



Ngā iwi o Te Ika-a-Māui – North Island iwi

**Ko te waihanga me ngā wehewehenga o te
whaikōrero: The Structural System of *Whaikōrero*
and its Components ***

Figure 1 (opposite page)

Copied with permission from Tania M Ka'ai et al. (eds), *Ki Te Whaiao: An Introduction to Māori Culture and Society* (Auckland: Pearson Longman, 2004), xii.

* Note to readers: It is the practice of this journal to italicise Māori words in text unless they are proper nouns (e.g., place names, names of tribes, names of people). Each Māori word will be translated in parentheses in the text on its first occurrence; or where longer explanations are necessary these will be found in endnotes.

Prior to European colonisation, the Māori people of New Zealand used *whaikōrero*¹ (oration) as the primary medium for expressing opinion; presenting topics for discussion; and enabling decision-making regarding all matters affecting living arrangements and work, including decisions concerning daily, monthly and annual activities critical to the safekeeping of the people.² While Cleve Barlow defines *whaikōrero* as the “greetings expressed by elders on marae³ courtyards during assemblies of people,”⁴ this is an inadequate description of *whaikōrero* in that it does not take into account many of its functions and its vagaries. In the 21st century, *whaikōrero* remains a system pivotal to the operation of Māori culture yet like any system, it is affected by the changing context. This article examines systemic limitations to *whaikōrero* and how these are manifested duly or unduly within contemporary Māori oration practices.

Through several interpretations of *whaikōrero* provided by a number of *kaumātua* (Māori elder/s)⁵, this article will discuss the systemic structure of *whaikōrero* and its components, specifically regarding the system of *whaikōrero* that occurs during the formal rituals of encounter between *tangata whenua* (hosts) and *manuhiri* (visitors); that is, the system of *whaikōrero* followed by *kaikōrero tangata whenua* (or the oration of host speakers) and *kaikōrero manuhiri* (the oration of visiting speakers).⁶

My informants, or *kaumātua*, are those qualified men over fifty years of age who have proved themselves competent in speech-making. Although one of the *kaumātua* who informs this present article is under fifty years of age, he is still considered a *kaumātua* because of his knowledge of *whakapapa* or genealogy.

The majority of these *kaumātua* are renowned as repositories of knowledge in their own tribal areas, and throughout the *whaikōrero* circuit. These *kaumātua* are individually affiliated to the following geographical tribal areas of the North Island of New Zealand: Ngāpuhi, Ngāti Awa, Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Whare, Te Arawa, Te Whakatāhea, Tūhoe, Waikato-Maniapoto (see Figure 1).

A restriction generally accepted and adhered to by most tribes is that the performance of *whaikōrero* is restricted to men. The rationale for this restriction is based on the protection of women as the progenitors of future generations. The *marae*, where *whaikōrero* play a dominant role, is viewed as the arena for competitive verbal engagement that, consequently, also has the potential for the use of *mākutu* or *kanga* (verbal curses) and, thus, those tribes that follow this cultural practice do so to protect the future of the tribe itself. Te Rangihau suggests women hold the ‘physiological key’ to reproduction and, thus, it is unwise for them to *whaikōrero* where in the process they may become the target of *mākutu* or *kanga* and be rendered infertile. Katerina Mataira counters this argument by pointing out that, under the rubric of the above rationale, women who have reached menopause should therefore be exempt from such prohibition. While the debate regarding the rights of women to *whaikōrero* is important to develop, this is not the focus of the present article and deserves separate analysis.

For those international readers who may never come into direct contact with *whaikōrero*, it is hoped this article will initially provide insights into the complexities of Māori cultural practices, but will also demonstrate the convolution that occurs when a pre-colonial indigenous ‘traditional’ cultural system survives within a colonial society. This article asks the question: what is a traditional system?

For those Māori (and non-Māori) readers interested in or actually practicing *whaikōrero*, the discussion to follow will potentially provide a means by which the ‘spirit’ of past *whaikōrero* practices can be re-instituted into modern speech-making. The article hopes to re-envisage *whaikōrero* as a practice where orators are given the leeway to develop their ‘personal touch,’ whilst remaining within traditional etiquette. With regard to advancement of Māori culture, the ultimate aim of this article is to add to the resurgence of *whaikōrero* excellence throughout New Zealand, where all its virtues can be advanced, better understood, appreciated, and extolled.

Whaikōrero has important structural components. These components are arranged in accordance with both traditional practices and situational context. The structure of this article reflects the component parts of the *whaikōrero*, and is developed around description of the *whaikōrero* components and their position in the oratory presentation.

TE WHAKARĀRANGI I TE WHAIKŌRERO: SEQUENCE OF WHAIKŌRERO COMPONENTS

Historian Michael King describes the traditional *whaikōrero* sequence as follows:

The speeches follow a set pattern beginning with a *tauparapara* . . . This is followed by a eulogy to the dead, which may contain mythological illusions and a statement of philosophy of life and death. The eulogy culminates in a farewell to the dead, passing them on to the ancestors. Once the separation between the living and the dead has been stated the living are then addressed and welcomed.⁷

Anne Salmond provides more detail: “The routine speech of greeting follows a clear structural sequence”⁸ and proceeds in the following order: *whakaaraara* (call); *tau* (chant); *mihi mate* (greeting to the dead); *mihi ora* (greeting to the living); *take* (subject of oration); and, finally, *waiata* (song).⁹ The sequence described by Salmond is illustrative of the oration of the *kaikōrero tangata whenua*, or the hosts. In contrast, Hiwi and Pat Tauroa describe the sequence of *whaikōrero* adhered to by the guests, or *kaikōrero manuhiri* as: *tau*; *ko te mihi ki te wharenuī, ki te marae* (acknowledgements to the meeting house and to the ground where the gathering is taking place); *mihi mate*; *take*; *waiata*; and finally, *he kapinga kōrero* (concluding comments).¹⁰

KO NGĀ WEHENGĀ O TE WHAIKŌRERO: THE COMPONENTS OF WHAIKŌRERO

— *Ko te tauparapara*: the *Tauparapara*¹¹

King defines *tauparapara* as “a tribal poetic chant containing a traditional or philosophical statement.”¹² I was informally told by Wharehuia Milroy that *tauparapara*¹³ have pre-colonial roots, deriving from two words which mean prayer or incantation and the blood spilt on the battlefield. *Tauparapara* may be described today as the means used for lifting oneself or one’s group out of a sacred state of being. In yesteryear, this sacred state resulted from blood being spilt in warfare.

According to an elder from Tūhoe¹⁴ (for all locations, see Figure 1), *tauparapara* should be the first utterance by the opening speaker of the *tangata whenua* (host speakers) to act as a prayer or dedication to their spiritual life-force.¹⁵ The *tauparapara* is also described as the component of *whaikōrero* that awakens both the speaker's and listener's mind¹⁶ by alerting the listener to the intention of a speaker to orate, and by bringing out the speaker's emotion. It also has the role of protecting the speaker, focusing his concentration on the task of orating, and encouraging and giving strength to the orator.¹⁷

According to one *kaumātua*, *tauparapara* may include *pātere* (chants with geographical mention), *tau* (which may be interpreted as *karakia* or an abbreviation for *tauparapara*), *waiata*, and *manawa wera*¹⁸ (chants that vent the spleen).¹⁹ However, another *kaumātua* believes that *tauparapara* are different to *manawa wera* and *ngeri* (chants of derision).²⁰ Contemporary speakers often employ the words *manawa wera*, *karakia*, *waiata*, *haka* (war dance) and *ngeri* as interchangeable for *tauparapara*. *Tauparapara* usually contain genealogical references. Genealogy is an important factor in Māori culture and infuses most practices. The link to the ancestors is almost invariably acknowledged in all ceremonial settings.

One other type of oration that may be employed in place of *tauparapara* is the *waerea*; a traditional prayer, chant or incantation used to clear the path (i.e. the platform for speaking) or as a safeguard, especially for visitors, against any ill omens.²¹ *Waerea* are significant during the process of *whaikōrero* because of the *tapu*²² state into which speakers are deemed to enter while performing *whaikōrero*.

Tauparapara may also be used by a speaker to contextualise their speech,²³ while in some cases, speakers use songs or proverbs in the place of *tauparapara*.²⁴ A common example of a *tauparapara* genre used for contextualisation purposes is the *hoa tapuwae* (a chant to assist an individual group on a journey). For example, on an occasion where the *take* is education, speakers often employ a particular *hoa tapuwae*, which describes the acquisition of knowledge by Māori gods, because it pertains to the quest for knowledge and/or educational achievement.

Where *tauparapara* have direct significance for the content of the *take*, they serve as appropriate openers to *whaikōrero*.²⁵ One *kaumātua* reported that when attending a funeral on a *marae* he has never visited before, he uses *tauparapara* of the type that protects a traveller, to assist and protect himself as well as those who have accompanied him on this occasion.²⁶ If, on the other hand, he is not a stranger to a *marae* he will then focus on 'death' itself and utter a *tauparapara* that has relevance to the deceased rather than a *tauparapara* used to protect a travelling party.

Not all orators use *tauparapara* to open their *whaikōrero*, although some *kaumātua* believe they should, and feel that the presence of *tauparapara* can raise the standard of the oration to a higher level²⁷ by adding importance, esteem and status to the occasion. *Tauparapara* can serve to animate the speakers and to demonstrate that they are learned and well taught.²⁸ In some cases, *whaikōrero* can be composed mainly of *tauparapara*. This is dependent upon the content of the *tauparapara* in relation to the *take* at hand. For instance, some contain an abundance of references to historical events. By merely expressing such *tauparapara* the listener is given information regarding the origin of that *tauparapara*: the reason it was uttered, the person who uttered it, and/or the region that it pertains to. Thus, the *tauparapara* itself becomes the *whaikōrero*.

However, while some tribes place great importance on *tauparapara*, others see them as useless and merely time-consuming,²⁹ only employing *tauparapara* as fillers when the speaker has little to say relevant to the *take*. In other cases, where *tauparapara* are employed with little relevance to the *take* at hand, this may merely indicate a speaker's lack of breadth of knowledge and lack of understanding of the use of *tauparapara*.³⁰ For instance, at times speakers will use a *tauparapara* despite incongruity between its meaning and the occasion. Yet, ignorance is not always the cause of this incongruity as sometimes speakers use particular *tauparapara* to replace a protective chant or incantation (as described above regarding the role of *waerea*).

The absence of *tauparapara* within a speaker's *whaikōrero* may, at times, be explained through historical tradition. In the past, not all exponents of *whaikōrero* used *tauparapara*.³¹ Specifically, often only the opening speaker would use *tauparapara* to initiate his *whaikōrero*. Successive speakers were increasingly unlikely to do so because they were cognisant that the use of *tauparapara* by the opening speaker had initiated the *tapu* state into which all speakers enter during the *whaikōrero* exchange.

Of particular note is the use of *tauparapara* after a speaker has acknowledged any other visitors who have accompanied him onto the *marae* to which they are being welcomed.³² In this case, a visitor acknowledges other visitors. It should also be noted that, unlike those tribes who conduct *whaikōrero* outside, there are tribes who, at times, fulfil this ceremony inside the *whareniui* (literally 'large house' – referring to the 'meeting house' and the main building on *marae* used for sleeping). The *whaikōrero* is structured differently if the guests are formally welcomed inside the *whareniui*, in that they do not recite *tauparapara*.³³

— *Ko te whakaaraara*: the '*whakaaraara*' sometimes referred to as the 'call of alert'

While in some protocols, the *whakaaraara* comes before the *tauparapara*,³⁴ it may also come after the *tauparapara*.³⁵ It is this component which alerts the audience that a speaker is preparing to rise and begin his oration. The utterance '*Tihei*', derived from the longer version '*Tihei mauri ora*,' (*tihei*, to sneeze; *mauri*, life force; and *ora*, healthy state) derive from the Māori story of creation, which shows the god Tāne's creation of humanity by breathing life into earth from *Kurawaka*³⁶ to form *Hine-ahu-one*.³⁷ Both utterances signify new life. For instance, when a baby is born their first sneeze is referred to as the 'sneeze of life'. Accordingly, speakers adopt these expressions to signify new breath for orating or the intention to begin their *whaikōrero*. Timoti Kāretu asserts that "most *tauparapara* begin with the words '*Tihei mauri ora*'" serving to announce "'Here I am. Listen to me. I am about to speak.'"³⁸ In some cases, speakers recite their *tauparapara* while seated, and often only rise after they announce '*Tihei mauri ora*.' The reason for this is unclear, but it appears to be dictated by personal preference. Kāretu also comments that some speakers end their *tauparapara* with these words, signifying that while something is about to end (i.e. their *whaikōrero*) something else is about to begin.

One popular *whakaaraara* used extensively by Māori speakers, especially by members of the Te Arawa tribe (see Figure 1), begins with the words '*kia hiwa rā*' ('be alert')³⁹. As Dewes explains, the origin of '*kia hiwa rā*' can be seen in pre-1840 inter-tribal conflict

where most attacks occurred at dawn: “The rising of the sun ended the watchman’s vigil and ushered in a day of peace and light.” *Kia hiwa rā* was a call that informed one sentry that another sentry was still alive; failure to respond alerted others that they were under attack.⁴⁰ *Kia hiwa rā* is a popular *whakaaraara* commonly used by speakers to alert their audience of their intent to begin oration.

One Tūhoe elder⁴¹ suggests the *whakaaraara* is also used by the orators to signify the specific area or tribe from which they hail. A seasoned attendee of *whaikōrero*, who has witnessed *whaikōrero* throughout the country, should be able to deduce from the *whakaaraara* where the speaker is from and/or who they are representing in their *whaikōrero*.

— *He mihi, he whakamihī*: acknowledgments

The *mihī*, or acknowledgements, may include a *mihī ki te Atua* (acknowledgements to Gods), *mihī ki te hunga ora* (acknowledgements to the living), *mihī ki te papa* (acknowledgements to the ground where the proceedings are taking place), *mihī (poroaki) ki ngā mate* (acknowledgements [in the main farewells] to those who have died), and *mihī ki te kāhui ariki* (acknowledgements to the aristocracy of Māoridom). The order of acknowledgements varies with some speakers initiating their *mihī* by acknowledging God, and, notably those from Tainui, starting with the Māori Queen.⁴²

Ko te mihi ki te Atua: acknowledgments to God

While acknowledgments to God are not standard practice everywhere,⁴³ they have become an expected and regular component of modern *whaikōrero*.⁴⁴ Six Tūhoe *kaumātua*, one of whom was previously an Anglican minister, believe that tributes to God are a post-colonial development and do not issue from traditional origins.⁴⁵ An important observation made by one *kaumātua* was that many Tūhoe elders, although steeped in the Ringatū⁴⁶ faith, did not include acknowledgments to God in their *whaikōrero*.⁴⁷ Another Tūhoe *kaumātua* believes that the inclusion of acknowledgments to God is a result of the influence of Christianity.⁴⁸ A *kaumātua* of Ngāti Porou (see Figure 1) posed the question: who or which God is it that a speaker should acknowledge?⁴⁹ I take this to mean that the variety of religions present in contemporary New Zealand convolute the practicability of acknowledging only one ‘God’.

Speakers may open their *whaikōrero* by acknowledging God, followed by the *whakaaraara* and the *tauparapara*.⁵⁰ One *Te Arawa* *kaumātua* reflected that as a youth he observed some of his elders acknowledging God for bringing everyone together on that *marae*, but these references were not made by all speakers.⁵¹ Like *tauparapara*, whilst the opening speaker may acknowledge God, successive speakers may opt not to duplicate this acknowledgement. Today, the majority of *kaikōrero* (speakers) include acknowledgments to God because their omission would be generally unacceptable⁵² despite being a post-colonial development. Thus, many budding speakers currently make reference to God as a precaution, lest they be chastised for omitting this component.

Ko te mihi ki te hunga ora: acknowledgments to the 'living'

Acknowledging visitors is one of the roles of the *kaikōrero tangata whenua*,⁵³ as King suggests: "Once the separation between the living and the dead has been stated, the living are then addressed and welcomed."⁵⁴ If the host speakers omit acknowledgments to the visiting party, it would likely be interpreted as a blatant slight.

Ko te mihi a ngā kaikōrero manuhiri ki te pae, ki te hunga ora:
acknowledgments by visitors to the designated host speakers, and to the 'living'

Acknowledgement of the designated host speakers, sometimes referred to as the 'pae' or the 'taumata',⁵⁵ is a component of *whaikōrero* says one *kaumātua*.⁵⁶ By making this acknowledgement, the visiting speaker is also acknowledging the host people as a group. A visiting speaker will often greet an individual amongst the hosts that they know in a personal capacity; or the person given recognition may be a designated speaker or may have some connection to the host tribe. When giving personal recognition, the speaker should be aware that an individual may suffer embarrassment for being mentioned when a more distinguished person is present and omitted from the acknowledgments. Likewise, those not given personal recognition and/or those accompanying them may become offended if they believe they should also be personally recognised.

With regard to sequence, one *kaumātua* suggests visiting speakers acknowledge host speakers following comments regarding the *take*.⁵⁷ For example, in the event of a funeral, acknowledgments to the *pae* follow tributes to the *tūpāpaku* (the deceased). Another *kaumātua* stated that acknowledgments are made to the host people prior to acknowledgments directed at the *marae* and its buildings.⁵⁸

Ko te mihi a te manuhiri ki te manuhiri:
acknowledgment of visitors by visiting speakers

One Tūhoe *kaumātua* received instructions from his own *kaumātua* that, as a visiting speaker, his first task was to acknowledge other visitors amongst the *manuhiri* with whom he may be unfamiliar.⁵⁹ A Te Arawa *kaumātua* suggests that only the first visiting speaker should acknowledge other visitors,⁶⁰ by turning and greeting those visitors who did not come as part of his own party.⁶¹ Acknowledgments among visiting speakers occur either after the *tauparapara* or at the end of the speaker's *whaikōrero*.

Ko te mihi ki te wharenuī, ki te marae: acknowledgments to the
'meeting house' and to the 'ground' where the proceedings take place

The *wharenuī* (traditional meeting house) and *marae* (courtyard) embody living forms from the past and, consequently, often receive acknowledgement in the *whaikōrero*. Both places are affixed with identity which surpasses the structural. The *marae* or *marae ātea* (as it is also known) resembles *Papatūānuku* (Earth Mother), whose procreation with *Ranginui* (Sky Father) produced the Gods of Māori cosmology and, ultimately, human beings. *Wharenuī* are often named after an eponymous ancestor of the tribe in question (further discussed below).

Three *kaumātua*, all from different *iwi* (tribes), stated that *kaikōrero tangata whenua* should not, however, acknowledge their own buildings or *marae*.⁶² Acknowledging one's own *whareniui* and *marae* could be interpreted as acknowledging oneself, and could be seen as placing too much importance on oneself.

The speakers normally acknowledge the following structures: the *whare hui* (building for meeting), the *wharepuni* (guest house), the *whare tipuna* (building of ancestors),⁶³ or the *tipuna whare* (house with ancestral name). These buildings are acknowledged primarily because they are often named after and represent ancestors of the hosts. Therefore, in acknowledging this *whare*, the visiting speakers pay homage to the descendants of that ancestor.

Another building that may be acknowledged is the *wharekai* (dining room) because, as above, this may be named after an ancestor of the host people. In the case of *marae* in the Ngāti Awa, Tūhoe, and Te Whakatōhea areas (see Figure 1), many *wharekai* were given the name of the wife of the ancestor represented by the *tipuna whare*. Acknowledgments may also be given to the *marae* as a demonstration of respect to *Papatūānuku* as the eponymous ancestral mother of all Māori.

Two *kaumātua*, one from Tūhoe and one from Te Arawa, explained that if they are welcomed onto *marae* they have previously visited, and where they have previously paid tribute to the *whareniui* and the *marae*, then they refrain from re-acknowledging them.⁶⁴ Another Tūhoe *kaumātua* adds that as he was growing up he seldom observed his elders paying tribute to the *marae* and/or its buildings.⁶⁵ However, this viewpoint may be attributed to this *kaumātua* only witnessing his *kaumātua* speaking as hosts, or on *marae* they had previously visited. In the case of Ngāti Porou speakers, they will acknowledge the *marae* and the *whare* to safeguard themselves and their group from any ill omen when they go onto *marae* outside their area.⁶⁶

Ko te poroporoaki i ngā mate: acknowledgments or farewells to the dead

Eulogies to the dead are a way of acknowledging all the ancestors who are part of Māori history. All those who are deceased are given special reference during *whaikōrero* because of their own achievements and because of the loss to their families. One Tūhoe *kaumātua* says that acknowledging those who have died is very important nowadays,⁶⁷ although one Ngāti Porou *kaumātua* observed that not all speakers from his *iwi* address the dead.⁶⁸

There is no clear protocol regarding when acknowledgments to the dead should occur during *whaikōrero*, although some believe that farewells to the deceased lying in state on the *marae* should follow after the *tauparapara*.⁶⁹ Te Arawa speakers, for instance, often address the deceased following their *tauparapara*, after which they acknowledge God, and then the *whare mate* (family members seated in close proximity to the deceased).⁷⁰ However, at funerals, speakers from the Mātaatua⁷¹ area address the deceased first and foremost, rather than initially acknowledging the *marae* and buildings.⁷²

One *kaumātua* argues that when host speakers present their *whaikōrero* at *tangihanga*, then they should keep their farewell to their deceased to a minimum, leaving the more comprehensive eulogies to be expressed by the visiting speakers.⁷³ This allows host speakers to avoid the embarrassment of giving too great an acknowledgment to their own relative lying in state. Because the deceased is related to the host speakers, they also

inherently embody the *kaikōrero tangata whenua*. Thus, to speak of one's dead is to also speak of oneself. Hence, the following saying applies: “*Kāre te kūmara e kōrero mō tōna reka,*”⁷⁴ which suggests that for humility's sake the kūmara (sweet potato) should not tell others of its own sweetness.

Mihi ki te kāhui ariki: acknowledgments to aristocracy

After some lengthy deliberation and consultation amongst the Māori tribes, Pōtatau Te Wherowhero, of the Waikato tribe, was appointed as ‘King’ for the Māori people in 1858.⁷⁵ The *Kingitanga* (‘Kingite’ movement) has been in existence since then and continues under the auspices of the Waikato people and the Māori Queen – *Te Ata-i-rangi-kāhu*. Descendants of Te Wherowhero are termed *kāhui ariki* (aristocracy, or the ‘royal family’). Waikato speakers always acknowledge the Māori Queen and the *kāhui ariki* in their *whaikōrero*. Likewise, when visitors from Waikato are welcomed on a *marae* outside of the Waikato area, host speakers usually acknowledge the *kāhui ariki*, and/or the Māori Queen. Such acknowledgments give recognition to the Waikato people and the King Movement legacy. Subsequently, a reciprocation of respect to the *kaikōrero tangata whenua* and the people(s) they represent is afforded. Because this sort of acknowledgment has become common, its omission on Waikato *marae*, or in the presence of *Te Arikinui*, can be perceived as ignorance, arrogance and/or a sign of disrespect on the speaker's behalf.

Ko te kaupapa o te rā: discussion on the reason for the gathering

Following the farewell to the dead, speakers focus their *whaikōrero* on the reason for the gathering. For instance, if the occasion is a funeral, then the deceased is the focal point.⁷⁶ (In itself, the *take* deserves considerable treatment, but the scope of the present article does not allow for this).

Ko te waiata: the accompanying song

According to one Tūhoe *kaumātua*, the main function of the *waiata* is to add importance to the *whaikōrero*.⁷⁷ A rule in *whaikōrero*, says one Ngāti Porou *kaumātua*, is that the *waiata* ensures a speaker's statements are endorsed.⁷⁸ This is even more the case if the *waiata* is appropriate to the content of the speaker's *whaikōrero*. Two Tūhoe *kaumātua* believe that in former times the *waiata* was the last *whaikōrero* component to be performed.⁷⁹ Another Tūhoe interviewee⁸⁰, however, recalled that he didn't hear his elders conclude their *whaikōrero* with *waiata*. It is possible that the difference stems from these *kaumātua* coming from separate areas within Tūhoe. Presently, from personal observation of *whaikōrero* among Tūhoe and other tribes, concluding *waiata* is very much a norm of *whaikōrero*.

To bring *whaikōrero* to a close, the most widely used type of song is called *waiata koroua* (traditional song without instrumental accompaniments), although in cases where school groups are being formally welcomed or welcoming others, *waiata-ā-ringā* (action songs) and *himene* (hymns) may also be delivered. Nonetheless, there is the perception that *whaikōrero* are afforded more kudos when they are concluded with the traditional *waiata koroua*.

Speakers may circumvent the expectation of others to conclude their *whaikōrero* with *waiata* by jovially ‘passing on’ the prospect to successive speakers, with a statement like: ‘*Mā te mea i muri i ahau te waiata*’ (the next speaker has the *waiata*). Thus, there are times when not all speakers will conclude with *waiata*, but rather one *waiata* is performed to encompass all.⁸¹ Often this arrangement occurs when the visitors are from the same area and/or belong to the same organisation and, therefore, have come as a unified entity.

Salmond says that the “speech closes when the old women stand to join the orator in an ancient song.” However, despite Salmond’s comment, some speakers deliver *waiata* to commence their *whaikōrero*.⁸² Eric Schwimmer concurs, suggesting that “oratory had customary forms, beginning with the intoned welcome to the dead and the living and interrupted by suitable songs, which are called the ‘relish’ of the speech.”⁸³ Some exponents of *whaikōrero* do not restrict themselves to one *waiata*, at times performing three, four or even more.⁸⁴ On occasion, I have witnessed *kaikōrero* who have an obvious plethora of *waiata* at their disposal (as they seemingly are able to reel pertinent *waiata* off at will), and who intersperse a number of different verses from one song or different entire songs throughout their *whaikōrero*. This may occur to emphasise a point or merely as a part of the theatre of *whaikōrero*. Undoubtedly, it is an effective method of maintaining the interest of the spectators and the momentum of the *whaikōrero*.

— *He kapinga kōrero*: the conclusion of *whaikōrero*

The following section focuses on the ways speakers conclude their *whaikōrero*. The reader should be cognisant that the list of ways to conclude *whaikōrero* provided is not exhaustive.

‘Apiti hono tātai hono’: ‘draw the link’

The following expression (or a similar expression) is often heard from speakers concluding their *whaikōrero*: *‘Apiti hono, tātai hono. Te hunga mate ki te hunga mate. Apiti hono, tātai hono. Te hunga ora, ki te hunga ora’* (‘Let the dead be united unto themselves, and let the living continue to interact with the living’).

This expression may be used by speakers from Tainui and Te Arawa, and sometimes by orators from Ngāti Manawa. There are also recorded *whaikōrero* samples that contain this expression by individuals from Ngāti Raukawa, Ngāi Te Rangi-Ngāti Ranginui, and Rongowhakaata. When a Tūhoe speaker expresses the above phrase, it is likely that that person has genealogical ties to Waikato, or Te Arawa,⁸⁵ because it is a phrase that two *kaumātua* from Tūhoe say is not an expression normally used by Tūhoe orators.⁸⁶ However, on occasion I have heard this expression uttered in the Mātaatua area, an occurrence, argues another *kaumātua* from the same region, that reflects the fact that contemporary speakers now have access to oratory practices from other areas.⁸⁷ Thus, it has become a common expression among younger speakers, who have heard it at many gatherings around New Zealand and who have, subsequently, adopted it into their own *whaikōrero*. I believe that the inclusion of this expression is merely formulaic for many modern speakers.

Ko te haka: The dance/challenge of warriors

Contrary to the general consensus that *waiata* is the final component of *whaikōrero*, two Tūhoe *kaumātua* believe that in former times the *haka* (warriors' challenge) was used to conclude *whaikōrero*.⁸⁸ It was asserted that, following *waiata*, *haka* were performed to release the speaker from the 'sacred state' adopted during *whaikōrero*.⁸⁹ *Whaikōrero* exponents may also incorporate *haka*, verses of *haka*, or lines of *haka* to enhance their oration.⁹⁰

Ko te tuku koha: the presentation of a gift

One *kaumātua* suggested that the concluding component of *whaikōrero* is the presentation of *koha* (a gift) following the *waiata*.⁹¹ In former times this gift may have consisted of food, mats, or baskets, made as offerings by visitors to the hosts, but today the usual form is money.⁹²

KO TE WHAKATAUIRA I TE WHAIKŌRERO: CONCLUSION – THE STANDARDISATION OF WHAIKŌRERO

This article has, in part, focused on the structural uniqueness of *whaikōrero*, both intra- and inter-tribally. While *whaikōrero* are increasingly seen by younger speakers to follow a set pattern which should be emulated, the variations in *whaikōrero* structure described within this article suggest that *whaikōrero* should not be viewed as one-dimensional. According to one Ngāti Porou *kaumātua*, Tāmami Reedy, the diversity of *whaikōrero* is waning because of a false belief that *whaikōrero* need to follow a rigid system. He explains that the standardisation of *whaikōrero* has caused its creative dimension to be lost. For example, often *whaikōrero* are seen to be sub-standard if they are not opened with *tauparapara*. Similarly, omissions within *whaikōrero* of acknowledgements to the dead or even to God (despite this being a post-colonial development) are viewed as failings; the effect being that *whaikōrero* are becoming overly standardised and formulaic. Typical expressions are employed regardless of the *take* and, ultimately, many *whaikōrero* have become monotonous, boring; and they cause inattentiveness in the listener as the fluidity and ability of many *whaikōrero* to inspire listeners are seemingly disappearing.

Tāmami Reedy is not alone in this view. Tāmami Kruger, of Tūhoe, argues that a *whaikōrero* prototype has developed that, while enabling the proliferation of *whaikōrero*, has caused a lack of variation in the way speakers orate. Kruger also laments the decreasing ability of *whaikōrero* to inspire due to the increasing similarity of *whaikōrero* caused by speakers imitating others. Sir Robert Mahuta also stressed that the increasing standardisation of *whaikōrero* occurs because speakers conform to avoid verbal admonishment from other speakers, typically from those who are more experienced.

As alluded to by Reedy and as gleaned from my own observations, the standardisation of *whaikōrero* can be overcome by the *mana* (esteem) of the speaker. Where a person is renowned as a *whaikōrero* expert, he has greater flexibility in the organisation and delivery of his *whaikōrero*. He is also less likely to be criticised for not conforming precisely to the contemporary standards of *whaikōrero*. Salmond describes an occasion where the boundaries of typical *whaikōrero* were broken. A speaker, who was infuriated by events,

demonstrated his disapproval by “ditch[ing] all preliminaries,” launching himself straight into the *take* and, later . . . refus[ing] to sing an accompanying *waiata*.⁹³ In comparison, fledgling *whaikōrero* exponents have greater obligations to adhere to current protocols, and need to be more cautious than the more established speaker. The dilemma young *kaikōrero* face is whether or not they should conform to the standards of contemporary *whaikōrero*, or test the boundaries. Whatever they choose, they still risk meeting with the support or rejection of their elders.

Another factor to take heed of when considering a speaker’s ability to challenge the structure of *whaikōrero*, is the knowledge that the speaker possesses, including knowledge of historical accounts, culture and etiquette, motto maxims, songs, proverbs, and an array of other significant factors. If speakers are able to skilfully incorporate such knowledge into their *whaikōrero* they will gain respect that will subsequently allow them to go beyond the boundaries of average *whaikōrero*.

The wide-ranging description of the *whaikōrero* from the perspective of numerous *kaumātua* suggests that speakers should be conscious of the impact (or lack of it) of their *whaikōrero* on the audience. While *whaikōrero* should remain within the boundaries of etiquette, there should be space for innovation. When conscious deviations from *whaikōrero* norms occur where the speaker does so because of his knowledge and understanding of *whaikōrero*, then *whaikōrero* will be more interesting, elaborate, and reach the quintessence of *whaikōrero*, that is, quality oration as opposed to prototypical oration. With only slight deviations in mind at this stage, I look forward to a future when *whaikōrero* are alive, and not limited to the rigid and predictable structures; a future where *whaikōrero* can hold the attention of their listeners purely because individual speakers are creative enough to apply their ‘personal touch’.

Tragically, the art of *whaikōrero* has been undermined and, possibly through ignorance, arrogance, or complacency, a sense of impiety has developed regarding the true value of *whaikōrero*. The effect of such impiety has been to the detriment of quality *whaikōrero*, as Kāretu outlines:

What was once a noble and lofty art is fast degenerating into a perfunctory, platitudinous, recited litany of rote-learned words and phrases. The occasions are becoming fewer when one could be moved and stirred by the command of rhetoric, of metaphor, of mythical allusion, of pithy and apposite aphorism, of wit and candour, of subtlety and nuance interspersed with chant where appropriate and concluded with *haka*.⁹⁴

The present article has provided an outlet for a number of *kaumātua* to ‘speak’ about *whaikōrero*, its role and its structure within the system of Māori oratory traditions. It is hoped that the analysis put forward demonstrates, albeit through only one component of *whaikōrero*, the intricacies of *whaikōrero* and the difficulties of maintaining and developing an indigenous culture within a larger society. For those parties with a more vested interest in *whaikōrero*, the analysis provided largely does not seek to answer questions, but rather to pose them. For instance, does having a ‘system’ of *whaikōrero* strengthen or weaken the art of *whaikōrero*? Are *whaikōrero* formulae merely taken from generalised research findings that tend to fixate Māori culture? And why should an orator who chooses to

deviate from the system or structure of *whaikōrero* be deemed arrogant, ambitious, ignorant or naïve, as opposed to innovative and/or inspiring?

This article is also a challenge to up and coming orators. Is the system of *whaikōrero* nothing but a 'psychological fence' of behavioural normality, whereby an orator who tests its boundaries is wounded by the 'barbs' of conformity. Are there orators, or potential orators, courageous enough to shift the 'fence', and are there elders who will allow the 'fence' to be moved by the orator, so that it may better encapsulate the vast and beautiful landscape of oratorical potential? Will time tell?

- 1 KTH Mataira, *Te Kura Pūaotanga* (Hamilton: Waikato Polytechnic, 1995).
- 2 KTH Mataira, *Te Kura Pūaotanga* (Hamilton: Waikato Polytechnic, 1995).
- 3 "The *Marae* is an institution that has persisted from pre-European Maori society. While a whole living complex may be referred to as a *marae*, the *marae* proper consists of an open space of ground in front of an ancestral meeting house...In traditional times the *marae* and the meeting house together made up the focal point of every permanently inhabited village." M King (ed.), *Te Ao Hurihuri* (Wellington: Hicks Smith, 1975), 21.
- 4 C Barlow, *Tikanga Whakaaro* (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1991), 165.
- 5 Please note that the references below do not necessarily follow strict academic tradition in the form of citation, which would treat the informants as anonymous 'subjects' whose identity requires protection. In this article, stating the identity of the *kaumātua* (elders), whose views have formed this description of the *whaikōrero*, is important. It is through their identification that the writer honours their knowledge and experience. Much of the information that frames the basis of this article was taken from responses by *kaumātua* from different tribes, either during structured interviews that formed the research component of the author's PhD, or during informal discussions. Throughout this article I acknowledge (via footnoting) the information given to me by these elders.
- 6 The *kaumātua* often talked of *whaikōrero* in relation to *tangihanga* (funeral), however, many of the responses were also made with relevance to other gatherings where formal welcoming ceremonies are afforded the visitor.
- 7 King, *Te Ao Hurihuri*, 23.
- 8 A Salmond, cited in M Bloch, *Political Language and Oratory in Traditional Society* (London: Academic Press, 1975), 52.
- 9 Salmond, *Political Language*, 52-3.
- 10 H Tauroa & P Tauroa, *Te Maraе: A Guide to Customs and Protocol* (Auckland: Reed, 1986), 65-66.
- 11 The components of *whaikōrero* examined here were provided by the responses of the previously mentioned *kaumātua* but these may not be the only components that constitute *whaikōrero*.
- 12 King, *Te Ao Hurihuri*, 23.
- 13 *Kaumātua* Hiko Hohepa of Te Arawa uses the term '*pōhuatau*' when referring to *tauparapara*.
- 14 This is a tribe situated in the Eastern Bay of Plenty, named after their eponymous ancestor 'Tūhoe Pōtiki.'
- 15 *Kaumātua* Hohepa Kereopa of Tūhoe.
- 16 *Kaumātua* Pou Te Mara of Tūhoe.

- 17 *Kaumātua* Hirini Melbourne of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.
- 18 Formerly, such compositions would have been used by an individual or group to express their frustration or anger in response to the death of tribal members by other tribes. Today, they are used to announce the speaker's tribal affiliation or to enhance their *whaikōrero*.
- 19 *Kaumātua* Hīeke Tupe of Tūhoe.
- 20 *Kaumātua* Pou Te Mara of Tūhoe.
- 21 *Kaumātua* Kei Merito of Ngāti Awa
- 22 This is an assertion of importance, reverence, formality, status, or restriction to behave appropriately.
- 23 *Kaumātua* Ranginui Walker of Te Whakatōhea.
- 24 *Kaumātua* Te Kotahitanga Mahuta of Waikato-Maniapoto.
- 25 *Kaumātua* Awanui Timutimu of Tūhoe.
- 26 *Kaumātua* Kei Merito of Ngāti Awa.
- 27 *Kaumātua* Tīmoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu
- 28 *Kaumātua* Awanui Timutimu of Tūhoe.
- 29 *Kaumātua* Tāmati Reedy of Ngāti Porou.
- 30 *Kaumātua* Mauriora Kingi of Te Arawa.
- 31 *Kaumātua* Tāmati Reedy of Ngāti Porou. This view was also supported by *kaumātua* Tīmoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.
- 32 *Kaumātua* Hapi Winiata of Te Arawa.
- 33 *Kaumātua* Hohepa Kereopa of Tūhoe.
- 34 *Kaumātua* Kimoro Pukepuke of Tūhoe.
- 35 *Kaumātua* Whitu Wairiki of Tūhoe.
- 36 According to Māori belief, Kurawaka is the location where the deity Tāne procured the soil from which he fashioned the first woman and breathed life into her.
- 37 Hine-ahu-one (woman-fashioned from-earth).
- 38 T Kāretu, "Language and protocol of the marae," in M. King (ed.) *Te Ao Hurihuri*, 35.
- 39 P Awatere & K Dewes, *Tauparapara from Te kawa o Te Marae*, Audio-tape recording. (Wellington: Victoria University Anthropology Department, 1963).
- 40 Eric Schwimmer also talks about one other instrument working in this capacity: "Finally, they had a huge wooden war gong (pahu) used by sentries at night to show the people of the pa that they were awake and watching." E Schwimmer, *The World of the Māori* (Wellington: Reed, 1974), 88.
- 41 *Kaumātua* Tīmoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.
- 42 *Kaumātua* John Tahuri of Tūhoe.
- 43 According to *kaumātua* Te Kotahitanga Tait of Tūhoe, Te Arawa are a people who often acknowledge God, whereas Kuia Mana Rangī of Ngāti Porou commented that some Ngāti Porou speakers do not acknowledge God.
- 44 *Kaumātua* Tāmati Reedy of Ngāti Porou.
- 45 *Kaumātua* Tīmoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu, *kaumātua* Taua Pouwhare of Tūhoe, *kaumātua* Hīeke Tupe of Tūhoe, *kaumātua* Kimoro Pukepuke of Tūhoe, and *kaumātua* Pou Te Mara of Tūhoe.
- 46 This is a religious sect based on the New Testament founded by Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki and observed by some Māori from Ngāti Maniapoto, Mātaatua, and Te Tairāwhiti.
- 47 *Kaumātua* Tīmoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.
- 48 *Kaumātua* Hīeke Tupe of Tūhoe, who himself was sent by his *kuia* and *kaumātua* to learn the Presbyterian faith.

- 49 *Kaumātua* Tāmāti Reedy of Ngāti Porou.
- 50 *Kaumātua* Pita Iraia of Ngāti Whare.
- 51 *Kaumātua* Hiko Hohepa of Te Arawa.
- 52 *Kaumātua* Tāmāti Reedy of Ngāti Porou.
- 53 *Kaumātua* Timoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.
- 54 King, *Te Ao Hurihuri*, 23.
- 55 Pat Hohepa, a Ngāpuhi (see Figure 1) *kaumātua*, stated that what most tribes termed *pae* or *paepae* he would refer to as the ‘*taumata*’.
- 56 *Kaumātua* Timoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.
- 57 *Kaumātua* Awanui Timutimu of Tūhoe.
- 58 *Kaumātua* John Tahuri of Tūhoe.
- 59 *Kaumātua* Timoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.
- 60 *Kaumātua* Hapi Winiata of Te Arawa.
- 61 *Kaumātua* Hapi Winiata of Te Arawa.
- 62 *Kaumātua* Timoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu, *kaumātua* Pita Iraia of Ngāti Whare, and *kaumātua* Te Kotahitanga Tait of Tūhoe, in reference to Te Arawa.
- 63 This *whare* is termed *whare tipuna* because its carvings are often representations of ancestors. Carvings may be supplemented or complemented by photographs of deceased family members.
- 64 *Kaumātua* Timoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.
- 65 *Kaumātua* Te Kotahitanga Tait of Tūhoe.
- 66 *Kaumātua* Koro Dewes of Ngāti Porou.
- 67 *Kaumātua* Taua Pouwhare of Tūhoe.
- 68 *Kaumātua* Tāmāti Reedy of Ngāti Porou.
- 69 *Kaumātua* Pita Iraia of Ngāti Whare and *kaumātua* Kimoro Pukepuke of Tūhoe.
- 70 *Kaumātua* Te Kotahitanga Tait of Tūhoe.
- 71 Generally, this area would cover Ngāti Awa, Tūhoe, Te Whakatōhea, and parts of Ngāi Te Rangī and Ngāti Rangīnui.
- 72 *Kaumātua* John Tahuri of Tūhoe.
- 73 *Kaumātua* Timoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.
- 74 *Kaumātua* Timoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.
- 75 There is some debate whether the year was 1858 or 1859.
- 76 *Kaumātua* Awanui Timutimu of Tūhoe.
- 77 *Kaumātua* Hieke Tupe of Tūhoe.
- 78 *Kaumātua* Tāmāti Reedy of Ngāti Porou.
- 79 *Kaumātua* Awanui Timutimu of Tūhoe and *kaumātua* John Tahuri of Tūhoe.
- 80 *Kaumātua* Kimoro Pukepuke of Tūhoe.
- 81 *Kaumātua* Pat Hohepa of Ngāpuhi.
- 82 An observation by *kaumātua* Te Kotahitanga Mahuta of Waikato-Maniapoto.
- 83 Schwimmer, *The World of the Māori*, 86.
- 84 *Kaumātua* Tāmāti Kruger of Tūhoe.
- 85 *Kaumātua* John Tahuri of Tūhoe and *kaumātua* Te Kotahitanga Tait of Tūhoe.
- 86 *Kaumātua* Awanui Timutimu of Tūhoe and *kaumātua* Kimoro Pukepuke of Tūhoe.
- 87 *Kaumātua* Mehaka Herewini of Tūhoe.
- 88 *Kaumātua* Timoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu, and *kaumātua* Hohepa Kereopa of Tūhoe.

- 89 *Kaumātua* Tīmoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.
- 90 *Kaumātua* Tāmami Kruger of Tūhoe.
- 91 *Kaumātua* Hiko Hohepa of Te Arawa.
- 92 Barlow, *Tikanga Whakaaro*, 49.
- 93 A Salmond, cited in M Bloch, *Political Language and Oratory in Traditional Society*, 55.
- 94 *Kaumātua* Tīmoti Kāretu of Tūhoe and Kahungunu.

Poia Rewi is a senior lecturer at Te Tumu, the School of Māori, Pacific and Indigenous Studies at the University of Otago in Dunedin, New Zealand. He is currently working on his PhD thesis on *Whaikōrero* (Māori Oratory).