 1940s. During his time, significant changes were made to the structure of compulsory schooling, including the abolition of

the proficiency examination, which had previously been a barrier for children entering secondary education. With the increased diversity of children attending secondary school, ongoing teacher education became essential to ensure educators were equipped to teach all students and encourage their continued participation in education (Beeby, 1992).

Beeby had observed, much like current literature confirms, that for teachers to make any significant change to their teaching practice they needed to be consulted and given time for the changes to be made with appropriate resourcing in place (Beeby, 1992; Scherer et al., 2020). He saw that, particularly for primary teachers, the pace of change needed to be gradual due to the work they carried out in all curriculum areas. To bring about change in a system, Beeby talks about "stimulating the most liveliest teachers to experiment with novel methods on their own account, or to join together in groups of their own making to break new ground" (Beeby, 1992, p. 140). This is echoed in the scholarship of change management, in particular Everett Rogers (2003) seminal work *Diffusion of Innovations.* Rogers suggests five categories of innovation adopters and how each category might be supported to make changes to their current practice. 'Innovators' or Beeby's 'most liveliest teachers' are the first to experiment with change and are then able to model their innovations for others. Beeby appointed innovative classroom practitioners as subject advisors, tasking them with traveling across the country to collaborate with schools in implementing curriculum changes.

In addition to on-going teacher education in the school setting, there are times when it is advantageous for teachers to come together to explore theoretical aspects of the profession before taking this back to the classroom (Beeby, 1992; Nicoll Antipas, 2024; Rogers, 2003; Uzorka et al., 2023). Collective professional development that is connected, collaborative, and cyclical (Nicoll Antipas, 2024) can have a great impact on teachers beliefs about the objectives of education which can then effect the adoption of new methods of teaching (Beeby, 1992; Rogers, 2003).

Further to formal PD opportunities, teachers participate in informal PD through networks established both in person and online (Evans, 2019; Kyndt et al., 2016; Macià & García, 2016). Networks involve PD that can be connected, collaborative, and cyclical, and also controlled by the participant whereby they can seek out opportunities that are relevant and timely in relation to their needs (Kyndt et al., 2016).

Both ITE and ongoing teacher education—whether formal or informal—play a crucial role in shaping teaching practice. Beeby's subject advisors are no longer part of the fabric of teacher education in Aotearoa New Zealand. Currently, there is a 'back to basics' education policy where reading, writing and mathematics are the areas of focus and the arts are seen only as a 'nice to have'. As a result, formal PD is funded only in these basic areas. The current push for transformation in teaching may be hindered by the rapid pace of its implementation, as well as insufficient resources and collaboration needed to support effective PD that drives meaningful change.

Materiality of School

Materiality or the non-human aspects of schooling are as important as human actants when considering the effect of school on education. In recent years, spatial school design has been a focus of research due to the MoE supporting new builds, which are modern/open/innovative/flexible learning environments, of which there have been various degrees of success (Ministry of Education, 2011). School uniforms also affect education through the structuring and ordering of people.

Learning environments

The built environment provides pedagogical provocations and has an effect on the types of pedagogy that can be enacted within (Benade, 2021, 2022; Cameron, 1986; Mittermeier & Benade, 2023). The built environment of schools has been in contention since the introduction of open-plan-learning in the 1970s and the more recent reintroduction of flexible learning environments for both new builds and the remodelling of schools, an initiative that was prescribed by the MoE (Ministry of Education, 2015). Prior to the redefinition of school environments, there was a taken-for-granted acceptance of the traditional school classroom where children were grouped by age into classes with one teacher (Cameron, 1986). Research carried out in 1989 to investigate the emergence and use of open-plan-classrooms determined that teachers would ideally like to use classrooms to their pedagogical potential. However, core issues lay with:

> a large number of teachers trained to work on their own in a single-cell classroom with their own class trying to use that skill and experience in buildings designed for a different pattern of organisation for teaching. While many of the buildings are certainly inadequate, it is likely that some of the dissatisfaction expressed is due to using an inappropriate pattern of organisation for teaching. (Cameron, 1986, p. 17)

Fast forward to the present and the same phenomenon is being observed in the 'new' flexible learning spaces which have been designed and built for schools, now with the addition of ubiquitous

technology solutions (Benade, 2022). “Just as student-centered pedagogies are constrained by traditional classrooms, … so [too the] teacher-centered pedagogy becomes constrained by open and flexible spaces” (Benade, 2022, p. 871). Although the MoE espouses a commitment to 21st century learners and learning, their building plan also emphasises a commitment to cost-effective practice and long-term value for money. There is the intention that schools should be built as multi-purpose facilities to accommodate the needs of the community, something which sounds good in theory until this aspect of the design cuts across the potential pedagogy which might be enacted in such a space (Ministry of Education, 2015).

Traditional classrooms serve to support teacher centric pedagogy whereas open and flexible spaces serve to support a student centred pedagogy (Nair, 2014). However, such research and design begin from the assumption that student centred pedagogy is what is desired. Teacher centred and student centred pedagogy are but two models for thinking about education, there are other models to be considered such as world centred education (Biesta, 2022). In world centred education students are introduced to the world in order to fall in love with the world. It is then expected that they will be able to moderate their wants and desires by asking the ethical question of ‘whose wants and desires?’ and ‘how do these wants and desires impact the world and the people in it?’ What does a learning environment for a world-centred education look like, if in fact a world-centred education is what is desired? Does the pedagogy come before the built environment or emerge from it? And what if, hiding beneath the materials of the built environment lies a pedagogical movement that is not yet known?

Uniform/ity

“While schools exist as a collection of bodies, rarely is the body considered in the analysis of schooling” (Page & Sidebottom, 2022, p. 772). Bodies are what exist within the construct of school, the timetables, and the buildings which are then further managed by the clothing they can (and cannot) wear. Uniforms and the subsequent uniformity they produce (Craik, 2005) were used as far back as the 1500s. This approach was implemented in English public schools and emulated in the colonies as “part of a particular pedagogic approach to teaching and learning in certain cultural contexts, especially those associated with an Anglo-Saxon heritage, with militaristic or totalitarian regimes” (p. 51). Uniforms have also been used as a tool in the reproduction of social class and to inscribe particular gender roles onto bodies (Craik, 2005).

The cost, gender implications, and cultural considerations of uniforms in Aotearoa New Zealand resulted in a report from the Human Rights Commission for the purpose of providing guidance to schools on implementing uniform policy (NZ Human Rights, 2022). Like the changing of the buildings in which students are working, the clothes which students are required to wear are being reconsidered as part of the milieu of complex social considerations about the function and purpose of school. Although schools have the right to implement a uniform policy, they must consider the enactment of te Tiriti o Waitangi such as the rights of Māori students to wear taonga (treasure), non-discrimination in gendered uniforms (for example, freedom of movement), and the human right to express one's self through cultural and religious practices such as with piercing's and tattoos (NZ Human Rights, 2022). This is a material turn away from uniform/ity towards plurality as a hopeful reflection of social changes (Tynan & Godson, 2019).

In addition to uniforms in schools, schools have thick policy manuals that attend to other aspects of the material uniformity of students; rules about food that can and cannot be packed in lunch boxes, rules about stationery including the type and labelling of it, rules about the coloured pens students are to use, rules about what students can and cannot do on the way to and from school, and reward and punishment systems for when rules are not followed. Although some of these rules have their foundations in aspects of safety (the prevalence of certain food allergies, for example) most are about control and uniformity of students (Raby, 2012). What would a school look and feel like if it had no arbitrary rules but instead functioned as a democratic community where all members were encouraged to define and be their best selves in relationships with others?

Why Looking back Matters

Transformation cannot and does not happen in isolation. Knowing what has come before and why is integral to building a case to consider transformation. Although I have been aware of the political nature of education since my *conscientizaçäo* through reading the work of Paulo Friere (1974) at Auckland College of Education, this learning and greater awareness has been and continues to be an on-going process rather than a one off event. The more I come to know about the layered colonial becoming of education in Aotearoa New Zealand, the better I can support those wishing to enter the profession through their own *conscientizaçäo,* an examination of their tacit understandings through conversations that interrogate the taken-for-granted norms of education.

The exercise of bringing into focus some of the history of education in Aotearoa New Zealand within the context of wider political and social happenings, both here and globally, has served to help me to think and articulate my thoughts about the damage that school has done to many it has claimed to help (see Appendix 1 for a timeline of events). Again, in working these apparent ruins of colonisation and patriarchal norms of education in Aotearoa New Zealand, "[r]ather than finding despair, paralysis, nihilism, apoliticism, irresponsibility, or immorality in the decay and devastation of the ruins…, [I] have found possibilities for different worlds that might, perhaps, not be so cruel to so many people" (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000, p. 1).

Chapter 4 – The Dragons are Coming

> "The dragons! The dragons are avaricious, insatiable, treacherous; without pity, without remorse. But are they evil? Who am I, to judge the acts of dragons? . . . They are wiser than men are. It is with them as with dreams, Arren. We men dream dreams, we work magic, we do good, we do evil. The dragons do not dream. They are dreams. They do not work magic: it is their substance, their being. They do not do; they are."
> (Le Guin, 2018, p. 366)

The symbolism of dragons often evokes fear and images of destruction. Ursula Le Guin's (2018) imagining of dragons, however, juxtaposes the constant labour or doing of humans with the being of dragons. The articulation that "dragons do not do, they are" (Le Guin, 2018, p. 366) brings to mind this shift in thinking from doing to being. Le Guin's dragons invite thinking beyond the dreaming of dreams, the working of magic, and categorisations of good and evil to consider the essence of being. If this perspective is applied to schooling, how might thinking about schools in terms of their *being* rather than their *doing* open up new, previously unimagined possibilities?

Building on this idea, the following chapter engages with the theory and philosophy of education. It explores possibilities for compulsory schooling that look beyond, behind, between, and beneath taken-for-granted assumptions and expectations. A parting of hyperbolic folds to move past human doing to consider human (with more than human) being. This chapter takes flight from the historical, contextual, and political locatedness of compulsory schooling explored in Chapter 3. It asks what philosophical and creative alternatives might disrupt the taken-for-granted enactment of school through the exploration of time and the critique of simple silver bullet solutions.

The first section proposes philosophical and creative ways to challenge the taken-for-granted enactment of linear, forward-moving time that structures the doing of those in its grip. It explores various aspects of time to then ask; how might time in the school container be reconceived in a more sustainable way? The section is a conscious disruption of the traditional Western narrative of forward progression through time.

The second section critiques simple silver bullet solutions that claim to solve the apparent problems of compulsory schooling. It parts the hyperbolic folds to explore beyond, behind, between, and beneath the media headlines that claim terrifying problems with education. This section considers

the purpose/s of compulsory schooling—beyond qualification and socialisation—to include plurality, diversity, equity, freedom, and emancipation for the common good. From this perspective, reductive simple silver-bullet solutions appear absurd.

Playing with the Fourth Dimension

Time is an aspect of the designed compulsory school system which structures and orders people and activities within the school environment (Mittermeier & Benade, 2023, p. 45). In her short story *Some Approaches to the Problem of the Shortage of Time*, Ursula Le Guin (1982) humorously critiques the concept of linear time. She explores the idea that while a 'time leak' in space might explain the perceived shortage of time, a more likely cause is the 'petrolisation' of time—a metaphor for the over-mechanisation and acceleration of modern processes, as well as the commodification of time and its role as fuel for the modern economy. Le Guin argues that by constantly striving to control and speed up every aspect of life, paradoxically time is lost. To live harmoniously, she suggests, we must urgently reverse this petrolisation of time before the loss becomes irreversible. Where might time be 'leaking' from the school container in which we attempt to contain it? For example, the time in a traditional classroom with four walls, individual desks, a focus on the teacher at the front of the room, with a timetable on one side of the whiteboard and a clock to keep time hanging above it will be experienced in a different way from an open multi-purpose learning environment with porous boundaries.

Provoked by thinking with philosophy and theory—including Ursula Le Guin's (1982) imagining of time leaking due to the 'petrolisation' of time—this section explores various aspects of time. It examines Western understandings of time, the colonisation of time, the structuring of school time, lost time and catching up, and pockets of resistance. Finally, it asks: how might time in the school container be reconceived in a more sustainable way? What would it be to have school based on 'carbon-neutral time', or 'sustainable time', or 'wind time'?

Western understanding of time and its effect on education

The nearly ubiquitous Western understanding of time as a linear flow broken into various measurable parcels (Nanni, 2012), and all that this apparent understanding then influences in education, is what continues to draw me back to questions of time and education. As far back as the third century writings of St Augustine's *Confessions* (Augustine, 2016) which theorise an

understanding of time as "1. …the creature of God [and] 2. …a phenomenon of human consciousness" (Hernandez, 2016, p. 37), time has been an aspect of human experience that is grappled with. Foucault (1995) questions the disciplining use of time, Heidegger (1927/1996) the impossibility of being without time (more specifically, the time of death), Kant posited that time was purely intuitive and subjective, and that time did not exist outside of an individual's mind (Guyer, 1998), while Newtonian temporality or clocktime has served "as a means for commodification, compression, colonisation, and control of time in politics, science, and economic life" (Impola, 2023, p. 432). Following these theorisations of time, participating in modern day Western society involves being a slave to clocktime whilst wondering if time is being used wisely, where lost time might be found, and when the clock will stop with the event of death. Perhaps there is something to be said for the philosophy of *Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy* (Adams, 1979), which reminds the reader that "[t]ime is an illusion. Lunchtime doubly so" (p. 36).

The understanding of time is not a settled science and there are further questions to be asked about the nature of time and the effects it has. Time continues to be questioned philosophically and scientifically (Barad, 2007). More recently, quantum physics has challenged scientific understandings of time as previously theorised through Einstein's theory of relativity when considering "re(con)figuring space, time, and matter" (Barad, 2007, p. 179) as intra-actions of space, time, and matter where time emerges as a phenomenon of experience.

The traditional Western understanding of time as linear is deeply embedded in the way education is structured. The embeddedness of time that the education system reinforces reflects the modern Western notion that time progresses in a consistent, linear manner and that education should follow a similar timeline. This enduring narrative allows time to be weaponised in schools, structuring the educational experience to shape individuals into objects of the economic system (Hope, 2016; Jones, 2021; Kakkori, 2013). Two ways in which this is achieved is through the colonisation of time and the structuring of school time, which are explored in the following sections.

The colonisation of time

Throughout this doctoral project, I engage with the systemic and ongoing effects of colonisation, which are central to my work in initial teacher education. This focus stems from the understanding, discussed in Chapter 3, that compulsory schooling serves as a powerful site for colonisation. The colonisation of time works by offering one temporal sequence as *the* temporal sequence when in

fact there are multiple temporal sequences for different people who are differentially located (Barad, 2007). In Aotearoa New Zealand, the processes of colonisation have resulted in the delegitimisation of mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems) (Le Grange & Mika, 2018; Mika & Stewart, 2016; Stewart, 2023b). This includes the way in which Māori (and other Indigenous peoples) live in time as determined by nature. The natural way that human beings experienced time before modernity imposed calendar and clocktime occurred through the interaction with natural cycles; the moon, the rotation of the earth around the sun, growing seasons, and fishing seasons. "Time as embodied in various rituals, routines, calendars, discourses and devices which provide a sense of regularity and rhythm and which orientate human collectives towards an accepted source of temporal authority" (Nanni, 2012, p. 6).

Time is used as a tool of invisibilisation of the experiences of Indigenous and marginalised groups (Barad, 2007). The construction of a common future in the 'world doomsday clock'—an "estimation of our proximity to global catastrophe" (Barad, 2007, p. 57)—distracts attention from ongoing current wars and invisibilises the uncommon future of Indigenous and marginalised groups. Doomsday has already arrived for certain populations.

Carl Mika (2017), interrogates colonisation and time using the notion of worldedness. He theorises that people are always already connected to everything past present and future:

> something has *always already* occurred, and its occurrence always already constituted other things… Time is hence an untidy and non-constraining phenomenon in indigenous holistic thinking, and its nebulousness would mean that parallel dimensions existed alongside the one currently being experienced. (p. 45)

Cyclical, spiral or other more complex frames for time (Reid & Sieber, 2016; Shotwell, 2016; Stewart, 2021a) contrast to Western clocktime. Viewing and experiencing time through a variety of frames reveals the teleology of Western clocktime with its constant demand for linear progress (Hope, 2016; Reid & Sieber, 2016). Decolonised time invites the eschewal of a perpetual future which may never be attained and instead works across and through time acknowledging the past as present and future (Le Grange & Mika, 2018; Mika, 2017; Shotwell, 2016). In this sense, Indigenous time connects to Barad's theorisation of space~time~matter (Barad, 2007), where time is not separate from the experience of space and matter but indistinguishable as a separate entity. For non-Indigenous people, the reconfiguration of linear Western clocktime to space~time~matter can alter perceptions of being, knowing, and doing things in the world (Kuby & Taylor, 2021), whereby

imagining the previously unimagined might be possible. Time experienced outside of Western linear clocktime is temporal fluidity rather than linear temporality.

The structuring of school time

The second example of time's effects in education that is productive for this research is that of structured school time. In the 1990s, Høeg observed:

> Your time will be strictly regulated, there will be very few occasions when you are in doubt as to where you should be or what you should be doing, very few hours altogether where you have to decide anything for yourself. The rest of the time will be strictly regulated. The bell rings—you go up to the classroom; it rings—you come down; it rings—you eat; rings—work; rings—eat; rings—study period; rings—three free hours; rings—bedtime. It's as if there are these very narrow tunnels that have been laid out and you walk along them and nowhere else. They're invisible, like glass that has just been polished. You don't see it if you don't fly into it. (Høeg 1996, as cited in Kakkori, 2013, p. 578)

There is likely resonance in the above excerpt for anyone who has attended a traditional school for any length of time. The structuring of school time is a method of sublimation of children into their future adult world where they have been trained to take their place in the market economy. "[P]referring adults' view of time suppresses children and their different way of being, understanding and experiencing time" (Kakkori, 2013, p. 578).

Time here is used to produce an object of education; an object that will stay in the 'glass tunnels'. The structuring of time takes away the shared participation of students and teachers, and the inclusion of non-dictated activities required for co-operation (Dewey, 1916). When time is structured in a way that removes all control from those required to use it in a predetermined way, students no longer have a stake in their education (Biesta, 2013). That is, students are required to run through 'glass tunnels' of predetermined education for the purpose of domestication, while being unable to make their own choices. Opportunities for equality to be practised or verified (Rancière, 1991) are removed by the structuring of time.

Even when the structuring of time obfuscates the child in conditions of control, the experience of time cannot be controlled. The perception of time can be impacted by activities in which one is engaged: the slow drag of a week when there is something exciting to look forward to in the weekend and the flying of time when engaged in the meaningful flow of creation (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Shelton, 2020). This perception of time may give the impression that one is using time or generating time. Time, as conceptualized in *Finite and Infinite Games* (Carse, 1986), suggests that

the “infinite player does not consume time but generates it. Because infinite play is dramatic and has no scripted conclusion, its time is time lived and not time viewed” (Carse, 1986, p. 94), it is unstructured time. Instead of looking back at past gains to determine the next bigger and better thing, this approach looks forward from the present moment, creating the potential to bring something new into the now.

Another caution against the relentless forward structuring of time is that “we run the risk of losing sight of the experience of freedom in the present” (Biesta & Säfström, 2011, p. 54). This focus on what will be may cause us to miss the richness of re-encountering that which we have encountered before, but in a different way (Lesko, 2012). Frames of time such as Indigenous decolonial cyclical or spiral time might be used (Reid & Sieber, 2016; Shotwell, 2016; Stewart, 2021a), such that revisiting is experienced not as repeating, but as reviewing from a new vantage point. Returning to a previous encounter with accumulated experience provides a new reading of phenomena.

Episodes of Star Trek that deal in temporal anomalies pull my brain in multiple directions at once with possible paradoxes and potential. This is also true as I consider non-linear ways of thinking about and with time. Leena Kakkori’s statement, “We should not harm children only because we do not have the answer to one of the most difficult questions: What is time?” (Kakkori, 2013, p. 582) is an excellent provocation to further consider the study and exploration of time in education.

Lost time and catching up

During the pandemic, education systems became obsessed with lost time (see for example Education Review Office, 2021; 2023). This obsession revealed the taken-for-granted narrative that time can in fact be lost and that it can also be recovered through some kind of intensive remediation programme. The more sinister undercurrent of some reports signifies the implication that the required economic units will not be produced, and the smoke and mirrors of lost time, as some kind of concern for the child, are only a concern for the economic profitability of the child (Kuhfeld et al., 2022).

In addition to the loud anxiety of lost time, there is a kind of moralising of the use of time and what constitutes a good use of time and a waste of time. This narrative is one that refuses to see people in all of their “remarkable complexity” (Stewart et al., 2021, p. 1054) whereby, for many people, time ‘wasted’ is a precursor to the ‘good’ use of time. My practice of material figurations (as

discussed in Chapter 2) might be an example of wasted time. Hyperbolic crochet, constructing a mobile, making dragons' eggs, and painting may not be seen as a 'good' use of time in the process of completing a doctoral project. However, through that particular use of time, I was then able to think thoughts which I would not have been able to think without that particular use of time. Again, Carl Mika's (2017) notion of worldedness resonates with a non-hierarchical being in time where all things are both connected and of importance in the process of becoming. Following the notion of worldedness, there can be no moral judgement of the ways in which time is spent when every time is connected to everything, and is therefore of unique importance.

For me, an important question to ask about the use of time is: what do the children say? A report produced by NZCER (Bourke et al., 2021) which focussed on the experiences of children and the use of time during periods where they could not attend school due to COVID19 restrictions revealed:

> They spoke about their changing appreciations of time and the role it played in what they could choose to do, when, and how. Many were quick to realise that schoolwork tasks could be completed more efficiently than at school, through self-determined patterns. These provided them with more time to engage in play, pastimes, hobbies, and interests, and make contributions to the everyday life and work of the household using the resources available in the home and immediate environment. (p. 2)

Children experienced time differently when they were consciously learning outside the confines of the school environment. In these settings, living and learning became intertwined, inviting them to draw on their existing knowledge and life experiences more naturally and meaningfully within the context of their learning.

On returning to classrooms, many children tested 'lower' than expected (which probably contributed to the panic about lost learning time). However, I wonder if the results of testing might have been quite different had the tests been carried out in the places in which children felt they had learnt the most or were connected in some particular way to ways of learning in space~time~mattering (Barad, 2007). Perhaps it is not the children who have not learnt enough to complete the test, but the tests that have not learnt enough about the children.

Moments of resistance

There are pockets of resistance to the taken-for-granted linear progression of time in schools such as the enactment of slow pedagogy. There is much theorisation of slow pedagogy to be found in the scholarship of Early Childhood Education (Clark, 2023). Slow pedagogy is articulated as a resistance

to the drive to move quickly past childhood into a real and productive adult life, with a view to savouring the time of childhood as important in its own right (Clark, 2023; Frobel Trust, 2022): childhood for the sake of childhood and not just for the preparation of becoming an adult. Forward looking pressure of what is to come has been normalised and becomes a distraction from what is right now. The joy to be found in play for the sake of play, cyclic interactions with particular interests facilitating a deeper and more connected understanding, and an enactment of equality through support of the autonomous, yet communally connected child are at stake when children are pushed at pace through a pre-determined and time-bound system of education (Farquhar, 2016; Gibbons, 2016; Romero, 2018; Tesar et al., 2016).

It is not only children who might benefit from the notion of slow pedagogy; there are also benefits for adults living within the Western accelerating system, a condition of modernity (Berg & Seeber, 2016; Dioso-Lopez, 2021; Romero, 2020; Rosa, 2013). Hartmut Rosa (2019) posits a theory of coming to live in resonance with the human and more-than-human as an antidote to the oft felt alienation toward an accelerated present. Rosa invites readers to consider resonance as a way to sustain hope for an alternative way of being—one that resists the complete alienation caused by modernity's relentless pursuit of bigger, better, and faster. In an interview with Bjørn Schiermer, Rosa explains that resonance interrupts an implicit understanding that "the good life consists in making more of the world available, attainable and accessible" and instead invites a shift in one's focus to the "af←fection…e→motion…transformation…[and] elusiveness" (Schiermer, 2017, p. 3) of resonance. This way of being is wholly relational and iterative; the call of clocktime is unimportant. This way of thinking, Rosa acknowledges, is not new but rather a thinking with and a contextual reconfiguration of previous theory. Drawing on "Benjamin's concept of *aura*, Adorno's conception of *mimesis*, Marcuse's conception of *eros*, or Fromm's idea of *love* serve precisely the function of a placeholder for this different mode of being. I wrote *Resonance* as an attempt to spell out what an auratic, mimetic, erotic mode of life might look like" (Schiermer, 2017, p. 7).

Eastern philosophical traditions also support a resistance to Western clocktime, as illustrated by the use of 無為 *wu wei* in Chinese philosophy. Not exclusively the purview of adults, *wu wei* is something that children more naturally embody before they are educated out of it (Normile, 2024). *Wu wei* refers to an ability to move through the world and human society in a manner that is completely spontaneous and yet still fully in harmony with the normative order of the natural and human worlds (Slingerland, 2000). Followers of *wu wei* are aware of the paradox that in order to achieve

wu wei, to be completely spontaneous, one cannot strive to achieve this, or even try. One of the central tenets of this orientation to the world is that everything that you need will come to you when the time is right, both in nature and in people. For modern day followers, this practice is not about sitting on a rock waiting for the universe but about understanding that one should seek that which comes spontaneously rather than striving within systems that deplete. *Wu wei* is not inaction, but effortless action with wonder (Normile, 2024). For adults working with children in the context of education, this might mean rather than clocktime determining where an investigation takes them, the wonder of a book, or nature, or a question might instead direct their explorations. Rather than subject silos and the privileging of the academic over the arts, *wu wei* invites a wholistic encounter in ways that attend to the wellbeing of the participants.

> Leaving room for, and giving attention to, experiences like wonder and *wu-wei* positively contributes to the essential indeterminate aspects of education, to the disclosure of previously unknown and unimagined possibilities… Both wonder and *wu-wei* can facilitate a kind unlearning that strips away preconceived aims and assumptions, facilitating receptivity to new perspectives and possibilities capable of inspiring and informing metacritique. (Normile, 2024, p. 65)

In considering different ways to think about and with time, I find my own engagement with time shifts. It is both amusing and ironic that I am rushing to complete this chapter within a timeframe, even though I would much rather curl up in a cozy corner and immerse myself in the fascinating exploration of alternative ways of experiencing and living with time. I also know that when the time is right, I will have a place to return to, to dive deeper, to talk further and think further. The job here is to explore previously unimagined ways of being in time, as alternatives to the enduring Western narrative of linear clocktime and education.

Wind time in school

Provoked by thinking with theory, including Ursula Le Guin's (1982) satirical commentary on the ridiculous notions of the conception of time, the colonisation of time, the structuring of school time, lost time and catching up, and pockets of resistance, I return now to consider my questions about the potential to redefine the type of time that school runs on to 'carbon-neutral time' or 'sustainable time' or 'wind time'.

While reflecting on the concept of redefining time, I find myself transported back in time to September 2023, during my visit to the United Kingdom. On a narrow country lane in the hills somewhere between Birmingham and Manchester, I found myself (ironically) wasting time, as I had

arrived early at a friend's farm for an evening visit. I sat on an ancient stone wall beneath a giant, slowly throbbing, carbon-neutral and sustainable wind turbine and I gazed across the valley at more wind turbines scattered in the distance. This experience brought to mind conversations I've had with my friend and colleague Pania Te Maro about Tāwhirimātea—the Māori atua (god) of the weather including wind—and changing winds which are not static but dynamic. It also pulls into the present my experience of windy days as a primary school teacher. These memories are layered with the lovely swooshing of the palm tree outside of my home office window right now. In the fronds of the palm tree, I observe the web of the newest spider to settle there and I wonder whether windy days benefit him. I imagine he might be a bit frustrated by all the debris caught in his web, knowing he'll need to spend time cleaning and repairing it before it might effectively catch any worthwhile prey again. I go outside to photograph him for you. Now, not only can I hear the wind and see the effects of the wind, but I can feel the wind, and it chills me. I return not to my office but to the kitchen where I meet my daughter who has been in her room writing a history essay about Te Tiriti o Waitangi, and we have a conversation about the colonising practices of academic citations and I make a second coffee for us both. Back at my desk, I sip from the handmade mug I bought whilst in Scotland which returns me to thinking with those slowly throbbing carbon neutral and sustainable wind turbines and time, and a particularly interesting contrail that I captured above a hill of frenetic wind turbines.

Figure 5

Thinking Across Time

A compilation of photos. A visual representation of the preceding paragraph.

By putting posthuman philosophy to work (Braidotti & Regan, 2017; Haraway, 2016; Pasley et al., 2024) through the presencing of time and thinking with material figurations, my *gedanken* (thought) experiments about school time shift from 'what is?' to 'what if?' (Barad, 2007; Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Flaxman, 2008). Furthermore, engagement with Māori metaphysics, which theorises time beyond notions of Western linear time, becomes part of the entanglement of the material discursive where both are required for knowledge making and understanding (Barad, 2007). When I had the experience with the wind turbines in the past, did they know they would speak to the future? Did they then know that they would be in conversation with clocktime and a Scottish mug and a spider in a palm tree? These are not questions that require an answer but questions that invite further questions about time in compulsory schooling. Even the word compulsory has an ordering of time as its protocol comes into effect at a certain time, as measured from the date of birth, when one *should* be ready to enter compulsory schooling.

How might wind time then manifest in compulsory schooling? I am particularly drawn to the multiple manifestations of Tāwhirimātea in space~time~mattering. Tāwhirimātea can move in all directions or none. Tāwhirimātea can move objects and be moved by objects. It is accepted that Tāwhirimātea will change in time and space, moving and returning. He dwells in places, eddying gently. He can come in full force to destroy. He can come as a thermal updraft to lift and support. He can disappear completely. All of these things are expected of Tāwhirimātea. Yet, when other entities, especially children, display such diversity of being, compulsory schooling gives them the label of abnormal. Might wind time, adopting the time of Tāwhirimātea, have a humanising effect on compulsory schooling, where change and diversity within each entity becomes the expectation, rather than the current homogenising progression through curriculum levels and content? Western notions of human development, which have been theorised as a linear forward progression, might instead be theorised as coming from the North, South, East, and West (and everywhere in between), where all directions, including becalming and the very absence of wind time, are part of expected development. Speed, direction, or even presence of the wind is not important. There is always already potential in te kore, the nothingness before there is something.

Time in compulsory school could be enacted as modelled by the complexities and variance of Tāwhirimātea to inform how teachers might choose to teach philosophically. Rather than the demands of linear clocktime, teachers can recognise and work with the gentle breeze of slow pedagogy punctuated by strong gusts of production and swirling eddies of attention. Wind, as a

sustainable power source, stands in resistance to the exploitation of human capital and the rising levels of anxiety and burnout. It offers an alternative to the relentless demand for people to go faster and work longer from an increasingly younger age—all in the name of progress. Might this reconceptualisation of time be an enactment that brings forth "possibilities for different worlds that might, perhaps, not be so cruel to so many people" (St. Pierre & Pillow, 2000, p. 1).

Having addressed the dominant Western constructs of time and progress—and proposing an alternative framing of time in compulsory schooling—I now turn to the issue of silver bullet solutions that claim to solve perceived problems of compulsory schooling. What philosophical and creative alternatives might be considered to disrupt the taken-for-granted enactment of simple silver bullet solutions that attempt to address the complexities of being human during compulsory schooling?

The Myth of the Silver Bullet

Silver, the most reflective metal on Earth, has long been known for its healing properties (Shen, 2017) and appears in traditional stories as a material used to vanquish foes. The enduring myth of a silver bullet—a simple solution to the problem of a werewolf—persists in contemporary society as a metaphor for a quick fix to a perceived problem. In school systems, silver bullets abound, promising simple solutions for the werewolves that have terrorised schooling for generations. These apparent silver bullets, or quick fixes, persist as remnants of the technocratic solutionism of modernity which continues to shape education alongside scientific management (Harðarson, 2016; Mehta, 2013; Nash, 1972; Neyland, 2010). The scientific management of education is critiqued for its reliance on the belief that the scientific method can precisely define problems and provide definitive solutions. This critique remains significant, as modernity continues to function as a reductive force seeking to minimise the complexities and risks that are integral to education (Biesta, 2013; Locke, 2022; Lyotard, 2019). Despite challenges from postmodern thought, which questions modernity's reliance on rationalism, universalising truths, and grand narratives, these reductive tendencies endure (Lyotard, 2019).

The apparent werewolves of education in need of simple silver bullet solutions currently headlined in the media of Aotearoa New Zealand include:

- falling literacy and numeracy achievement rates
- classroom behaviour issues

- curriculum inadequacies
- failure of ITE
- low achievement statistics of Māori and Pasifika peoples

A danger of promoting simplistic, silver-bullet solutions to educational challenges is the tendency to obscure the complexity of the issues themselves (Darling-Hammond et al., 2024; Mehta, 2013; Noddings, 2015). One such complexity lies in the coexistence of the education system's strengths and its perceived problems—where solving one perceived problem may inadvertently impact existing strengths (McNaughton, 2024; Noddings, 2015). For example, efforts to improve equality and make schools more accessible for all people (perceived strength), can lead to concerns about declining achievement (perceived problem) due to a wider range of people accessing school (Noddings, 2015).

The appeal of simple solutions aligns with a belief that the primary purpose of school is to prepare children for future careers by equipping them with necessary skills and qualifications. But if education is not solely about producing a workforce to sustain a capitalist economy, then its purpose must be further considered (Noddings, 2003, 2015). Beyond the colonial imperatives of compulsory schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand discussed in Chapter 3, what is the purpose of school and how might that purpose take shape through the complex and nuanced work of teachers—rather than through simple silver bullet solutions?

Questioning the aims and purposes of school

In 2024, Amazon Prime released a TV series based on the hugely popular video game called *Fallout* (Cain & Jones, 1997). *Fallout* is a post nuclear role playing game where the antagonist is a Vault Dweller who has emerged from a meritocratic vault society in order to find her father who has been abducted by outsiders. In facing a world of chaos she asks, "what happened here?" to which she receives the reply, "everyone wants to save the world, they just can't agree how" (Nolan, 2024). This line could be applied to education and it is not only the 'how' that cannot be agreed upon, but it also holds the implied question of 'why?'. How we do education relates directly to why we do education, or the purpose of education.

The purpose of education has been questioned from the time of Plato to the time of contemporary philosophers of education. These thinkers—both classical and contemporaneous—consider education within its social and cultural contexts, questioning taken-for-granted assumptions about

how education is structured and enacted. They explore how the structures of education shape what and how students learn, and why. In the context of this doctoral project, it is the purpose of *school* that is considered as something that emerges through complex entanglements, rather than as a fixed or singular objective. Considering the aims of schooling in a way that accounts for human complexity is an enduring challenge.

Nel Noddings (2003, 2015) writes extensively about the purpose of school. She highlights the importance of each generation questioning the tacit and often taken-for-granted aims of school that appear to be uncritically accepted by society. Noddings (2003) points out some of the admirable shifts in the aims of school, such as the education of girls. She also cautions the uncritical acceptance of recent initiatives in the education of girls, such as efforts to increase the participation of girls in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Maths (STEM) subjects, to ensure that such initiatives do not unintentionally serve as another mechanism of patriarchal coercion. Using the aim of equality in schools as an example, Noddings reveals the harmful practices that arise from the uncritical pursuit of equality in the form of standardised curricular and the use of standardised tests. This example highlights the issues with an apparent simple solution (giving everyone the same) without taking into consideration the complexity of human life experience. While equality and opportunity may be framed as desirable objectives, the mechanisms used to achieve them often reinforce existing structures of power rather than dismantling them.

Schools function within a capitalist system where human capital is integral to maintaining the system. Cliff Falk (2005) suggests that "[e]ducation is a primary means of 'flow control' for ensuring that subjectivity is formed within certain parameters that are currently determined by the capitalist system" (p. 205). In other words, education is not a neutral endeavour but one shaped by economic imperatives, influencing not only what is taught but also how individuals come to understand themselves and their place in society. This particular shaping of subjectivity aligns with the needs of capitalism but may be at odds with broader conceptions of human flourishing. In this sense, the vision of education as a means to foster a happy human community appears fundamentally incompatible with its function in sustaining a profitable consumer society (Noddings, 2003).

Subjectification and emancipation

Biesta (2013) identifies three purposes of education. He suggests that education systems are for qualification, socialisation, and subjectification. This is not to say that each of these aspects can be

taken in isolation or that these three categories are the only purposes of education, but it is a framework through which the purpose of education might be revealed and critiqued. Biesta suggests that qualification and socialisation are often purposefully attended to, but the aspect of subjectification is often left to chance. The process of subjectification in education

> has an orientation toward emancipation, that is, toward ways of doing and being that do not simply accept the given order, but have an orientation toward the change of the existing order, so that different ways of doing and being become possible. (Biesta, 2013, p. 64)

Subjectification, in this context, goes beyond the simplistic notion of producing lifelong consumers. Instead, the focus is toward the subjectification of the student, in which the teacher's educational response is shaped by the student's emerging interests, questions, and ways of engaging with the world (Biesta, 2013; Noddings, 2003). This is not to suggest an individualistic response, but rather to emphasise the importance of nurturing student subjectivity within a community context—one that values both their relationship to and with plurality in the world and their awareness and pride in their natural strengths and inclinations (Arendt, 1961b; Biesta, 2022; Darling-Hammond et al., 2024; Noddings, 2003).

Purposeful subjectification can also be understood as an act of creativity (Robinson, 2001) or poiesis—the act of bringing something into being that did not exist before (Carse, 1986). It may also be framed as a resistance of the ordinary (Gibbons, 2013). When education is viewed as a disruption in the existing order, it is no longer a mechanism for reproducing a predetermined, homogenised 'same' object of education but is rather a subject of continual and unique becoming (Arendt, 1961b; Biesta, 2013, 2019; Rancière, 1991; Rancière, 1999). In this view, subjectification, creativity, *poiesis*, and resistance to the ordinary collectively position education as a practice of freedom and emancipation.

The practice of freedom and subjectification in education is more complex than simply becoming aware of and then enacting freedom. Arendt (1958) explicates some of this complexity in her articulation of freedom as referring to an act of beginning. It is not only the act of beginning that is freedom. Action/s are enmeshed with the action/s of others with respect to how these beginnings are taken up. Arendt was attuned to the plurality of the world in that freedom is not in isolation but only in concert with others. Arendtian freedom is a non-linear progression whereby freedom is enacted between and through multiple people, who enact multiple beginnings and in turn take up the beginnings of others (Hayden, 2014; Saeidnia & Lang, 2017).

Within the school system, teachers may hold the most emancipatory philosophy of education, but their ability to enact it is constrained by policies (Biesta, 2013; Peterson & Hannon, 2021; Rancière, 1999). Structures and policies affect the purpose of government-run and funded schools (Biesta, 2013; Peterson & Hannon, 2021; Rancière, 1999). These structures and policies can form barriers between teacher's beliefs of what education might be and how these beliefs can be enacted, which then effects the choices that teachers and students have. New government policies that attempt to provide silver bullets for schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand, align desired school outcomes with established curriculum objectives. There has been an on-going process of school reform based on a political agenda (as discussed in Chapter 3) that focuses on the qualification and socialisation of children. Furthermore, with all of this espoused reform has come very little change (Beeby, 1992; Cuban, 1988, 2023; Payne, 2008). Perhaps it is not school that needs to be fixed but it is politics and its resulting policies that need some kind of fixing to enable schools to be places of conscious subjectification and emancipation.

Education: A public good for the common good

Education as a common or public good has been a popular subject in discussions concerning philosophy of education (see for example; Devine, 2004; Grace, 1989; Grace & Thrupp, 2010; Stewart, 2018). The rise of neoliberal education policies has shifted the focus of these discussions, reframing education as a private good. This shift occurs because neoliberalism reinscribes education as a private good due to the human capital it produces, rather than its broader societal benefits. Concerns have been raised about the implications of this market-driven approach in the development of student subjectivity and the practice of emancipation.

Education, of which school is a part, might still be argued as being a public good for the purpose of the common good (Locattlli, 2018). It is the apparent purpose of education to produce citizens who can and will participate in society in various, preferably positive, ways. The premise of the common good is that all members of society have a duty to support it. While individuals may not always experience a direct personal benefit, everyone ultimately benefits from being part of that society. For example, the premise of a common good can be seen in the funding of public schooling. Although those paying taxes may not be accessing funded public schooling for themselves or their children, the argument supposes that they will live within a society in which school has engendered shared values and ensured economic viability. However, this raises the question: what is the imagined common good that public schooling seeks to disseminate, and who does it serve? Public

schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand has historically served the purposes of assimilation of Māori and the establishment of cultural superiority of Eurocentric knowledge (Beeby, 1992; Consedine & Consedine, 2005; Tawhai, 2023). The common good here may be more accurately articulated as the colonising good. If education is to be for the common good, as proposed by UNESCO in their 2015 report *Re-thinking Education: Towards a global common good* (Locattlli, 2018), then the common good should be thought about in terms of plurality and diversity, and our common desire to live well on this planet rather than a commoning or homogenisation of what is good.

In this conception of the common good, 'common' is used as an adjective (res communes) to signify something that belongs to everyone. What might compulsory schooling, which belongs to everyone, look like? Can this be the basis for how school might be redefined within education in Aotearoa New Zealand? And if common is 'belonging to everyone' then how should 'good' be defined? Good can refer to anything that has value or it can be a descriptor of a virtue. My reading, in this particular instance, is that 'good' is a virtue to be desired, some kind of thing that has a positive outcome. However, within the statement of 'common good' there again seems to be a tacit agreement about what this 'good' might be. Perhaps there might be multiple ways of being 'good' with some agreed upon values.

'Good' is a word that is used within the institution of the school with the assumption that being good, which equates to being compliant, is a good thing. Good children are rewarded with stickers and certificates, good girls are nice and good boys are obedient. It is important to ask questions concerning these truth-myths about being 'good' at school. Questions such as; are these the good things that the common good of education and school should be? Or is there another way of thinking about good? How can education, that belongs to all (common), be for the good of all in diverse and contextual ways? UNESCO again turns to a common experience of all humans who are living on this planet. They ask, how can education, as a common good, ensure continued flourishing of humans? The Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPPC) 2023 proposes a liveable and sustainable future for all with the converse being that if the climate crisis is not addressed then our planet will become unliveable which, by definition, could not be defined as 'good' (IPCC, 2023). Therefore, education as a common good, rather than adhering to the tacit understandings of good, must address the climate crisis as a matter of urgency so there is an environment in which we can flourish, or have a good life (Robinson, 2023).

Teaching for the purposes of qualification, socialisation, subjectification, and towards the common good

Teachers who desire to teach with the view that schools are a common good whilst addressing the qualification, socialisation, and subjectification of students within a pluralistic vision of the world—who reject simple silver bullet solutions—face significant challenges in their work. The pressure on a teacher at the nexus of philosophy, policy, resourcing, students, community, expected outcomes, research, and the science of teaching and learning is so great that many want to leave the profession (Massey University Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa, 2024). In a society that looks to compulsory schooling to address many of its concerns, and sees teachers as the "most important influences on student outcomes in schools" (Education Evaluation Centre, 2024, p. 3), how might the system of compulsory schooling nurture teachers who in turn would be able to nurture students?

The definition of nurturing is to take care of something while it is growing. I use this term deliberately in this context to acknowledge that teachers are always becoming. Teacher education does not end with the completion of an ITE program. Instead, it is an ongoing process. One's teacherness is ever emerging through intra-actions within the broader educational landscape, including with individuals in ever-evolving communities. Reflecting on my own emergence as a teacher, I recognise that, while once I might have been able to write a formal teaching philosophy—like those required of most graduates from an ITE programme—my approach to teaching now emerges intra-actively with the students, such that it is shaped by the structure of the institution and the infinite paths that may unfold.

A teacher might ask; how am I becoming a teacher for *this* student, at *this* time, in *this* relationship, for *this* line of inquiry, in *this* community? There is no *a priori* assumption underpinning this relationship. There are no learning outcomes with teaching scripts to ensure particular qualification and socialisation outcomes of compulsory schooling. When teachers teach with this line of questioning in mind, teaching and learning remains unknown and risky (Biesta, 2013). Teaching is not a straightforward transaction of depositing pre-packaged knowledge into the brains of students (Freire, 1985). Instead, educational equality is enacted in the teaching and learning relationship (Rancière, 1991). Yet within the embrace of risk and the enactment of educational equality, there will be moments when a student may benefit from direct guidance. This could be in the form of explicit instructions, a supportive social framework, a crucial piece of knowledge that is just the wind

they need to set sail, or the encouragement of a more knowledgeable other who offers their insights as a gift (Biesta, 2019).

Teaching philosophically resists simple silver bullet solutions to education desiring to leave all pathways for teaching open. If school is thought of as a game, it might be played as an infinite game (Carse, 1986). Carse reminds readers that if anyone is forced to play then it is no longer play and that the goal of an infinite game is to remain invitational where players can keep playing for as long as they choose. Teaching philosophically might ask the question; which of the tools in my kete of resources will support players to keep playing at learning whilst finding a balance between qualification, socialisation, and subjectification when there needs to be consideration of the common good in a pluralistic world?

Hannah Arendt (1982) suggests that the way in which one might become familiar with plurality is to go visiting. This is visiting with the intention to find out about someone or something else that might be different from what has been encountered before. It is the eschewal of commonality; rather, "in visiting the viewpoints of others one increases one's capacity for enlarged thought and representative thinking" (Gillies, 2016, p. 154). Donna Haraway (2016) discusses the difficulty of such a practice in that "it demands the ability to find others actively interesting, even or especially others who most people already claim to know all too completely, to ask questions that one's interlocutors truly find interesting, to cultivate the wild virtue of curiosity" (p. 127). Haraway goes on to point to the power of storytelling when one goes visiting in an Arendtian sense. The stories that are formed about whose who are visited support the enlargement of thinking about the plurality of the world, which might then activate the imagination to new ways of living (and dying) together.

> Those who "believe" they have the answers to the present urgencies are terribly dangerous. Those who refuse to be *for* some ways of living and dying and not others are equally dangerous. Matters of fact, matters of concern and matters of care are knotted in string figures, in SF. (Haraway, 2016, p. 41)

Compulsory schooling that engages in the Arendtian practice of visiting to enlarge its thinking about the plurality of the world needs to be genuinely curious about those within its community. School that is genuinely curious about students, does not believe it has simple silver bullet solutions to schooling students before meeting them, and recognises that the student and teacher are becoming

through dynamic intra-action. At a school that is premised on subjectification that is a constant becoming (Braidotti, 2018), the notion of a simple silver bullet is absurd.

If not silver bullets, then what?

Returning to the statement from *Fallout* (Nolan, 2024), which acknowledges the desire to change the world (and in this context, school) but with the inability to agree on how this must be done, I contend that the only necessary agreement is a willingness to engage with difference—recognising that there are multiple ways to do school and what works for one community may not work for another (Noddings, 2003). This does not mean one is right and another is wrong, just that there are different ways of being in the world and engaging with school. This kind of difference, or plurality, builds resilience into a system and may shift the focus from industrialised notions of increased outputs to a sustainable understanding of diversification and the importance of the soil (or culture) in which children grow (Robinson, 2023).

Silver bullets offered in school, such as the universal implementation of particular structured literacy programmes, offer an answer to a taken-for-granted question, 'how do we slay the werewolf of declining literacy rates?' However, rather than slaying an imaginary werewolf with a simple silver bullet, perhaps those involved in determining education policy need go visiting and ask more curious questions; questions that start to explore the complex issues of the on-going absence of equity in a school system set up with an egalitarian vision.

Alternatively, rather than denying the existence of werewolves, could an environment be created in which the werewolf might flourish? A community of werewolves doing what werewolves love to do as opposed to being erased from the population. A resistance to the rejection of creation such as that portrayed in Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* (1985). Victor Frankenstein's creation is a demonstration of the devastating effects of the wrong kind of social education and hints that the trajectory of Victor's creation would have been very different had they occurred in a loving and nurturing environment (Joshua, 2008). There is no silver bullet for a lack of human connection, or visiting. Silver bullets that are sought in the form of off-the-shelf remediation programmes are devoid of human connection and do a good job of further restricting human connection rather than seeking to address disconnection and alienation (Freitas & Bolda, 2019).

The Dragons are Here

This chapter began with the quote:

> "The dragons! The dragons are avaricious, insatiable, treacherous; without pity, without remorse. But are they evil? Who am I, to judge the acts of dragons? . . . They are wiser than men are. It is with them as with dreams, Arren. We men dream dreams, we work magic, we do good, we do evil. The dragons do not dream. They are dreams. They do not work magic: it is their substance, their being. They do not do; they are."
> (Le Guin, 2018, p. 366)

I suggested that compulsory schooling is focussed on human doing whereas it might be imagined as dragon being. It is an invitation to set aside a 'safe' education of prescribed measurable outputs to engage in risky education that eschews replication in favour of previously unimagined pathways.

I have proposed philosophical and creative ways to challenge the taken-for-granted enactment of linear, forward-moving time by reconsidering time through the eyes of Tāwhirimātea. Not only does this shift in thinking disrupt the traditional Western narrative of progression, but it also enacts the decentring of colonising forces within school structures and embodies Arendtian visiting—a genuine curiosity about the experience of others and the plurality of the world.

In critiquing simple silver bullet solutions in relation to the complexities of being human in compulsory schooling, I have suggested that before the problems of compulsory schooling might be determined, the purpose of it needs to be considered. If the purpose of compulsory schooling is to extend beyond qualification and socialisation—encompassing plurality, diversity, equity, freedom, and emancipation for the common good—then simplistic, silver-bullet solutions are absurd, as they fail to account for the infinite variables involved in meeting the needs of individuals within a community. Needs that cannot be met before the people come into community with each other, or go Arendtian visiting with each other.

Pushing aside taken-for-granted aspects of compulsory schooling invites exploration of previously unimagined possibilities for compulsory schooling. Perhaps the next iteration of imagining the previously unimagined is to consider schooling without the compulsion of its compulsory nature. The finite and infinite philosophy of James Carse, where 'play' pertains to all activities that one engages in across their life, asserts that "[i]t is an invariable principle of all play, finite and infinite, that whoever plays, plays freely. Whoever must play, cannot play" (Carse, 1986, p. 4). Such an

understanding leads to the question, what previously unimagined possibilities might emerge when school is a game where all players play freely?

Chapter 5: Stories Beyond, Behind, Between, and Beneath the Anthology

There are always stories beyond, behind, between, and beneath stories. This chapter examines the variety of reasons that the stories hosted on the artefact's website were both written and selected to be part of the anthology. Additionally, it explores the diverse approaches and techniques that shaped their telling. Some of these stories behind the stories focus on the intention/inspiration of the story; some on the ways in which research literature led to the writing of the story; some on the way the story led to engagement with research literature; and some on the techniques used in playing with story writing. The multiple, interwoven purposes of this chapter reflect the dynamic creation of the anthology and exegesis, moving beyond, behind, between, and beneath their various parts. But first, the chapter begins with a discussion of the relationship between the writer and reader with the purpose of considering some of the tensions when writing for a purpose, whilst being aware that the purpose emerges with the reader and the reading.

The Relationship Between the Writer and Reader

In revealing the intentions and impetus behind the stories there is a risk of tethering them to one type of reading. This is not to suggest that when the stories are read they will remain tethered to their beginnings as there will be unique lines of flight (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987) for each reader and each time they are read. The tension between revealing the intentions and impetus behind the stories mirrors my resistance, as a teacher, to defining learning outcomes for students. If I tell students (or readers) what they are meant to learn (or read), where is the risk, and where is the emancipation? Regardless of my intentions and impetus for writing the stories included in the anthology, "[t]he spectator also acts, like the pupil or the scholar. She observes, selects, compares, interprets. She links what she sees to a host of other things that she has seen on other stages, in other kinds of place" (Rancière, 2009, p. 13). What readers read will emerge from the environment both within and about them, drawn through space~time~mattering into a unique coalescence. Meaning is not fixed or pre-determined but emerges through the intra-actions between the reader, the text, and the world around them, where boundaries between the subject and object are not clear-cut but create new possibilities for reading that are constantly in flux (Barad, 2007).

Writing fiction is a deliberate act of creation, where authors make conscious choices about characters, emotions, viewpoints, setting, plot, and structure (Kress, 1993, 2005) to shape the

reader's experience when exploring phenomena that they engage with. Although Ernest Hemingway (1932) tells writers that phenomena need to be experienced to be written about, other writers, such as Ursula Le Guin (2004), Margaret Atwood (2003, 2022), and Steven King (2000) encourage writers to write out of what they know but have not necessarily experienced. The use of short fiction offers a "minimalist story … of brief visions or chance encounters suddenly opening onto the abyss of unknown worlds, memories of minute events revealing the depths of passion hidden in everyday lives" (Rancière, 2018, pp. 279-280). These brief visions and chance encounters invite the reader to "venture into the forest of things and signs, to say what [you] have seen, and what [you] think of what [you] have seen" (Rancière, 2009, p. 11). Characters that are provisioned by the author, both human and more than human, provide ways in which the reader might consider multiple perspectives within a story. The reader might then be able to say more clearly what they have seen and what they think of what they have seen in the phenomena of their own lives.

The reader's emancipation, Roland Barthes (1977) suggests, requires the metaphorical death of the author. He asserts that "the modern writer (scriptor) is born simultaneously with his text" (p. 3). Once the text is completed, however, the author needs to die to make way for the birth of the reader. Taking the reader seriously supposes the way to ethically consider what I choose to write and how it may affect the other (Nealon, 1997). Writing is one side of a dialogue where reading is the other. Although I have written in order to come to a deeper understanding of issues pertaining to education, I have also written while keeping in mind that, for the reader, "the unity of a text is not in its origin, it is in its destination" (Barthes, 1977, p. 6).

Stories of the Anthology

Below are the stories of the stories in the anthology which emerged from a variety of provocations including personal experiences and conversations, reading theory, current educational policy change, news articles, and working with pre-service teachers. There has been constant and dymanic movement between the creative work, and engagement with the philosophy and theory of education faciltated by a critical posthumanist ontoepistemology. As such, some of the descriptions are more theoretical than others while some lean into the affect that the writing has had on my thinking.

A question of order

The order in which the stories are presented in this chapter has been carefully considered. One possibility was to arrange them chronologically based on when they were written. However, this approach was quickly dismissed for two reasons. Firstly, chronological sequencing could only reflect when the stories were initially drafted, as the writing process was fluid, with narratives evolving concurrently and interweaving over time. Secondly, imposing a linear temporal structure would contradict the philosophical engagement with concepts of time, teaching, and learning that underpin this work.

Another organisational approach considered was categorisation by genre or type, such as school-based narratives, children's stories, satire, autobiographical pieces, and science fiction. However, the majority of the stories resist neat classification, with stories instead spanning multiple genres and thematic categories. This fluidity made such an approach impractical and reductive.

A further possibility was to employ a random list generator, allowing an algorithm to determine the sequence of stories. However, the idea of inviting an unknown algorithm to determine the order of these dearly nurtured stories felt like the oft enacted algorithmic training of dearly nurtured people in the name of education. Nonetheless, the potential for a known and familiar algorithm, one with a comforting cadence associated with reading and writing traditions was considered as an alternative means of organisation.

As a result, the stories are presented in alphabetical order. This decision reflects a long-standing archival and bibliographic tradition, mirroring the organisational systems used in libraries dating back to the ancient Library of Alexandria. This method acknowledges the historical significance of cataloguing practices in preserving and curating knowledge.

Alarming

Alarming portrays a teacher's dream of a utopian school. One does not need to spend much time on primary teachers' Facebook pages to know the frustrations of teachers working in the school system—a system which does not seem to harness the strengths of those working within it nor respond to the needs of children required to participate in it. In *Alarming*, the school itself is imagined as a central character—an advanced AI system that ensures the smooth running of the school

environment. This allows human teachers to focus entirely on humanising activities with children and each other.

As with many of the stories in this anthology, *Alarming* is intended to question the purpose/s of school and to juxtapose the dream of what school might be with the reality that teachers and children are faced with each day. The ideas presented in *Alarming* are not new for teachers who just want a fork to eat their lunch and an opportunity in the day to go to the toilet alongside being able to provide responsive learning opportunities for children. The lack of forks in the staffroom is symbolic of the constant lack in the system, while teachers' dreams of an educational utopia are shattered by the harsh wake-up call of reality's alarms.

As I have researched and written stories, I have become increasingly wary of suggesting that there might be some kind of educational utopia. There is a shared understanding in fiction writing that anything proclaimed as utopia is usually a thinly veiled dystopian reality of mind control practices and subjugation of the populace through nefarious means. The movie *Serenity* (Wheldon, Director). (2005) explores the possible horror of utopia. A new planet, Miranda, has been terraformed and then populated, sold as a utopia for human civilisation. What the migrants to Miranda don't know is that the architects of this utopia have deployed a drug in the air processors that has been designed to pacify the population. The drug, G-23 Paxilon Hydrochlorate (Pax for short), has terrible consequences, pacifying 90% of the population so completely that they stop living. The movie shows a world with preserved bodies, slumped where they simply stopped breathing. The drug's effect on the remaining 10% of the population is the opposite of what was intended, turning them into Reavers, hyper-aggressive murderous nightmares. I will spare you the gory details of what happens to the Reavers and their prey, suffice to say that like any drug, this is not a 'one size fits all' simple solution to achieve a utopic world.

Despite the portrayal of dystopian utopias in movies, such as *Serenity* (Wheldon, Director). (2005), and in classic fiction, such as Huxley's (1958) *Brave New World,* I am still drawn to the possibility of utopia, although perhaps only when it is conceived of on a different idea of what utopia might be, a utopia of difference. Standardisation—the Pax of compulsory schooling—is the apparent road to utopia which is designed to result in the pacification of the populace and will likely produce a type of educational "Reaver". What if, instead of a standardized or homogenized dystopic utopia, school

enacted a utopia of difference? What might that look like? How might that work? In our difference, might utopia be found?

Captain Obvious

Captain Obvious is an obvious story about the absurdity of education as a very slow (or no) moving system. This story harks back to my days of writing puppet play scripts for kids' camps that aim to make the reader (spectator) laugh and are ridiculously obvious. This format relies on the device of using a character to declare something that is self-evident. To make extra certain that the reader gets the obvious message, I have added the sidekick Clarification for a double whammy effect.

Dialogue is used in *Captain Obvious* to over-emphasize the intended message. I picture Captain Obvious and Clarification with the exaggerated movements of slapstick comedy with flourishes of their superhero capes and accompanying superhero poses that are as ineffective as the process of change they are initially confident of implementing.

Captain Obvious stems from a lack of belief that school systems can produce meaningful change. Instead, change appears to result in the perpetual replication of what we have always had (as discussed in Chapter 3, for example, in relation to the continued colonising practices of the compulsory school system). Government initiatives in education continue to give plenty of scope for a *Captain Obvious* series—*Captain Obvious and the Problem of AI, Captain Obvious and the Mandated use of Time, Captain Obvious and Clarification Structure Everything, Captain Obvious and the Problem of School Lunches*. *Captain Obvious* falls into what might be called 'dark humour', where it is intended that the reader will read the story with a chuckle and then a gulp.

Dead Zone

Dead Zone is the only story in the anthology that emerged from a direct suggestion by someone else: could I write a story in response to a provocation about an increase to traffic speeds around schools? The policy to increase traffic speeds was designed to boost economic productivity. Perhaps it would lead to the death of a child—a shocking and confronting commentary on the price of productivity and the ever-increasing demands for humans to move faster.

Dead Zone is one of those stories that Ursula Le Guin (2004) talks about as 'just appearing'. Possibly because I already had a vivid picture in my mind of the scene since I have spent years as a road patroller and as a teacher on road patrol duty. Perhaps it was the apparent power I held as the writer to ensure a child was not the victim of adult decisions, while still sustaining the tension of imminent danger. Or perhaps it was the alignment of the sun and stars that day. More likely, it was a combination of these aspects together with the fact that *Dead Zone* is one of the later stories written, where many of the writing processes and techniques that I once wrestled with had become more automagical. Whatever facilitated the ease of emergence, this story carries the writer's euphoria for me—the rare satisfaction of capturing an event in relatively few words while allowing the reader to feel its intensity. Test readers almost unanimously expressed relief that Annie is not killed, yet the lingering impact on all of the characters remained palpable.

The story explores the theme of time, with various experiences of the same time period leading up to the death. The hurry of the mum, the slow wander of Annie, and the repeating sequence of the road patrollers provide a stable cadence to the narrative. Then, the suspension of time as everything comes together where all three time-versions meet to devastating effect.

Dead Zone also explores the effects of a woman's experience of 'doing it all'. It is a gross generalisation, but there are often demands on women to carry an unequal share of domestic duties whilst engaged in fulltime work. The way in which many women work seems to be in response to some kind of social narrative that says that we (women) said that we can do it all so now we have to prove that we can, simultaneously. It is easy to imagine the multitude of tasks that Jane has had to accomplish to get Matt to school that morning while juggling the demands of John to get to the very important meeting which was scheduled without a thought of her needing to attend to care responsibilities. And although Jane's demise is caused through choices she makes, there is a question to be asked if she should ever have had to make those choices. For example, what if there had been a different time for the meeting that mitigated the rush, or a boss who did not call outside of working hours? There is much research and scholarship that has been done around the 'second shift' (Hochschild & Machung, 1997) worked by women in unpaid domestic labour. Although I have seen change in my lifetime, I still see many friends struggling to establish equitable division of labour within their households.

Ed

On the surface, *Ed* is a story of unexpected (re)connection and the blossoming of love. However, beneath the obvious romantic connection, *Ed* is an autobiographical metaphor for education detailing my early experiences with school and my unexpected love affair with education in middle age.

My account of my years in compulsory schooling, which contains a mixture of experiences, reinforced my belief that although I was good at some things at school, they were the things that didn't count. Over my school career I won the speech competitions, interschool cross country and swimming, took the solo at the Auckland Primary Principal's Association Choir Festivals at the town hall several years running, won the gold awards for Art, Cooking, Sewing, Woodwork, and Metalwork, and even made the Mathex Team one year because I was the kid who, even though I still didn't know my times tables, could solve problems. My adult eyes look back on this school career and see it as very successful. The child saw only failure in the things that were deemed important—specifically, my assessed performance in maths and literacy. It was not only my brain that was questioned in school, but also my body. Despite its excellent functioning in swimming and cross-country, being the redhead freckled child with ghostly pale skin and chunky thighs made for endless bullying and a strong desire to get away from myself. The specter of perceived failure casts a long shadow.

With this negative experience of compulsory schooling as my reality, it is perhaps ironic that I became a teacher. Why return to the site of degradation? I wanted to ensure my experience was not repeated for others. My goal was to champion creativity and diverse thinking, fostering supportive and inclusive classrooms where idea generation mattered more than tidy handwriting or perfect spelling. Yet, as a young teacher, I inadvertently got caught up in the teaching machine. Despite inspiration coming from critical pedagogues like Paulo Freire (1972) and Alison Jones (1991), I was trained in the way of lesson plans and assessment that prioritised what was easiest to measure. Reading levels, spelling lists, and times tables became tools to sort and rank children. Looking back, I feel embarrassed by how I replicated the harm I had endured. My teacher education was a means to an end, it was not love, not yet.

Years of teaching, marriage, and children followed. I then retrained as a Childbirth Educator—perhaps my first flutter of love, but ultimately just another means to an end. When my children

started school, I returned to school teaching, navigating the frustrations of middle management before leaving to work in a game studio. There, the possibility of love emerged as I pursued a Master of Educational Leadership. This qualification began with an invitation to reconsider all that I had taken for granted about education. In beginning the Master's programme, I had invited "Ed" over for dinner, welcomed him into my home, and realised that I never wanted him to leave.

When writing this story, I was interested in exploring the affective connection I had with education and the presence of strong emotions, such as love, shame, and trust. Initially set up as the antagonist, Ed shifts to Mika's love interest. Though skeptical of Ed's capacity to change, she cannot resist, falling for him over simple pleasures—walks on the beach, sharing good food, and conversation. The uses of everyday contexts and language, such as the use of text messaging conventions, were deliberate strategies for invoking the idea that dramatic transformation might occur in the mundane of everyday life.

Fresh Start

Fresh Start was one of the first four stories that I wrote for this doctoral project and has remained in the anthology through the iterative process. It emerged in response an interview question posed to candidates applying for the Graduate Diploma of Learning and Teaching at Massey University (Albany): "If you could wave a magic wand and fix Education (if you think it needs fixing), what would you do, and why?" Many candidates envisioned an education system where all students entered on an even playing field, identical, equal. *Fresh Start* explores the implications if such an impulse were to be realised.

After several rounds of re-working, the characters in *Fresh Start* became more defined with the intention that readers would have a tangible sense of loss as the characters journeyed through the portal. Truncated sentences help to both build anticipation of what is to come and reveal the horror of fully realised homogenisation. The taken-for-granted purpose/s of compulsory schooling is a theme of this story which lead to further engagement with Gert Biesta's (2013; 2022) philosophy and theory of subjectification as a purpose of education. Additionally, it led me to Rosi Braidotti's (2013, 2018) theorisation of posthuman subjectivity and her encouragement of all philosophers to have a theory of subjectivity. Both Biesta and Braidotti propose subjectivity as tied to uniqueness in the world where it is important that I am me and not someone else. Rather than treating individuals—

whether human or more-than-human—as interchangeable components of a system to yield predictable outcomes, we should engage with the infinite complexity of relationships.

Fresh Start has provoked interesting conversations about what it is that school is expected to do and at what cost this would be to our collective humanity. Additionally, conversations have arisen about the value of diversity in a system that appears to want particular standardised outcomes.

In the Margins

Books with softened spines draw me in to second-hand bookstores; they have a particular smell and heft. Dog eared pages and notes left in the margins, known as marginalia, make them more desirable. Marginalia—the practice of annotating in the margins—has been the subject of scholarly research since the 1700s and has recently gained interest in popular culture (Spedding & Tankard, 2021). Marginalia is theorised as the enactment of active engagement with a text, affecting both the writer of the notes and subsequent readers (McMullin, 2021).

In the Margins brought together the posthuman notion of 'thinking with' both human and more than human others (Barad, 2007; Braidotti, 2013; Haraway, 2016), an understanding that my thinking is never alone or in isolation from the thoughts that have gone before mine. Thoughts are both countless and in constant motion in the form of dust motes drifting through shafts of light in a second-hand bookstore. Further aspects of my thinking about time emerge in the narrative to consider how time might affect the structure of life differently in different locations (Kakkori, 2013).

The ending of the story is deliberately left unresolved and ambiguous to invite the reader to identify their own mysterious co-reader. When I wrote the story, I had in mind a confrontation with an alternate version of myself, but test readers have found characters as diverse as the suggested ghost of the old scholar to the appearance of their true love.

Just Breathe, It'll be Fine

Just Breathe, It'll be Fine responds to conversations with friends and colleagues who have faced barriers in both education and in their careers due to being othered through gender, disability, size, ethnicity, LGBTQ+ identity, economic disadvantage, or multiple intersecting factors. Despite their

very best efforts to do things the 'right way' together with the love and support of their family, they face both systemic barriers and barriers created by people working in the system.

The story invites the reader to step into the shoes of another, experiencing the frustration of repeatedly encountering barriers while striving to remain calm—knowing, from experience, that showing distress will only create further obstacles. There is no happy ending to this story. It is designed to leave the reader with a feeling of injustice and an invitation to examine the role that they may be playing in perpetuating such injustice.

The main character's internal monologue—'just breathe, it'll be fine'—initially seems to help ease her nerves. However, as she continues to encounter barriers, this mantra becomes an increasingly inadequate form of defence, exposing the limitations of individual resilience in the face of systemic obstacles. Audre Lorde's (2018) now well-known assertion that "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house" (p. 19) challenges Western patriarchal structures and calls for alternative ways of being. Lorde advocates for poetry, inclusive feminism, embodied knowledge, and the erotic, asserting that "for women, the need and desire to nurture each other is not pathological but redemptive, and it is within that knowledge that our real power is rediscovered" (p. 17). The main character finds a sense of nurturing in returning to her mother, suggesting that care and connection are essential forms of resistance. More broadly, there is a need for greater nurturing in a world shaped by a narrow archetype of humanity—one that must be expanded to embrace a more inclusive and relational way of being (Arendt, 1961b; Braidotti, 2013; 2020; Haraway, 2016).

Mable got a Papercut

Mable got a Papercut arose from a day I spent observing in a classroom. It didn't take long for me to fade into the classroom furniture to observe the interactions of the children. This story highlights the life of the child and the complexities they navigate each day at school; areas where they have agency, their relationships and how they affect the learning experience, and their possible inner monologue. When writing, I was reminded of how the adults are portrayed in the *Peanuts* comics and the Charlie Brown TV series (Schulz, 1950). You never hear what the adults say except for a "wha wha" trombone sound as the intention of the comic is to give a point of view from a child rather than children from an adult's point of view. *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 2017) positions children as "confident and competent learners from birth" (p. 12) and furthermore, where "[i]n Māori tradition children are

seen to be inherently competent, capable and rich, complete and gifted no matter what their age or ability" (p. 12). School discourse is often dominated by a tendency to pathologise children, viewing them through a deficit lens, as reflected in the frequent use of terms like 'below expectation', something which calls for stricter behaviour management, and the need for labels of underachievement. The use of such language is not reflective of the position statements about children as articulated in *Te Whāriki* (Ministry of Education, 2017). Although *Te Whāriki* is the *Early Childhood Curriculum*, its position statements form a foundation for education in Aotearoa New Zealand, recognising that children retain these traits when they enter compulsory schooling. However, experiences at school can strip children of their inherent confidence and competencies.

Much like *Dead Zone, Mable got a Papercut* is intended to provoke questions about the impact on children of the hurried lives of adults—what if Mable's mum had given her a plaster and a moment of sympathy? This story is also a commentary on Western clocktime, and how it structures and orders lives and interpersonal interactions with others. *Mable got a Papercut* juxtaposes the shifting hierarchical structures of children with the static and established hierarchical structures of the adult world, prompting contemplation of ideas about control and agency, which links the use of linear clocktime to the structuring of the school environment.

Pōhutukawa Park

Pōhutukawa Park is an example of creative practice, much like some of the material figurations described in Chapter 2, leading to thinking with theory. It emerged quickly from a very extended time thinking about and with the location. My relationship with this small park started as a five-year-old walking to and from school. Most days the park would go unnoticed, as it was just part of the background to everyday life. In fact, my friends and I were more interested in the giant marching power pylons which would make scary noises on foggy mornings and the motorway bridge that we needed to walk beneath whilst hearing the rush of traffic and feeling the vibrations of big trucks. The Pōhutukawa were much smaller then, like me.

Later in life, when I joined the rush of traffic over that motorway bridge, the park to the side became like a sentinel marking my coming and going from home and work. The Pōhutukawa clearly signalled the passing of seasons with the emergence of spectacular blooms heralding the beginning of summer. The side of the trees that faces the sun bloom first, then slowly but surely the rest of the

tree follows suit. Some trees bloom a full month before others, no matter their orientation to the sun. The flowers are mostly a variation of red, from orangey fire to deep crimson and then there is the rare yellow one, Puamataahu.

In 2024, 43 years after I had started walking past that small park on my way to school, I invited my daughter Oli to join me to capture some photos. I could have borrowed her camera and taken them myself, but I was interested in what she would photograph, how she might see the park and the trees. I told her that I would like to photograph the diversity of the Pōhutukawa in that small area and together we found many varied expressions of what it is to be Pōhutukawa. Once home, I printed the photos to consider what we had captured. Spread out on my dining room table, I began cropping some to create a tighter focus. One photo showed a bee collecting nectar from the Puamataahu—a detail that hadn't been noticed when the photo was originally taken.

I wanted to keep this picture book simple. Not simple in the sense that it would be less than other work, but simple in the sense of experiencing simple joy and wonder. Simply seeing something anew that is quite common place. Stopping to actually look at what most people race by when coming and going from home and work. There is beauty beside that fast moving (actually, often crawling) motorway that sits at the edge of one's vision. In the first iteration of this picture book, I focused on highlighting the unique and rare Puamataahu, or yellow Pōhutukawa. However, I soon realized that singling out one element in this way risked exoticising it, which in turn could unintentionally render other elements invisible or overlooked.

The development of this picture book has led to much thinking about inclusion in education and the enactment of normative practices. I wonder, if trees attended school, how long it would take for the Puamataahu to be altered to resemble the other trees, while those that bloomed early might be labelled as 'advanced' and those that bloomed later as 'behind'—despite the fact that a later-blooming Pōhutukawa tree extends the joy of summer in Aotearoa New Zealand. The idea that trees might be labelled this way is absurd, so too it should be absurd for children to be labelled in such ways.

Tapas

Tapas is a collection of short provocations/invitations to think, imagine, and discover. This collection of flash fiction emerged from a period of 'writers block' where all I had were half formed ideas and

random paragraphs. I compiled those half-formed ideas and random paragraphs into one document and sent them to my husband, lamenting that it was all I had, thinking that he might be able to inspire me to work on at least one of them. However, he responded saying that together they were like having tapas, lots of little interesting bits to think about. With this in mind, I read them with fresh eyes and saw that there was a kind of completeness in the incompleteness and in the lacunae, enabling the reader to do with the invitations what they would (Rath, 2012). Perhaps they might serve as a springboard for others' storytelling to inspire new ways of thinking about what has been previously unimagined. *Tapas* engages with themes of education, mental health, sustainability, feminism, and faith.

Micro-narratives are powerful forces that have an ability to shape individuals through what they say and often through what they do not say. Whilst considering the inclusion of these micro narratives or flash fiction in the anthology, I revisited my own primary school reports while writing Chapter 2. I found report comments that were the micro-narratives that had shaped my school experience and effected my identity and subjectivity in the world. Our lives are lived through layers of narrative; metaphysical layers or the stories we believe about the abstract, existential, or spiritual; macro layers or the stories we believe about cultural and political aspects of our lives; and micro layers or the stories that we tell and believe about ourselves, which are often told as snippets where what is unsaid is as important as what is said.

It is difficult to identify purposeful language conventions or a particular style used across the *Tapas* collection. Each was crafted with a start in mind but they never got to the point where the inertia of fiction writing kept them moving. When I return to them, I can feel the frustration of wanting each one to be part of a bigger story, but I am also content that they can stand on their own. They remain an open invitation. What is hinted at in many of these *Tapas* is the ineffable, that which cannot be captured.

Taught by the Wind

Taught by the Wind started its life as *Teaching with the Wind.* The first iteration was written in response to a politician who claimed a structured syllabus was necessary to prevent teachers from simply gauging the wind each day to decide what to teach. The resulting story fell into the category of 'too obvious' and I was challenged to write it again, but this time without school as the setting. I

found that particular challenge hard, almost impossible, until one day while I was writing Chapter 4 and thinking about Tāwhirimātea and how wind time might manifest in compulsory schooling, when I imagined being with the wind through my day. What would Wind teach me and how would I respond to Wind? The story now seeks to pick up the variation of pace across the day with periods of high intensity and becalming. The aim is to encourage readers to reflect on their own natural rhythm and pace throughout the day, offering an alternative way of living that consciously resists the relentless pressure of modern society that seeks to maintain a constant, fast-paced lifestyle. Words are intentionally chosen to establish an intimacy between the protagonist and Wind where, in places, she tries to actively ignore the demands of Wind. Although she chooses to block out Wind during various stages of the day, she is attuned to the effects of Wind's discontinuous motion.

Taught by the Wind connects closely to the discussion of Western clocktime in Chapter 4. It aided my thinking about the arbitrary structuring of school days around this system and led me to consider how resisting that structure might invite greater freedom in how people move through the school day.

The Dragon and the Monkey

The Dragon and the Monkey explores the importance of being authentic to oneself and notions of what it means to fit into education. The character of Monkey is there to help the Dragon to remember who she is rather than trying to be someone she is not. At the time of writing, this was also a reflection on Rancière's (1991) *The Ignorant Schoolmaster*, which facilitated my exploring the idea that the role of the student is not to discover what the teacher knows, but rather to uncover what they themselves do not yet know. In the case of the Dragon, their learning is coming to know of themselves as part of a diverse community. The final scene depicts an enactment of this community where difference is normal, expected, and embraced.

Although *The Dragon and the Monkey* is written in the style of a traditional type of fairy tale, some of the language choices make it a fairy tale for adults only. Through the use of such language, the story is designed to evoke a playful and irreverent interaction with concepts that are experienced in serious ways such as identity, subjectivity, and self-confidence. As in *Ed,* exploration of emotions connected to education was of interest when writing this story. In particular, the effect that fear has on the choices that people make in life, especially in education. This story highlights the importance

of having trusted allies who have previously navigated the territory that you might want to enter. Their support can be instrumental in fostering the confidence that is needed to undertake something new and initially quite daunting.

The Odd Tūī

The Odd Tūī is a story of difference and in/exclusion. Inspired by a very real Tūī who inhabited the trees around my house and would sing at 3.30am. It was so unusual to hear the call of the Ruru and the Tūī at the same time (Ruru being nocturnal and the Tūī diurnal). Lying awake at 3:30 a.m., listening to the call of the Tūī, prompted me to reflect on what it means to be an 'odd' bird and how this parallels the experiences of those labelled as odd for defying normative expectations

The antagonists of this story were deliberately chosen as common garden variety birds. Reflecting the sort of people who can make life difficult and unpleasant for those who are different. I also thought about the colonisation of Aotearoa and the expectation that Māori would be assimilated into colonised ways of living (as discussed in Chapter 3). For this reason, all of the birds that Tūī encounters at night are native species who articulate their difference with good humour and a sense of solidarity and community.

The genre of *The Odd Tūī* is a children's story that can be used with children of all ages. My daughter (who is odd and appreciates the use of that particular word) did the illustrations. They give a shape to the story but also invite the reader to fill in the visual gaps.

Three on a Bench

Three on a Bench was partly written in response to a provocation about citational practices prompting a reflection on the wisdom and philosophy embedded in women's uncaptured and uncitable conversations. It also engages with the need to decentre Western knowledge systems in colonial schooling (Milne, 2016; Walker, 2016) in favour of a more expansive and inclusive epistemology.

One thing I quickly learned when I re-entered tertiary education was that wisdom is not acceptable unless reified through the act of article publication. However, much wisdom, often women's wisdom and knowing (and that of other marginalised groups) has not been captured in peer reviewed

publications and therefore does not feature in mainstream academic discourse. As articulated in Chapter 2, I read Karen Barad's (2007) *Meeting the Universe Halfway* multiple times to legitimise wisdom passed to me through many years in church—much like other's wisdom is built up in communal activity such as through oral traditions on the Marae and conversations had whilst constructing tīvaevae. The Anglican liturgy meditates on the connectedness of creation after which we participate in communion together. The material substance of bread and wine connects people spiritually together with all of creation. This is a weekly ritual that affirms the seen and unseen connections in all of creation that has formed the basis of my felt knowing (Lorde, 2018) of what I can now call 'agential realism' (Barad, 2007) or 'worldedness' (Mika, 2017). I am thankful to both Karen Barad and Carl Mika for the extensive theorising they have done with these concepts, and I am also thankful to the many cuppa-tea conversations that I have had that explore the lived experience of infinite connectedness (Carse, 1986).

Three on a Bench is set at the dawn of a new day, what I consider an eddy in time where the liminal spaces of dawn and dusk hold neither the demands of the day nor the requirements of night. There is a certain freedom in these liminal spaces captured in the dancing on the beach of one woman and their somewhat irreverent conversation that follows. No identifiers are used as the conversation never belongs to one person. I am often left wondering who said what or who might have come up with an idea but it actually doesn't matter as it's the phenomenon of that particular conversation, participants, and environment where that thought can be thought that matters (Haraway, 2019)—the enactment of agential realism (Barad, 2007) as a feminist practice.

Additionally, *Three on a Bench* touches on the idea of waiting for something in time—the women have to pack up and leave at a certain time, and they agree on another moment in time to meet again. I imagine the three women exiting from their small time eddy and resuming the normal flow of linear clocktime with more joy from their break together. I return again to the writing of Audre Lorde who advocates for women's ways of thinking and being together. "For women, the need and desire to nurture each other is not pathological but redemptive, and it is within that knowledge that our real power is rediscovered" (Lorde, 2018, p. 17).

Tomorrow's Problem

Tomorrow's Problem is a story that plays with ecological and sustainability issues along with the idea of the passing of time, and how it can structure and influence lived experience (Kakkori, 2013). It is an invitation to consider both the pace and price of life. Additionally, this story goes beyond words to experiment with the visual effect of layout. The first paragraph belongs to the whole story and spans the page. It then divides into two uneven columns, with an account of unsustainable, damaging practices dominating the space—mirroring the environmental impact of Western consumer choices (Irwin, 2008). The larger section is designed to evoke the feeling of demand for linear progress as discussed in Chapter 4, where perpetual potential is something that may never be met (Gibbons, 2015; Hope, 2016; Reid & Sieber, 2016). The smaller section is an engagement with what I have theorised in Chapter 4 as 'wind time', a decolonised time that is invitational, acknowledging the past as present and future (Le Grange & Mika, 2018; Mika, 2017; Shotwell, 2016).

The common idiom 'that's tomorrow's problem' is used to consider the many problems that tomorrow is going to need to deal with. Time is the enemy of environmental sustainability (Haraway, 2016; Irwin, 2008; Shotwell, 2016), it is an urgent matter that needs to be addressed today, not tomorrow. This story was written in response to reading Biesta's *World-centred Education: A view for the present* (2022) and the notion that education should be concerned with the needs and wants of the world, not the individual or community. Many theorists view education as essential for raising awareness of the challenges of tomorrow and for finding solutions to those challenges before there is no tomorrow (Gouthro, 2019; Haraway, 2016; Irwin, 2008).

Twitter Feature Request

The *Twitter Feature Request* script emerged from the frustrations my friends and I have experienced working in self-replicating industries from IT development to tertiary education. We are tired of fighting for inclusion but we also know that, as white women, it is our ethical responsibility and desire to continue to fight for inclusion for all people. Audre Lorde (2018) critiques white women academics who focus solely on achieving their own inclusion while neglecting the broader struggles faced by women of colour, disabled women, and others experiencing various forms of oppression. Lorde emphasises the importance of addressing these intersecting issues to unlock the vast reserves of knowledge and wisdom necessary for the collective flourishing of all. When everyone is represented,

there is less likelihood of mindlessly replicating existing patterns, and instead, a greater opportunity to generate innovative and diverse solutions to perceived problems.

> Women of today are still being called upon to stretch across the gap of male ignorance and to educate men as to our existence and our needs. This is an old and primary tool of all oppressors to keep the oppressed occupied with the master's concerns. Now we hear that it is the task of women of colour to educate white women—in the face of tremendous resistance—as to our existence, our differences, our relative roles in our joint survival. This is a diversion of energies and a tragic repetition of racist patriarchal thought. (Lorde, 2018, pp. 19-20)

The *Twitter Feature Request* script illustrates how small shifts can lead to flourishing, both for those excluded from male dominated spaces and for those who have been subsumed into those spaces and have never known alternatives. Inclusion does not have to be at the expense of one group. Inclusion is about recognising and celebrating difference as a strength, not as something to fear (Lorde, 2018).

The script deliberately incorporates a significant amount of IT technical design jargon to evoke feelings of frustration and exclusion in the audience. With each successive scene, the language gradually builds upon itself, and as the workforce depicted becomes more diverse, the reader or viewer is meant to begin to understand more of the technical terms. This progression fosters a sense of their own inclusion in the narrative.

Additionally, the *Twitter Feature Request* script speaks back to the narrative, communicating that the implementation of diversity and inclusion somehow makes more work for people, or takes longer to navigate, or in some way will negatively impact the dominant group. The script is intended to show that there might be greater satisfaction in working in an environment where difference is celebrated as a strength.

When the Bell Rings

When the Bell Rings, is an exploration of how time is constructed in 'traditional' schooling and where learning might be located within that construction of time. The story paints a picture of interactions which the reader may assume is a classroom, only to find out that it is lunchtime and the children have been going about learning in their own time. There is a deliberate use of the language of children to paint a picture of their interactions which oscillate between serious work and

relationality, another disruption to the linear and consistent flow of time expected in a 'work day', as theorised in Chapter 4.

When the Bell Rings touches on the policing of children's bodies within the structure of the school day. The example used being when they are allowed to go to the toilet and what is then done with that time as an act of resistance.

Additionally, the complicit ignorance of adults is highlighted, intimating that perhaps the children might know better. Read alongside *Taught by the Wind,* I can imagine Sarah, the main character, flourishing on wind time. She would be able to dance through a day at a varied pace rather than having to march to the cadence of the ticking clock.

When the Light is Just Right

When the Light is Just Right is a story of the liminal and transitional space of birth and death. It draws on the experience of attending a home birth and attending to the death of my Nanny.

The birth was the fifth child of this family, a home birth in the midst of Covid-19 pandemic restrictions. I had special permission to attend with a requirement for strict quarantine the weeks preceding the birth. It was beautiful. Strong women together surrounded by family. The other kids came and went whilst the newest member of their family transitioned into the living world. In the early hours of labour, we baked and ate and drank and laughed. As it progressed, we slowly entered into the sacred and what was to come, breathing, swaying, warming, sighing. Birth support is more than physiological support, it is holding the liminal space for a birthing parent and baby. It is prayer. It is breathing. A decentering of oneself to be in sacred community with others.

Attending the death of my Nanny was the other side of the transition coin. As written about in Chapter 2 Death's Visitation #1, Nanny's death had a profound influence on me becoming a writer. This experience also helped me to tie the life process from birth to death together. To see and experience similar transition and liminal spaces in how one moves into the world and then out of it. Even though Nanny's breath is gone, I am keenly aware that she lives on in me, my children, and in generations to come.

When the Light is Just Right is a thought experiment about what defines us as human and alive. A consideration of liminality where existence is and is not at the same time, an example of space~time~mattering (Barad, 2007) or space and mattering outside of time. I am interested in exploring other liminal spaces and the creative potential that emerges when stepping outside of everyday habitual thinking. Instead of adhering to conventional ways of knowing, I consider the possibilities of the 'not yet'—a space of becoming that resists binary, normative structures such as the rigid distinctions between dead and alive.

The Artefact

Like each of the stories in the anthology and the exegesis, the development of the artefact has been through many iterations. Initially, I had a strong vision for the artefact to be housed in a beautiful hard covered book. A tangible manifestation of the work that itself is a story: the story of my daughter, Oli, who designed the cover art after being told in secondary school that she was too intelligent to take art; and the story of Becky, the paper maker, who shared her thoughts about her experience of school as she taught me how to make paper; and my story of learning how to make and bind books. These stories will not be lost, they will live in the one hard cover version that will be produced. However, I realised that I would need something more dynamic and accessible in which the artefact could be housed. For this reason, I decided on a website.

As articulated in Chapter 1, this doctoral project seeks to provide invitational spaces for teachers to deeply consider enduring narratives of education, and how they might re-define their work philosophically to move towards a school system that provides a place for all to flourish. Where the cost and accessibility of a physical book may limit possible engagement with the stories by a wide audience, a website has a great reach with accessibility options available such as audio versions of the stories. The website is also able to cater to the various layouts of the stories such as the picture book *Pōhutukawa Park* and the story telling aspects of the visual layout of *Deadzone.* Additionally, a website can be added to relatively easily as new stories emerge. After sharing a reading at a conference, many people asked how they might get a copy of the story to share. This affirmed that an accessible option, where the stories could be shared widely through the use of ubiquitous technology, might support the potential impact of the work.

Currently, the artefact is better viewed on a larger screen. This is not ideal when many people only have access to mobile technology and this is something to consider as the website develops further. However, the stories that do not have specific layout requirements do render well on a mobile screen. As an ongoing development project, I intend to record the stories and make the audio files available with each of the stories. I will also include image descriptions to enable accessibility for those using screen readers and other assistive technologies.

Although there are some costs associated with websites such as purchasing and maintaining a domain name, web hosting, and development, these costs are significantly less than publishing a book. This minimal cost ensures that the stories do not 'owe' me anything, so their monetisation is not required. It is a privilege that I am able to set them free in the world for free, never under the burden of stories having to pay for themselves in some material way. Once this doctoral project is complete, the password will be removed, allowing the stories to reach a broad audience through the power of digital networks.

Chapter 6: Conclusion

Concluding Story

The screen is a checkerboard of faces. Attentive eyes with relaxed smiles and the slack jaw blank stare of email replies. There are arms extended where the occasional smirk reveals their participation in some side chat, perhaps about the meeting but more likely a discussion of weekend plans or a bit of naughty repartee in another time and space. Safe enough to drift, just running down the clock to the completion of the hour.

But then.
All heads swivel as bodies pull back from their cameras.
Slack jaws tighten.
Relaxed smiles turn to rictus.
The smirkers wonder what just happened, arms falling away from their side chat conversations.
If they were all in a real room, there would have been an audible intake of their collective breath. Although, if they were all in a real room, the comment would not have been made. But it had. Out there now. Hanging in virtual space.

One person leans in, relaxed smile wider than it had been, belying the butterflies in her stomach. In the space of a heartbeat, she gathers her thoughts. Thoughts that had previously slipped from articulation. She had never imagined she might be able to invite conversation and questioning of such a comment. And as she starts to speak, Tāwhirimātea begins to blow through the virtual collective—a hurricane for some, for others a hot drying force. The words of the comment are caressed into calm, settled, the truth-myth of them evident. She steps back as Tāwhirimātea sweeps up the words and together they reform them into life giving phrases and questions.

The hour is up. Tāwhirimātea comes to a calming conclusion … the promise of further wind shifts for our collective remain. Swirling eddies of thought, calm consideration, the hot wind of anger, cool ambivalence, and those who choose to hide from the effects of the wind—for now.

The checkerboard faces wink out of existence until only three remain with Tāwhirimātea poised to return. The Zoom voice announces, “Recording stopped,” and with that, Tāwhirimātea blows a chilling wind through her soul …
“Oh my gosh, it’s all recorded!”
“But you did so well.”
“You made it seem effortless.”
“I was terrified.”
“It was a masterclass.”

Tāwhirimātea gusts, buffeting her inner narrative to consider her previously unimagined ways of being in the world. Ways to speak of the world and human interactions. Ways to imagine being in the world differently. How School might invite participation in a world that will sustain the flourishing of all humans alongside more-than-human partners.
To do this not through nihilistic despair,
but through story.

During this doctoral project, I have spent a lot of time imagining school through writing short stories. This *Concluding Story* is a representation of the way in which I can now tell original stories to invite previously unimagined ways to engage with enduring narratives of education in Aotearoa New Zealand today.

Concluding Story is a story crafted from my study of narrative theory and short story writing. In 428 words, the story weaves together threads of educational theory and philosophy that I have been working with in the exegesis. Rather than dictating a singular narrative, *Concluding Story* leaves invitational lacunae for the reader—an invitation to participate in the construction and deconstruction of the text to align with the story collection which they hold as part of themselves.

In the Zoom meeting that inspired this story, a colonising narrative was put forward—specifically the claim that colonisation had benefited Māori and that, as a result, Pākehā are now disadvantaged because Māori receive advantages within the current system. Before embarking on this doctoral project, I, too, would have been one of the participants who pulled away from engaging with such comments, whereas now I see them as an opportunity for connection. Not only do I know much more about the history of compulsory schooling in Aotearoa New Zealand, but now I can construct invitational stories that invite connection, questioning, and conversation.

Looking back

When I first started this doctoral project, the palm tree outside the window of my newly constructed office cabin did not reach the top of the fence. Now it has grown well beyond the fence, its leaves pushing between the fence palings. Once a year the bottlebrush behind it and the bush lilies beneath it explode in riotous colour bringing tūī and bees, and this year there have been many little tauhou feasting on the insects. With its growth, it has developed a lovely swooshing kind of sound. It has nurtured the lifespan of many spiders and there are copper skinks that appear occasionally, moving at speed through the branches. I have sat at this window (and others) reading~thinking~writing~thinking~reading~writing~thriting … surrounded by Nature, books, piles of notes, material figurations, printed annotated articles, multiple drafts of my stories and tomes from others, as well as the detritus found in any office. Much like this doctoral project, or any substantial piece of work, it is hard to see change day to day, but over time, there is flourishing.

Figure 6

Then

Photo of the view from my office window as construction was completed.

Figure 7

Now

Photo of the view from my office window as the PhD was completed.

During this time of slow seasonal growth, I have learned to die, metaphorically, to my desires as a writer. When once I was anxious to ensure that the message of the stories was clear, now I am excited by the unknown lines of flight that readers might take with the stories of the anthology. What I have revealed in the exegesis are my own lines of flight to the previously unimagined.

At the beginning of this project, I had in mind enduring narratives of education that sit obviously on the surface of educational discourse such as hierarchical structures of control, winning and losing (winners and losers), and the 'truth' of meritocracy. However, this project has never been about dwelling with the obvious (despite my propensity for it), it has been about the liminal spaces—beyond, behind, between, and beneath the obvious. What might be seen by parting the outside layer of hyperbolic folds to examine what has been hidden?

When parting the outside layer of hyperbolic folds, one can see what is beneath the surface is intimately connected and shifting. In the same way, the ideas that I have engaged with in this exegesis, although presented in a linear way, remain connected, shifting, and contingent on one another and on the anthology of short stories. I have chosen to explore concepts that have emerged repeatedly as I have been reading and writing; the on-going colonising force of school, the concept of time in education, and the critique of simple silver bullet solutions. The exploration recognises that school is always already historically located, contextual, and political—imagined as

hyperbolically folded into the complexities of society in Aotearoa New Zealand, which is folded into a larger global context.

The short story format was chosen at the inception of this project as its potential is recognised as a tool of the marginalised that can be used to invite exploration of different realities. Although many forms of writing employ the use of metaphor and poetics, the short story relies on metaphor and poetics to condense the story telling process. Specifically, the short story format lends itself well to the exploration of the hidden depths of education through the creation of 'taking off points' for the lines of flight that a reader might take from a well-crafted piece of fictional writing.

So What?

In Chapter 1: Introduction, I defined an aspirational goal for this research:

> … rather than producing another piece of work that tells of a school system that is not effectively serving all who work within it or producing another programme that is touted as the silver bullet for education, this doctoral project seeks to provide invitational spaces for teachers to deeply consider the enduring narratives of education, and how they might philosophically re-define their work to move towards a school system that provides a place for all to flourish.

I wanted to offer something that others might find useful and be able to use freely.

The whakataukī (Māori proverbial saying) 'He waka eke noa' has been recruited into the discourse of the Ministry of Education in Aotearoa New Zealand and is now commonly translated in institutional and governmental settings as 'we are all in this boat together'. It has been used to engender community cohesion and to encourage (some may say coerce) people to be 'on the same page' and 'paddle in the same direction'. However, this pearl of Māori wisdom actually "underlines the fact of community ownership. If someone built a canoe everyone felt free to use it" (Mead & Grove, 2001, p. 136). This whakataukī is not about everyone being in the same boat, rather it invites all to use the boat that has been built for the community. For the purposes of this doctoral project, the waka in the invitation 'He waka eke noa' is a waka built with story and theory, left on the shore for anyone in the community to pick up and use, without restriction.

He waka eke noa

(A canoe for anyone to use without restriction)

As expressed in Chapter 1, the stories in the anthology are written for teachers—those officially in the profession, and those in the liminal spaces of teaching, who are often unacknowledged and either unpaid or under-paid for their work teaching children and young people. The stories are a waka to journey to previously unimagined places where they might be free to challenge their assumptions, as I have done—to think with story, and theory, and each other.

Elizabeth St. Pierre and Wanda Pillow (2000) consider working in the ruins of humanist research to find alternative ways to inquire into education. The commitment might equally be applied to working in the ruins of colonisation and patriarchal norms of school in Aotearoa New Zealand. They argue/explain/celebrate/reveal/etc., that, rather "than finding despair, paralysis, nihilism, apoliticism, irresponsibility, or immorality in the decay and devastation of the ruins … feminists [find] possibilities for different worlds that might, perhaps, not be so cruel to so many people" (p. 1). I have suggested stories as the method by which possibilities of previously unimagined schools might emerge that are perhaps not so cruel to so many people.

Looking ahead

To assume that this research will resonate with everyone would contradict my efforts to emphasize the need for diverse ways of thinking. Diversity in thinking is essential for resisting life becoming an atonal dirge. However, for those who take up the invitation of 'he waka eke noa', the research remains active. What new stories might emerge—ones that abandon the hero narrative in favour of communal seasonal foraging?

Although there is an invitation for all to participate in this on-going project, there will be those who may find the openness and experimental nature confronting and choose not to take up the invitation. This is a limitation that comes with a commitment to enacting relational ways of freedom. Even if the invitation is ignored or actively rejected, it will remain open for all to use the stories and exegesis without restriction to take possible lines of flight to the previously unimagined.

This morning, the dawn light caught on a brand-new spider's web in the palm tree. It felt like serendipitous timing as I returned to complete this conclusion, a reminder that although this project is drawing to a close, I will continue to spin story webs and think with theory and materiality. Now, after another day has breezed by, the afternoon sun streams through my office

window, casting playful patterns that dance across the walls and catch in the facets of my Nanny's crystal, diffracting tiny prisms of colour around me. I find myself thinking about the impossibility of choosing a final sentence. There is the classic storybook ending: 'and they lived happily ever after'. Or the easy resolution: 'and then they woke up'. But there will never be a final sentence for this work, because as dusk fades into gloaming and the work is paused for the night, the dawn will return, and the work will continue …

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Glossary

Below is a list of te reo Māori words used in the exegesis. Translation of words from one language to another is contentious. In te reo Māori, one of the main issues with attempting direct translation is that many words and concepts are contingent on one another. Therefore, rather than an authoritative translation, I have provided the meaning as used in this text. Many of these words are used in everyday conversation in Aotearoa New Zealand and for others I used Te Aka: Māori Dictionary https://maoridictionary.co.nz/ to support the crafting of the meanings.

Word	**Meaning**
Ākonga	Student
Atua	Deity / primal force
Kaiako	Teacher
Kaumātua	A person of status within the community
Kete	Basket
Ko wai au?	Who do I belong to?
Kōhanga Reo	Kaupapa Māori early childhood education
Kura Kaupapa Māori	Immersion Māori primary school run by Māori, for Māori
Manaakitanga	Hospitality, kindness, generosity, support – the process of showing respect, generosity and care for others
Marae	Meeting or gathering place
Mātauranga Māori	Māori knowledge system
Motu	Used once in this text to mean 'around the country'. It can also mean; island, country, land—anything separated or isolated. As a verb it means to cut or separate.
Pākehā	Non-indigenous settler/coloniser of Aotearoa, New Zealand
Pepeha	A traditional Māori introduction that connects the speaker to the land and other people.
Pipi	A small shellfish
Pono	Be true, valid, honest, genuine, sincere
Rōpū	Group
Tamariki	Children
Tangata o te tiriti	People of the treaty
Tangata whenua	Traditional landowners / hosts
Taonga	Things of value
Tāwhirimātea	The Māori atua (deity) of the weather including wind
Te ao Māori	Māori world/worldview
Te Kore	the nothingness before there is something. Nothingness that holds the potential of everything.
Te reo Māori	The Māori language
Te Tiriti o Waitangi/the Treaty of Waitangi	'Te Tiriti o Waitangi' is the version of the treaty which is in the Māori language whereas the 'Treaty of Waitangi' refers to the English version. Both versions have significant differences when it comes to sovereignty and what this means for the on-going governing of Aotearoa New Zealand. Making the distinction is important as 'Te Tiriti o Waitangi' is the document signed by the majority of signatories while the 'Treaty of Waitangi' is the document

	historically used to enforce the treaty between Māori and the Crown. As the Crown drafted the treaty, the 'contra preferendum' principle should be enacted whereby the version in the less powerful language takes precedence
Tēnā koe	Greetings to one person
Tikanga Māori	Māori ways and traditions – comes from tika – culturally correct
Wānanga	In the context of the text this refers to Kaupapa Māori tertiary education
Whaea	An honorific that is sometimes used for teachers who are women. The translation is mother and/or aunty.
Whakamana	To give authority to, prestige, to confirm, enable, empower
Whakataukī	Proverb, significant saying
Whānau	Family—includes extended family and people who one has kinship with
Whanaungatanga	Relationship, kinship, sense of family belonging – a relationship through shared experiences and working together which provides people with a sense of belonging. It develops as a result of kinship rights and obligations, which serve to strengthen each member of the kin group. It also extends to others with whom one develops a close familial friendship of reciprocal relationship.
Whare	House/Building
Wharekura	Kaupapa Māori secondary school

Appendix 1

Timeline of Education in Aotearoa New Zealand with Related Events

While initially the timeline was designed only to help my thinking, it has since been used in many contexts and has been added to by many minds. In particular, I want to thank the Massey University Albany on-campus kaiako pitomata (pre-service teachers) of 2023, who serendipitously saw the timeline in progress, found it useful to their own thinking about education in Aotearoa New Zealand, and added to its development.

Left column: Key events and policy development in education in Aotearoa New Zealand.
Centre column: Changes in the governing political party/parties using colours that represent each party.
Right column: Key social/historical events in Aotearoa New Zealand and across the world.

		1800 Prior to 1800, Abel Tasman reached New Zealand in 1642 and James Cook in 1769. The contact between settlers and tangata whenua was slow at first with whalers and sealers the most common point of contact. Contact increased with the coming of missionaries.
		1804 Haitian revolution ends, Haiti becomes the first post-colonial Black republic.
		1810
		1814 Anglican missionary Samuel Marsden arrives in the Bay of Islands, New Zealand, specifically at Rangihoua Bay, adding to the charting of the area.
1816 Rangihoua – Anglican missionaries open first British-style school, taught by Thomas Kendall. Both Māori and Pākeha children could attend.		
1818 First school closes due to inconsistent attendance said to be due to the lack of food provided.		

1st Industrial Revolution

		1820
1822 Methodist Missionaries arrive and establish schools.		
1830s Numerous schools in existence attached to mission stations.		**1830**
		1833 Slavery Abolition Act in the British Empire
		1835 He Whakaputanga o te Rangatiratanga o Nu Tireni – known in English as the Declaration of Independence of the United Tribes of New Zealand.
1838 Catholic Missionaries arrive and establish schools.		
		1840 Te Tiriti o Waitangi was written and signed.
		1843 Twenty-two Pākehā and 4 Māori die when a land dispute between Ngāti Toa and Nelson settlers turns violent at Wairau.
1847 Education Ordinance – Governor Grey enacted to support existing mission schools.		**1846 –** Fighting near Wellington as Ngāti Toa resist expansion of settlement.
		1850

1852 Constitution Act – 6 provinces given responsibility for education in New Zealand.		**1852** NZ Gold rush begins in Coromandel area.
1856 First state secondary school opens in Nelson (for Boys).		**1856** First Premier Elected – no political parties until 1891.
1858 Native Schools Act: establishes state funded European schools for Māori children who had to attend as boarders to ensure assimilation.		**1858 –** Coronation of Māori King symbolises opposition to further land sales.
		1860 Peak of the Otago Gold Rush with increased immigration (27000 in 1851 to 98000 in 1861). **1860–1** First Taranaki War ends in stalemate between government and local iwi.
1862 Otago is the first province to initiate formal teacher training, importing the programme used in England.		**1863** Suppression of Rebellion Act enables confiscation of land of 'rebel' Māori. **1863–4** Waikato War – Kīngitanga forces expelled from lower/mid-Waikato and Tauranga.
		1865 – America abolishes slavery (33 years after Britain).
1867 – Native Schools Act: again to teach Māori European ways and knowledge establishing cultural superiority.		**1865, 1866** Campaigns in south Taranaki by imperial troops.
		1869 Completion of the Suez Canal, transforming global trade routes.
1871 First girls secondary school opens.		**1870**
1876 Dunedin Teachers Training College followed by Christchurch in 1877 – mainly school-based training. **1877** Education Act passed into law making school free, secular, and compulsory for Pākehā children. Māori could attend. Establishment of Department of Education and 12 regional education boards and committies to run schools. Children were examined to move up classes, results often published in local papers with failures publicly humiliated.		
1880 Native Schools Code: native schools transferred to department of Education from native department. The goal of assimilation remains. Wellington Teachers Training College established followed by Auckland in 1881 still mainly school-based training.		**1880** **1881** Māori autonomy in south Taranaki ends with settler occupation of Parihaka.
1883 Establishment of the New Zealand Educational Institute (NZEI) the union for Primary Teachers.		

1st Industrial Revolution

2nd Industrial Revolution

		1886 Tarawera eruption killing approximately 120 people with the destruction of several villages and the famous Pink and White Terraces.
1889 First public kindergarten in Dunedin opens based on the ideas of Froebel. Early kindergartens were established for the care of waifs and strays.		
		1890 **1891** Liberal – a democratic party representing workers and small farming operations. Responsible for women's suffrage and pensions. They also passed the Tohunga Suppression Act replacing tohunga as traditional Māori healers with Western Medicine. **1893** Women's Suffrage.
1892 School and schooling were improved under the Liberal government through such things as financial support, better school funding, teacher pay and transport assistance.		
1894 Primary education made compulsory for Māori.		
		1898 Hokianga Māori assert rights in 'Dog Tax Rebellion' and Old Age Pensions Act established.
1899 George Hogbern, head of DoE believed that "moral purpose should dominate the spirit of the whole school life! Schools and teachers were to shape children into productive, moral and healthy citizens prepared to serve their country in peace and war". Inspecters awarded children with Competency and Proficiency to continue to high school.		**1900**
1903 Royal Commission into the training of teachers with a focus on centralising control of teacher education away from pupil-teachers into the institutions.		
1905 Establishment of a national system of teacher training. **1905 – 1912** To progress to senior secondary education students sat the junior civil service examination.		
1907 First school journal published to encourage patriotism, self-sacrifice, and obedience.		**1907** New Zealand becomes a dominion (from a colony).
1909 Defence Act made military training compulsory for nearly all boys when they turned 12.		
		1910
1912 School leaving age raised to 14, Education Act 1914 made it compulsory for public secondary schools to take free-place pupils. **1913** PE training for teachers which led to compulsory PE from 1914.		**1912 –** Reform: anti trade union.
1914 – Education Amendment Act abolishes school fees and provides free primary education.		**1914** WW1 Begins. First commercial flight considered the start of commercial aviation and the global commercial aviation industry.

2nd Industrial Revolution

World War 1

1917 – All students in district high schools had to study agricultural and dairy science.		**1916** Arrest of Rua Kēnana at Maungapōhatu ends Tūhoe autonomy in Urewera.
		1918 WW1 Ends. Spanish Flu pandemic. Around 9,000 New Zealanders died, with Māori communities suffering disproportionately high death rates (approximately eight times higher than Pākehā).
1920 Teacher Training regulations increased and Colleges were given exclusive rights of certification of teachers. **1921** Once a week flag salute made complusory.		**1920** Mobile dental clinics repurposed from war ambulances. **1920** Immigration Restriction Act – White New Zealand Policy. Immigrants had to be able to write in a European Language.
1922 Correspondence School founded (and still going) and Intermediate Schools (Years 7 and 8) were trialled.		
1924 Intellegence tests arrive in NZ schools imported from USA.		
1929 During the depression all teacher training colleges were closed for varying periods due to lack of funds. **1929** The curriculum specified woodwork for boys and home craft for girls (it was not until 1970s that there was cross over).		**1928** United: remnants of the Liberal Party. **1929** The Great Depression – the government was completely unprepared.
		1930 **1931** Hawke's Bay Earthquake kills 256.
1932 Probationary school experience for aspiring teachers (now only 1 year, down from 4) was abolished.		**1932** First successful controlled experiment to split the atom.
1935 All colleges of education reopened under the labour government.		**1935** Labour
1936 Proficieny Examination abolished. **1937** Free milk in schools (until 1967) and Education Fellowship Conference – a turning point for New Zealand Education.		
		1938 Social Security Act formed – the beginning of the modern welfare state **1939** The Great Depression Lifts but WW2 begins: Nazis, genocide, atomic bombs used. War progresses technology including missiles which then launch the space race and development of electronic computing.
1942 Introduction of the core secondary curriculum removing some gender distinctions and difference between types of secondary schools.		
1944 School leaving age raised to 15 over fears of juvenile deliquencyand the Mason Report on the state of education. "I would not pretend that a period of two years in training college and one year as a probationary assistant is sufficient to fit teachers to meet all the demands of the modern primary school" (p. 67).		**1945** WW2 ends with atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, ushering in the nuclear age. The United Nations is established.
1947 Education Act extends free secondary education for all children.		**1947** Cold War – there is an increased focus on Science and Technology in schools. Shift from production to knowledge capital. New Zealand becomes a parlimentary democracy.

World War 1

The Great Depression

World War 2

2nd Industrial Revolution

		1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. **1949** National Government.
1950 - 60s The Secondary School population grows significantly, fueled by the postwar baby boomers and less barriers to access.		**1950** Start of the civil right movements. **1951** Space Race starts in earnest.
		1953 Sir Edmund Hilary climbs Mount Everest, Queen Elizabeth's coronation, Tangiwai railway disaster.
		1957 Labour and first successful satellite launch (USSR).
1959 Parry Report into teacher education urging amalgamation between colleges and universities.		
1961 Hunn Report: acknowledges failure of education for Māori.		**1960** National and first NZ TV broadcast. **1961** First human in space (USSR).
1962 Zoning introduced which aims to ensure children attend their local school and the Currie Report into teacher education urging a merger between colleges and universities.		
1964 Compulsory school age lowered from 7 to 6 years.		
		1968 Wahine shipwreck disaster. **1969** First human lands on the moon (USA).
1970 Reading Recovery programme developed by Marie Clay and implemented in schools. It continues to 2024. Open plan classrooms started to appear.		**1970 '**Dawn Raids' by police targeting Pacifica overstayers.
		1972 Labour Government, Compulsory military training ends. **1973** Great Britain joins the European Economic Community.
		1975 National Government – Muldoon era, tariffs and high interest. Waitangi Tribunal Established.
1979 Review of teacher training that began two decades of reviews and reports into teacher training without effecting significant change.		**1979** Mt Erebus air crash disaster.

Korean War

2nd Industrial Revolution

Vietnam War

3rd Industrial Revolution

		1980
1982 First Kōhanga Reo opens (in 2023 there are 460 plus further immersion kura).		
		1984 Labour Government - David Lange primeminister. Reagan (USA), Thatcher (UK) influencing the introduction of neo-liberal policies across the Western world.
1985 First Kura Kaupapa Māori opens.		
		1986 Royal Commission on Social Policy and Homosexual Law Reform. **1987** Te Reo Māori now an official language; Immigration Act assessing immigrants on skills, education.
1988 "Education to be More". ECE report recommending autonomous and self-managing centres, bulk grants, and administered through the MoE. **1989** "Administering for excellence: Effective administraiton in Education" (Picot) Report released. MoE est. Tomorrow's Schools.		**1989** Tiananmen Square protests in China. Universities connected to the internet and telecommunications technology advancing swifty.
1990 Corporal punishment in schools is banned. Up until this point it was used liberally as a form of control.		**1990** National Government. **1991** Collapse of the Soviet Union, ending the Cold War.
		1992 Internet Company of New Zealand established. **1993** MMP (Mixed Member Proportional) system voted in. Approx 10-15K people connected to the internet.
1995 School decile system used to caluculate equity funding		**1995** Estimated that 23% of NZers have computers at home and 60-100K are online. Cave Creek disaster.
1996 One computer per 18 students in primary schools. 37% are connected to a modem. Te Whāriki released – first national ECE bi-cultural curriculum. **1997** Auckland College of Ed had an assignment exploring communication through the internet and implications for future ed.		**1996** First coalition government – National and NZ First.
1998 Pay parity for primary school teachers with secondary teachers.		
		1999 Labour/Alliance Government.
2000 Numeracy Project Implimentation (continued to 2009), PISA testing begins.		**2000** World wide internet trafiic is doubling every 100 days and about 50% of NZers have access through work, home, or education. **2001** 9/11 attacks, leading to the War on Terror.
		2002 Labour/Progressive Government.
		2004 Facebook launches. **2005** YouTube launches.
2007 NCEA introduced replacing previous qualification system. New Zealand Curriculum released - 15,000 New Zealanders involved and more than 10,000 submissions received on the draft.		**2006** Twitter launches and Sign Language made an official language. **2007** Anti-smacking law passed.
2008 Education Amendment Act creates ERO (Education Review Office) to evaluate and report on school performance.		**2008** National/ACT/United Future/Māori Party Government and the Global Finacial Crisis hits. Elim School tragedy.
2010 National Standards are introduced to primary schools. **2011** Tātaiako (cultural competencies for teachers of Māori learners) published. MLE school property strategy.		**2010** Instagram Launches. Pike River mine disaster. The rise of populist politics (Trump). **2011** Snapchat Launches and 22 February Christchurch Earthquake.

3rd Industrial Revolution

Iraq War

War in Afghanistan

2012 N4L (Network for Learning) crown owned tech company delivering network solutions to state and state integrated schools. Charter Schools legalised. **2013** Ka Hikitia (Māori Education strategy) published.		**2012/13** Welfare Reform Package to reduce long-term dependency, sanctions extended on welfare.
2015 – Education Ammendment Act changes to governance and managment. Creation of CoL/Kahui Ako to encourage collaboration across schools and sectors.		**2014** Te Urewera granted the same legal rights as an individual person.
2017 Te Whāriki update released and abolition of charter schools (all transitioned to State Integrated Schools) also Our Code Our Standards published.		**2016** TikTok Launches. Brexit voted for, will happen in 2020. **2017** Labour/NZ First/Green. The Whanganui river granted the same legal rights as an individual person.
2018 Tapasā (cultural competencies framework for teachers of Pacific learners) published. 48% of schools have 1:1 device policy. **2019** Free school lunch programme starts.		**2019** March Mosque Shootings and December Eruption of Whakaari.
2020 Curriculum Refresh started. NZ histories will be complusory from 2022 in all primary and secondary schools and the Education and Training Act 2020 replaces Education Act 1989. This gives communities greater involvement in decision making and requires all schools and education providers to give effect to Te Tiriti o Waitangi. **2023** Hautū – tool for boards to self assess engagement with tangata whenua and te tiriti o Waitangi. ECE Pay Parity (sort of).		**2020** Labour/Green Government. Brexit and the beginning of the COVID19 Pandemic. **2022** Matariki becomes a public holiday. **2023** National/Act/New Zealand First government. AI advancements (ChatGPT, generative AI boom).
2024 Ban on cell phones at school. Compulsory hour of reading, writing and maths. Ministerial Advisory Group established (by new government) to review refreshed curriculum areas. UAG established. ITE and compulsory education under scrutiny. Charter Schools reintroduced. Structured literacy mandated and primary schools are given the choice of 4 maths programmes that must be used starting in 2025. Standardised assessments for primary schools in development.		**2024** Repeal of Māori Health Authority Te Aka Whai Ora, repeal of smoke free initiatives, gang patch ban. **2025** Treaty Principles Bill starts parlimentary process with much community engagement and protest.

3rd Industrial

War in Afghanistan

4th Industrial Revolution

Ukraine War 2022

Israel-Hamas War 2023