When I accepted this generous award, I was uncertain what I could say to such a distinguished audience of Polynesian scholars. Joan Metge suggested that I look back over my work, tracing the hesitant journey of an historian into the world of Māori, largely through conversations and by sharing historical photographs. To a degree I had already done this in “Encounters Across Time: The Makings of an Unanticipated Trilogy” (Binney 2001: 80-98, 229-30). That essay reflected on the accidental—indeed unplanned—nature of the journeys that led to three books, published between 1979 and 1995 (chronologically: Binney, Chaplin and Wallace 1979, Binney and Chaplin 1986 and Binney 1995). All three involved aspects of Tūhoe history, so I thought I would follow the suggestion in a slightly different way: the manner in which oral stories may change.

A long time ago, when I was writing my Master’s thesis on the Anglican missionary Thomas Kendall, I remember my supervisor, Keith Sinclair, saying: “There’s no point in going up to the Bay of Islands, there’ll be nothing left but muddled memories, and elaborated myths.” I would hasten to add that it was he who, much later, taught the first University course in this country on oral history.

My journey from reliance on written records to seeking out oral narratives consciously, particularly those remembered in Māori rural communities, began, in fact, at the Bay of Islands. In 1964, I was asked to attend the family reunion of the descendants of Kendall; this was held on the beach at Russell. The families were descendants of Kendall’s second daughter Elizabeth, who had married an early surveyor. Unexpectedly, two vast Māori men arrived, brothers, named Kendall. They claimed to be Thomas’ direct descendants. They were, they said, his “Māori family”. Possibly they

*A glossary of Māori words used in the oral presentation follows the text.*
descended from Kendall and Tūngāroa, the young Te Hikutu woman with whom the missionary ran away for a time. No-one was quite sure—not even the Kendall brothers. Their uninvited appearance initially caused confusion among the invited, but they were quickly made welcome. On the same trip, I later met an elderly kaumātua, James Martin, living at Punaruku in the inland Bay of Islands, which was then a largely Māori community. He was a direct descendant of the Te Hikutu chief Waikato, who had travelled to England with Hongi Hika and Kendall in 1820; James Martin held Waikato’s whakapapa. Meeting this kaumātua, together with the Kendall brothers, led me to realise that different histories co-exist in our communities.

Waikato, Hongi and Kendall, along with the Professor of Hebrew at Cambridge University, Samuel Lee, compiled the first Māori grammar (Lee and Kendall 1820). This book could only have been co-authored; but all bibliographies available in the 1960s stated it to be Lee’s (or, occasionally, Lee and Kendall), as do contemporary reference systems. But how could there be a selection of waiata, the first to be collected and published—and notably the “Pihe”, a northern lament associated with Ngāpuhi’s founding canoe ancestor, Nukutawhiti, who drowned in Hokianga Harbour—if Hongi and Waikato had not sung these songs to Kendall for the project?

Hongi and Waikato Piriniha—that is, “Prince Waikato”, the name he took for himself, as James Martin told me—started a different dialogue in England. The chiefs’ account of meeting King George IV was (and is) remembered by Māori in the Bay of Islands. The narrated memory is not so much—or is not only—about the gifts of weapons and the armour that the King gave the two chiefs, which rapidly became Pākehā narratives about martial vanity and ambition. It is rather about the relationship that the chiefs understood they had established. In 1849, after the Northern War was over, Hone Heke Pokai, who married Hongi’s daughter Hariata Rongo, wrote to Queen Victoria and instructed her: “it rests with you to restore… the authority of the land of the people…. [F]or although he [King George] and Hongi are dead, still the conversation lives; and it is for you to favour and make much of it, for the sake of peace” (Heke 1850: 17).

This extended “conversation” underpinned the earlier appeal sent by 13 northern chiefs to William IV in 1831—the first collective letter written by Māori leaders. We know that the petition was sent from Kerikeri; as Manuka Henare has observed, it must at least have been debated at Kororipō Pā, which stands over the mission station (Henare 2007: 112-18). Hongi lived at that pā on and off in the early 1820s; the missionaries constructed a European-style house for him on its tihi. It is remembered locally that Hongi decided to go to England in 1820 after a hui held at Kororipō, which seems logical. As we know, the chiefs’ letter of 5 October 1831 asked the King for a protectorate
relationship (Henare 2007: 112-18). Certainly the missionary William Yate had a hand in that, and historical emphasis is always placed on Yate’s purposes, but from the chiefs’ perspective, their letter extended the “conversation”—and the relationship—that began in 1820 with the English Crown. But “Prince” Waikato was not a signatory to this letter, or indeed to the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840, having decided vehemently to reject the Anglican missionaries. However, on 23 July 1843, he was baptised Hohaia Pratt Waikato after Josiah Pratt, the former Church Missionary Society secretary whom he had met in England (Waimate Register 1843). Changing his name remembered this history, as well as affirming his new Christian identity. Waikato’s family, however, kept the name Piriniha in their whakapapa, recalling the “other” conversation of 1820.

I will not linger more in the Bay of Islands, though I have woven some foundational threads. This evening I have chosen to (re)tell some oral narratives born of events in the Urewera in the 19th and early 20th centuries. These stories are all at least a hundred years old in their origins. My intention is to show how some narratives continue, and are reshaped. Each of the stories I am recalling tonight was told to me afresh last year. I had heard (or read) all of them before, some over 30 years ago. I have published some. But the contexts in which they were narrated in 2008 meant that the stories had shifted.

We know that oral stories are “pre-eminently open-ended” (Smith 1995: 22). They are vehicles whose function is not only to remember and entertain, but to connect a crucial aspect of a remembered past with present concerns. When the stories are retold, their significance or message may alter even though the story may be old, familiar to the audience and narrated as an unchanging truth, or a far-seeing prediction. We can trace such shifts more readily today as oral stories written down by historians and anthropologists pop up again—but told with new implications or unexpected codicils.

My talk is given in homage to the oral storytellers. It is they who weave knowledge from the past into parables and warnings for the living. I first encountered this form of historical memory among Ngāi Tūhoe, and my talk is expressly in their honour. Among those to whom I wish particularly to pay tribute are Robert (Boy) Biddle, Heta and Mau Rua (two sons of Rua Kenana), Reverend Hieke Tupe, John Ru Tahuri and Tama Nikora, who told me some of the stories I am retelling. It is they who showed me that history is a multi-faceted diamond. It is they who enabled me to enter into other systems of knowledge than those in which I was originally trained. The oral narratives they recalled convey communal memories. Most importantly, the stories carry knowledge that matters, or knowledge considered “sustainable”, as the Latin American linguist and writer Walter Mignolo observed for his part of the world (Mignolo 2000: 6). The stories that I have chosen to retell all arose from experiences of colonisation.
History is always shaped by its narrators. The dominant narrative, or widely shared narrative, may seem confident in its sources, its explanations and its logic, but there are always alternative understandings (almost inevitably subversive) of the same events. Archives hold written records that survive, but different memories and different understandings also survive—especially when they derive from situations where one group of people has tried to control, imprison, colonise or assimilate another. It follows that, with different memories held in local communities or families, successive generations may act by them. Mythologised understandings create new facts, and new events. The journey of the Tūhoe prophet Rua Kenana and the “Eighty” chiefs to meet King Edward VII at Gisborne in June 1906 shows this precisely. Rua’s journey was not merely the action of one visionary; its purposes had long roots in the colonial past of Tūhoe. The presence of the “Eighty”—a ritual, not an actual, number—stemmed from a series of narratives originating in the 19th century. We all commemorate important events, but the metaphorical meanings embedded in such ceremonies may be—or may become—contested. We have all witnessed (and some participated in) examples: conflicts around Waitangi Day in Aotearoa New Zealand, and in the New World, the commemorations of 1992, the five hundredth year after Colombus re-found what he always asserted was Asia. We now commemorate—rather than “celebrate”—many historical events because we are more conscious of multiple narratives and different understandings.

The stories I have chosen to retell are (apparently) simple ones: fables, even. The first two are about animals—both introduced by Europeans—a rooster and a billy goat. But the stories state the mana whenua of Tūhoe.

One early narrative concerns the famed Tūhoe chief Te Maitaranui (Te Rangiaho), who visited the Bay of Islands about 1820. He came home with astonishing tales of “kuri waha tangata” (man-bearing dogs). This story was told by Hemi Kopu, an elder from Ruātoki, in the late 1890s; Elsdon Best published it in *Tuhoe: Children of the Mist* (Best 1977 [I]: 557). The story locates Tūhoe’s first awareness of European-introduced horses and, simultaneously, revealed their distance from them. Then, shortly after Te Maitaranui’s visit, the Bay of Islands’ war-leader Pomare I (Whetoi) led a campaign to the south, armed with muskets. At Ruātoki, Pomare heard the crowing of a rooster that he had given Te Maitaranui at the Bay. Interpreting the cock’s call as “he tohu”, Pomare curtailed his assault. He sought out Te Maitaranui, who had taken refuge inland at Maungapōhatu, Tūhoe’s sacred mountain (Best 1977 [I]: 531-33). ¹ The making of Tūhoe’s peace with Pomare and Ngāpuhi in 1822 is always attributed to this event. To recall the occasion, a tokotoko was made, a rooster carved on its handle.
In 1978, Tūhoe elder Horopapera Tatu recalled that the rooster-\textit{tokotoko} was given by Te Makarini Tamarau (Tamarau Waiari) to the government as a statement of peace (Sissons 1991: 279). This event took place at Ruātoki, probably in 1895 or 1896. Most likely, it was at the end of lengthy government negotiations held in 1895 at Tauarau Marae. Te Makarini (then elderly, and who died about 1904) had been jailed two years earlier (in 1893) for his efforts to block the survey of Ruātoki, where he too now lived. But in 1895 the senior chief of Ngāti Rongo \textit{hapū} at Ruātoki, Kererū Te Pukenui, finally acceded to the government’s triangulation survey of the Urewera, which Te Makarini had opposed. Kererū himself had agreed only after lengthy protests and when faced with Premier Richard Seddon’s despatch of armed troops. A week-long debate took place at Tauarau, when the government forces were present. A year before, Kererū had entrusted his own peace-making gift with the Premier, a famed ancestral \textit{taiaha}, owned by Rongokarāe and named after him as the eponymous ancestor of Kererū’s \textit{hapū}, Ngāti Rongo. This gift and its associated meanings were extensively debated during the week-long \textit{hui} in 1895: it was then called the sceptre of Tūhoe’s sovereignty (\textit{New Zealand Times}, 1895, Seddon 1895: 36). Then, in March 1896, Te Makarini gave an “uncommon” flax mat (as it was then described) to the Governor, Lord Glasgow, when Glasgow visited the Urewera, and this gift was recorded (Mair 1896). Thus a series of key gift exchanges—after prolonged protests—took place between 1894 and 1896. The Governor’s visit and the gift exchanges were to confirm Tūhoe’s agreement to the triangulation surveying and, in the end, with great reluctance, to the Urewera road, thereby bringing Elsdon Best into their midst as the quartermaster for the road workers. The gifts confirmed the ongoing negotiations with Tūhoe that would lead to the passage of the Urewera District Native Reserve Act in October 1896—the government’s act of reciprocity for the Urewera road.

These Tūhoe gifts to the Premier and the Governor were part of an extended exchange of promises. Seddon agreed that the Urewera would become a self-governing tribal district. Gift-exchanges such as these forge the crucial “sinews of understanding” on a negotiated “middle ground” such as this one, as historian Richard White has shown when discussing the Great Lakes’ tribes (White 1991: x). For Māori, the spirit of the gift (the \textit{hau}) travels with the \textit{taonga}—and it is the \textit{hau} that generates continuing reciprocities.

The meaning encoded with the gift of the rooster-\textit{tokotoko}, a gift of peace, lives in Tūhoe memory. In December 2008, I was told how, when Matiu Rata visited Tūhoe to explain the policies of his new political party, Mana Motuhake, the (then) senior elder John Rangihau instructed the \textit{paepae} that they all must participate in the \textit{whaikōrero}. Consequently, the formal speeches
continued for five long hours, and Rata sat in the hot sun for five long hours. At the end, Tūhoe presented him with a tokotoko carved with a rooster. “What is this rooster all about?” demanded Rata, puzzled. It is the gift for a man from the north, they said obliquely (Nikora 2008: OS [oral source]). The meaning hidden in the gift of peace depends entirely on what one knows.

Tūhoe memorialised a different alien animal, a large male goat that they named Te Epa Koura (The Bath [Ephah] of Gold). We know when the billy arrived in the Urewera from a letter written on 5 September 1903 by Hou Te Pouwhare (and which Margaret Orbell published) (Orbell 2002: 137, 140). The angora was a gift from the Native Minister, James Carroll (Timi Kaara), along with 17 females (and three kids born on the journey). The handsome billy was brought from the steamer by the elder Tupara Tamana, famed for his dexterity in the wero. The party arrived, however, just as the tangihanga was taking place for Tupaea Rapaera, the high-born nephew of Kereru Te Pukenui. Kereru had groomed him for leadership—sending him, for example, to accompany Seddon on the Premier’s tour through the Urewera in 1894. Tupaea’s death was a grievous loss and, perhaps in his stead, Kereru’s younger brother Renata Numia became Ngāti Rongo’s leader, taking his brother’s name. Te Epa Koura (the Golden Goat) was named, it was said at the time, for the wealth he was expected to bring in wool. He was adorned with a red cloak, prized huia feathers and a head band of plumes from the koekoeä: all insignia of greatness. He was presented in Ngāti Rongo’s brand new painted meeting-house, Rongokarae, named (like the taiaha) for the hapū’s foundational ancestor. Te Whiu Maraki, a matakite and known in later life as Kuku for the mussel shells he wore clamped to each ear as the sign of one who communes with the spirit world, joked that they would next be given a lion by the government. Tupara “translated” the goat’s speech:

Nane: “Karanga, Tūhoe! Ka nui tōku mihi mō ā koutou mihi mōku. … i kīia mai au, me tae rawa ki Ruatāhuna. E kore rawa e rite i ahau ā koutou kōrero. Kati, kia atawhai Tūhoe ā a mātou ko tāku whānau. Ki te takakino koutou i ahau, ka toro haere aku toto, kai ahau ngā tohutohu mai a te Minita Māori.”

Goat: “Call to me Tūhoe! I very much appreciate your kind welcome. … I was told to go all the way to Ruatāhuna. I am quite unable to match your speeches, so in conclusion I will say to you, Tūhoe: please treat me and my family well. If you injure me, and my blood pours down, I have my instructions from the Māori Minister.” (Orbell 2002: 137, 140)

Te Epa Koura’s speech was in response to his welcome across the tapu threshold-beam of the house (“te paepae poto o Houmaitawhiti”, as the letter stated). He recognised his obligation to travel inland to Ruatāhuna, the heart
of Tūhoe; he warned that he should be cared for and not eaten. It all sounds fun, even at such a potent tangihanga.

I learned an unexpected codicil to this story last year. For the unpublished oral story continues: Tupara shot the angora. When the billy reached Ruatahuna he chewed the thin grass down to the bare earth. Women started to say he would reveal the hidden gold of the Urewera (Nikora 2008: OS). Thus the narrative of the Golden Goat leads directly into a very different, and very complex, story: the gold secreted in the Urewera Mountains.

In 1903, Te Urewera remained closed to gold prospecting. The 1896 Urewera District Native Reserve Act (Seddon’s gift) restricted the authority to issue prospecting rights, or to cede land for mining, solely to the General Committee of Tūhoe. In so doing, the Act upheld Tūhoe’s express request to Seddon in 1895. The General Committee was provided for in the legislation, but would not be established until 1909. It was established only after its authority over mining had been removed. James Carroll made sure that this authority was transferred to the government in 1908. Only then did Carroll permit Numia Kereru, as the leading Tūhoe chief negotiating with the government, to select Tūhoe’s self-governing committee.

The intense competition over the hidden gold in the Urewera began much earlier. In 1897, Numia brought prospectors to search immediately outside the borders of the Rohe Pōtæ o Tūhoe, the newly defined Native Reserve. Numia and Hetaraka Te Wakaunua, senior chief at Maungapōhatu, were paid £100 by a private mining company for a right to search in two selected areas for six months. All hell broke loose; the Liberal government maintained its support for the closure of the Rohe Pōtæ to prospecting and mining. It would remain closed for 11 years. Twice—in 1906 and again in 1908—Tūhoe tried to elect their General Committee. On the second occasion, March 1908, the procedure they adopted conformed precisely to the terms of the Act. Carroll, however, refused to accept this elected committee. The reason was the fact that the meeting set precise conditions for prospecting: all prospecting licences had to be validated by the General Committee under its new seal (“Hīiri”). The meeting agreed that only the hapū that owned the land could lease the land for mining. The meeting also made it clear that no Tūhoe land would be sold. Under the Urewera Act, only the government could buy Urewera land, and only if the General Committee agreed to sell. The newly elected General Committee indicated that it would not sell.

Carroll rejected this committee and the restrictions it set. In October 1908, he hastily obtained new legislation to give him the authority, as Native Minister, to appoint Tūhoe’s General Committee. That is precisely what he did, in association with Numia Kereru, in 1909. This appointed committee was set up, as I explained earlier, only after Carroll brought the Urewera
under the provisions of general mining legislation, giving the government control over mining access.

The hope of finding gold formed a crucial part of Rua’s vision for autonomy. In 1908, he offered to sell prospecting licences in the Urewera to Māori and to Pākehā (at different prices) under his own authority. Two years earlier, he had declared he would meet the son of Queen Victoria in Gisborne. The procession of Tūhoe leaders (the “Eighty”) carried with them large packages; at the time they were described variously as containing gold, or diamonds, or the Ark of the Covenant. When the King failed to arrive at the Gisborne wharf on the predicted day, Rua announced the inner meaning of his mission: “I am really that King” (Binney, Chaplin and Wallace 1979: 30). The packages were to redeem the land from the son of Victoria, who had acquired it in 1840. The packages were, simultaneously, an enactment, or manifestation, of three seminal narratives about the Urewera: its hidden gold; Te Kooti’s diamond hidden on Maungapōhatu, the sacred mountain of Tūhoe; and the binding promise of God to Israel, recorded in the hidden books of the Ark of the Covenant, that the land would be restored.

In 1906-08, gold offered the possibility of economic independence—just like today’s Central North Island (CNI) fund: $66 million in forestry money made available for Tūhoe from July 2009. Tūhoe oral memories are clear that Rua’s goal for Tūhoe was economic self-sufficiency. Kui (Paretora) Te Puawhe recalled, in 1994 (when she was 96 years old), that Rua had formed his own “Maori mining company” (Connor 1994: 65). She understood that he wanted to establish his own “kingdom”, following the Kingitanga. Hopes of gold fuelled many of Rua’s visions—King’s Solomon’s temple, which Rua reconstructed at Maungapohatu in 1908, was said to have been built of the gold found at Ophir (1 Kings chapter 9: verse 28, chapter 10: verses 11-14; 2 Chronicles chapter 8: verse 18, chapter 9: verses 15-18). Rua’s circular council house, called Hiona (Zion), was painted gold (and blue). If the chimera of gold lit Rua’s dreams, the chimera of gold also explains why Carroll suppressed Tūhoe’s elected General Committee in 1908.

All this explains, too, why Tupara, who spoke for the angora goat, shot him. His rapacious grazing might betray their hidden wealth. After all, “Nane” had been sent by Carroll! In 1908-9, Carroll reconstructed Tūhoe’s General Committee so that its members were appointed (or approved) by himself as Native Minister. Then, in 1910, Apirana Ngata further manipulated the Committee membership to ensure that it would sell land to the Crown. But gold eluded them all.

My final cluster of stories-that-continue is a group of related narratives concerning the tāwharau for Tūhoe. The stories also shift from the pragmatic
to the metaphorical, but they are, without question, “unending”. They are “unending” for the fundamental reason that they are concerned with the recovery of Tūhoe autonomy.

There is a famous Tūhoe whakataukī: Kia tāwharautia a Mātaatua ‘Let Mātaatua be sheltered’. The origins of the saying were told to Elsdon Best in the 1890s. This whakataukī is always attributed to the occasion when Paora Kiingi I, senior grandson of Tūhoe’s last acknowledged ariki, Te Umuariki, aborted the vast war expedition that he had assembled to take revenge for Te Umuariki’s death. The expedition gathered at Whakatāne in 1829, intending to travel to Whangara on the upper East Coast where Te Umuariki had been killed. Instead, Paora Kiingi journeyed himself to create “te tatau pounamu” (the greenstone door of peace), named here as “Te Here o Te Marama” (The Bringing of the Light). The peace that Kiingi forged was further sealed by a meeting-house he built in Te Waimana after his return, and by his āhākī, when he reminded Tūhoe not to seek war but rather to seek shelter for themselves and their kin (Best 1977 [I]: 493-94). As John Ru Tahuri narrated in 1998, Paora Kiingi’s decision was “the beginning of that tāwharau; all the others came afterwards, in support of what Paora had said” (Tahuri 1998: OS).

This guiding principle would be debated, denied and upheld again through all the terrible experiences of war in the 19th century. Early in 1864, the whakataukī was recalled at a hui at Ruatāhuna, when a small group of Tūhoe men and women, urged on by Piripi Te Heuheu of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, who had married Te Umuariki’s daughter Animiraka, determined to give military assistance to Rewi Maniapoto, facing the British military invasion of Waikato. The debate turned around the famous saying. Te Whenuanui I, Te Umuariki’s youngest son, urged Tūhoe to stay at home to defend their lands, lest they too be invaded. He cited the whakataukī, “kia tāwharautia a Mātaatua”, and the majority agreed with him. But subsequently Te Whenuanui regretted his decision and hurried to join the party that had set off to Waikato. He endured the terrible siege at Ōrākau, but his daughter died. On his return home to Ruatāhuna, Te Whenuanui was greeted by the angry song, “Te Manawa Wera” (The Burning Heart), a hostile welcome composed by the women there. The song ensures that the message is remembered; it is one of the waiata sung by Kino Hughes in Songs of a Kaumātua (McLean and Orbell 2002: 116).

The search for shelter (he tāwharau) took many forms, and continues. These words lay directly behind the declaration of the aukati, announced by Tūhoe’s leaders in June 1867. The aukati encircled their lands. Their northern border was by now determined by land confiscation in 1866—a line drawn arbitrarily across a map of the eastern Bay of Plenty. This defended territory was “Te Rohe Pōtae o Tūhoe”. The much better known “Rohe Pōtae”, belonging to Ngāti Maniapoto (and usually thought to be the
only territory so named), was similarly defined by land confiscation; for both regions, the marked line formed their northern boundary. In both, oral stories tell of the sacred chiefly hat (“pōtai”) placed over a map, outlining their encircled lands. Among Maniapoto, the hat is said to have been the top hat of the second Māori King, Tāwhiao. Tūhoe elders also say that their Rohe Pōtai was created in the “likeness” (“he tauira”) of a hat. As Mihaka Herewini commented in 2002: “Take a hat, if you look at a hat, and cover all the things underneath, then that’s the likeness to Te Rohe Pōtai o Tūhoe” (“Ko te pōtai koki, ka titiro i te pōtai kia pōtaietia e koe ngā mea katoa kei raro i a ia, he tauira tēna, ki tōku rā, Te Rohe Pōtai o Tūhoe”) (Tuawhenua Research Team 2003 I: 274).

For Māori, the strongest powers and the tapu nature of authority are associated with the head; the metaphor thus conveys its own powerful resonances of tapu. From the late 1860s, the use of the term “rohe pōtai” stated that the land itself was tapu, and protected by its own leaders; it was not protected under the Queen’s law, but under Māori authority. As Ropitini Te Rito of Ngāti Kahungunu explained purposefully to the Native Land Court in 1889, the use of the term “pōtai” was “similar to the crown worn by the Queen” (Wairoa Māori Land Court 1889: 90).³

In actuality, the use of the term is even older than these stories. A Tūhoe elder, Rakaua Teka from Ruatahuna, told the local Tuawhenua Research Team that Te Kooti Arikirangi gave this name to their lands, calling it a district of distinct status: “te rohe pōtai wehea rā anō” (Tuawhenua Research Team 2003 I: 271). It is indeed likely that Te Kooti brought the concept to Tūhoe, and most probably when he first came to shelter with them early in 1869. The term “pōtai”, as an overarching “cap” of authority, was in use in Tūranganui (Poverty Bay), his place of birth, by the late 1850s. During a heated debate in 1858, the metaphor “pōtai” was cited repeatedly to describe the Queen’s supreme (all-covering) authority. Te Kooti will undoubtedly have remembered that Kahutia, his political mentor and outspoken Roman Catholic chief of Rongowhakaata, had at the time retaliated sharply to the local resident magistrate, Herbert Wardell: “Let the Magistrate be under the Queen if he likes; we will not consent to Her authority; we will exercise our own authority in our own country” (Wardell 1858: 21 May, 1861: 31). And the chief Kemera then asked: “[W]hy should the Queen’s Hat be slipped over our head. I for one will never join the church service and hear the Queen prayed for lest the potai should slip over us and smother us & our children” (Wardell 1858: 21 May). The notion of the chiefly cap asserts the autonomy of the area within its encircling boundaries. Te Rohe Pōtai states that the enclosed land is under Māori authority.
After the fighting in the Urewera ended, Te Rohe Pōtae o Tūhoe was placed under the collective leadership of Te Whitu Tekau (The Seventy), in 1872. The Seventy are named in one Tūhoe song, composed in the later 19th century, as the sacred refuge and life force: “Te urunga tū, te urunga tapu, te mauri tū / Te mauri tapu, Te Whitu Tekau” (Tuhitaare n.d.). Te Whitu Tekau was formed to contest the 1866 confiscation, as well as to guard the Rohe Pōtae o Tūhoe. Their collective name—The Seventy—was, almost certainly, taken from the Scriptures: it refers to the 70 leaders of Israel to whom God entrusted the ruling authority after he removed it from Moses. It is also a ritualised number for Māori when undertaking any great task, in war or, as here, in peace. The Seventy of Tūhoe were often referred to as “Te Hokowhitu” in the 1870s.

Tūhoe oral narratives concerning Te Whitu Tekau, however, focus on the incompleteness—or insufficiency—of the number to fulfil the tasks that they faced. There are many versions of this story. I have chosen two from Waiōhau, on the western edge of the Urewera. This version was narrated by Hieke Tupe in 1999, when he described the visit of Te Kooti to their lost settlement, Te Houhi, in January 1886:

“Tūhoe, tāwharautia e koe” – “Tūhoe, shelter (unite) as one”.
“But we have”, they said.
Te Kooti asked: “How many are you?”
“We are Seventy”, they replied.
“He aituā”, he said. “It’s a bad omen, an unlucky number, an uneven number. I will give you ten, to make it eighty.”
We still ask, “What is that ten?” “Is it the ten commandments?”
(Tupe 1999: OS)

This canonical number “Eighty” occurs in other stories. It is, as previously mentioned, the number of the chiefs said—by contemporary sources—to have accompanied Rua to Gisborne in June 1906 (Newman 1906, Poverty Bay Herald 1906). At Waiōhau, the story of the quest that is yet to-be-fulfilled focuses on a land fraud that the community suffered. Te Kooti had tried unsuccessfully to mediate in 1886; ultimately, the people were evicted from their kāinga, Te Houhi, in 1907. They dismantled their newly built meeting-house, Tama-ki-Hikurangi, and re-erected it at Waiōhau in July 1909. Ninety years later, Tupe narrated this story of the “Eighty” inside this house.

The most famous prediction concerning the lost communal lands at Te Houhi is Te Kooti’s statement about Te Umutaoroa (The Earth Oven of Long Cooking). I was first told this story in 1983 by the secretary of the Haahi Ringatū (the faith founded by Te Kooti), Robert (Boy) Biddle from Tūhoe. I
retell it for a purpose—and because it is one of the great stories. One night, when Te Kooti was sleeping beside the Rangitaiki River, he dreamt that the whole valley was veiled in thick mist. He named the place where he slept Te Umutaoroa. Inside this hāngi he left a mauri for the people. The taonga therein would remain uncovered—or hidden—until the rightful claimant appeared: a Messiah for his times. The quest to uncover the hāngi created many other stories concerning rival claimants who sought to succeed Te Kooti, all of whom failed the task (Biddle 1983: OS). The essence of the story, however, is the mauri that lies within. In one version, told by Tupe, there are eight stones. The last (and therefore the greatest) is “te mauri whakahoki i ngā iwi: the power to return people to their land”, as Tupe put it (1999: OS).

Late in 2008, a new Tūhoe claimants’ group formed. It is named Te Umutaoroa. It seeks to negotiate a settlement with the government for some of Tūhoe’s Treaty of Waitangi claims. It was formed in objection to Te Kotahi ā Tūhoe (itself formed as a coalescence of former rival claimant groups in 2006), which argues that it should be the sole representative group for Tūhoe. Te Umutaoroa represents some crucial segments of Tūhoe, notably Waiōhau, as well as Maungapōhatu, Rua’s former settlement. As a spokesman for Te Umutaoroa reminded the Minister of Treaty settlements, Chris Finlayson, in February 2009: “Te Umutaoroa is a grievance and a belief that has been peacefully held for years in hope of salvation” (Nikora 2009). In late May 2009, when the Tūhoe Establishment Trust was formed, by deed of agreement, to be the body that receives the CNI settlement money for Tūhoe ($66 million of back rental money from forestry), the marae at Waiōhau and Maungapōhatu refused to sign (New Zealand Herald (NZH) 30 May 2009: A10). In August 2009, Ngāti Haka and Patuheuheu protestors from Waiōhau blocked the road east of Waiōhau to state their objections to Te Kotahi ā Tūhoe being recognised as the sole negotiating group with the Crown. Local schoolteacher, Ani Hare, declared that it was “unacceptable” that 15 of 32 Tūhoe hapū should not be represented (Dominion Post 11 August 2009). In the same month, Te Kotahi ā Tūhoe rejected the government’s initial offer of terms for settlement. It also accused the local Māori Party member of Parliament for Waiairiki, Te Ururoa Flavell, of having a “Jesus” complex, undermining complex negotiations when he attempted to uphold Te Umutaoroa’s grievances (NZH 26 August 2009: A4).

Te Umutaoroa as a negotiating group has emerged at a time of great difficulty as Tūhoe enter into direct negotiations with the National government. It is not my intention to discuss the causes of the divisions between the two groups; both possess a mandate from segments of Tūhoe.
The issues are about the appropriate forms of authority and representation, as well as the right of different regions within the Urewera to advocate their particular claims. Te Umataoroa seeks to work in parallel with those grouped under Te Kotahi à Tūhoe. Their hope is for a government facilitator to act as a mediator, which was suggested by the Prime Minister in April (NZH 23 April 2009: A1). Te Ururoa Flavell’s efforts, however, have aroused the vituperative ire of Te Kotahi à Tūhoe’s senior leader, Tamati Kruger. My point here is, rather, that the narrative of Te Umataoroa continues to operate as a framework in the search for justice. It is a quest set by Te Kooti over a hundred years ago: to open the hāngi in a future time and under a new spiritual leadership. The mauri inside the hāngi are, as the story insists, for the benefit of the people—collectively. This oral narrative offers more than an historical metaphor. It states the objective: to restore the people’s land, together with their autonomy. The narrative arose historically from Te Kooti’s failure to mediate at Te Houhi in January 1886, when he met with the community’s leaders and the putative purchaser, Harry Burt (Hare Pati). Burt proved intransigent, insisting on more land than the community was prepared to offer. But for another Māori mediator, Aporo Te Tipitipi of Te Arawa, who gave evidence in the subsequent parliamentary inquiry of 1889 (which upheld the justice of the community’s claims, but failed to restore the land to its original owners), Burt’s intransigence was due to his hostility to Te Kooti, as much as to Burt’s greed. Thus, Te Kooti’s promise of future justice came to rest on his predictive words.

The stories-that-continue are told in new contexts. For Tūhoe, the stories about the “Eighty” concern their unfulfilled mission to recover their mana motuhake through a form of self-government. Ropata (Rapata) Wahawaha, leader of the last Ngāti Porou contingent sent to the Urewera as military allies of the government, stated when he quit Ruatāhuna for good on 11 December 1871:

The Government have acceded to your thoughts, and no longer entertain the wish to drive you from your country, this change is owing to your present obedience to the Government. Therefore the Government desire that I and my people should vacate your Country leaving you the right to act over all your boundaries: - the Waimana, Maungapohatu, Ruatāhuna and Waikare Moana. I therefore authorise the Chiefs of the Uriwera to be responsible for their several Districts, that the Government may know that you are responsible for the actions of your tribes in your own boundaries. (Porter 1871)\(^5\)

This military agreement signalled the end of the mid-19th century wars. But it signalled much more. The government’s agent for the East Coast, John
D. Ormond, had set it out, when writing to Te Purewa II (Renata Pohokorua), senior chief at Maungapōhatu, in November 1871 about the peace terms:

The Govt. have considered your proposal to leave the management of your people in your hands that is to look to you to keep evil out of your boundaries & hold your people together. This word of yours is accepted & it is to you the Govt. will look in future for the regulation of affairs at Maungapōhatu. (Ormond 1871)

This agreement was set out in letters sent simultaneously to other key chiefly leaders, among them Te Whenuanui I at Ruatāhuna and Te Makarini Tamarau at Waikaremoana, who later gave the rooster-<i>tokotoko</i> to the government. This exchange of promises for internal self-government led directly to the formation of Te Whitu Tekau in 1872: a collective, shared chiefly leadership, rather than anointing a King. In 1874, at the great <i>hui</i> held by Te Whitu Tekau at Ruatāhuna, the authority (<i>mana</i>) was expressly stated as belonging to them all, and in which they all participated (thereby bewildering the local resident magistrate, Herbert Brabant) (Brabant 1874: 3). Tupara Tamana’s elder brother, Te Ahikaiata Tamana, was the founding secretary of Te Whitu Tekau; he and his brother Tupara (who shot the goat) long acted as spokesmen for its concerns. The exchange of promises made between Donald McLean, the Native Minister, and Tūhoe’s leaders in 1871-72 was acknowledged by Premier Seddon (after whom Seddon Bennington was named) when, in 1896, he introduced the legislation to establish Te Rohe Pōtae o Tūhoe in law as a self-governing tribal district. Richard Seddon said:

I hope to see this Bill passed and placed on our statute book, and an opportunity given to the Tuhoe people to conserve their lands to themselves, thus maintaining a pledge given over a quarter of a century ago by Sir Donald McLean. (Seddon 1896: 168)

This was Seddon’s gift in exchange for the <i>taiaha</i> of “sovereignty”, Rongokarae—the gift described by Kereru and others in 1895—and also in exchange for the rooster-<i>tokotoko</i>, Te Makarini’s promise of peace. Seddon’s legislation ended the <i>de facto</i> autonomy of the Urewera. Instead, it placed the terms of Urewera’s self-governance within statute law.

The Urewera District Native Reserve, set up in 1896, was abolished in 1922. By this time, the Crown had bought more than two-thirds of the original reserve. Forty thousand acres (of the 330,000 acres that the government finally claimed in 1922) was acquired by purchasing individual undefined land shares between 1910 and 1912, contrary to the existing Urewera legislation. Most of
that early purchasing was invalid. The purchases were retrospectively validated in August 1916 by legislation passed through Parliament immediately at the end of Rua’s trial for sedition and resisting arrest. Although both these charges were dismissed, Rua was (as we know) imprisoned on the dubious grounds of “morally” resisting arrest. The timing of this legislation was not coincidental. In 1915, Rua had led Tūhoe protests against the renewal of government monopoly land purchasing in the Urewera, and his violent arrest in 1916 on “sly-grog” charges was demonstrably a pretext.

This talk has been about stories for survival—and more. These are stories about the recovery of autonomy. Ngāi Tūhoe have struggled to uphold their Rohe Pōtae—their cap of authority—against many encroachments by many governments. The story of Te Umutaoroa, like the story of the secreted gold, and the story Te Kooti’s hidden diamond (about which I have written elsewhere) are all narratives born of injustice (Binney 1984). The stories hold out hope, and sustain the belief that, in due time, new leaders will come forth and resolutions found.

Storytelling is an art deep within human nature. Good narratives not only tell us about ourselves; they tell us about the beliefs of others. Stories are the essential way by which we expand our empathy and our imaginations; stories are the means by which we communicate across time and across cultures. The art of oral story telling is one of the oldest communicative skills that we possess. It follows that the art of transmitting the “histories that matter” to successive generations is as old as human existence.

NOTES

1. Best was quoting a “native account”, but did not name his source.
2. I also talked at length with Horopapera Tatu in 1977 and 1978. He died later that year.
3. I am indebted to Cathy Marr for this reference.
4. The *waiata* “Ko Ranginui” was composed by Tuhitaare, a *tohunga* from Tūhoe. The song was probably composed as a *pātere* in the 1880s; its form has changed to a lament (*waiata tangi*). The title refers to the parent of all life, the Sky Father who, in the form of Tūhoe’s sacred mountain, Maungapōhatu, became their ancestor. In the song, the curse (*upokokōhua*) of confiscation is directly blamed on Piripi Te Heuheu’s decision to lead a Tūhoe contingent to fight at Ōrākau. Text by courtesy of Taiarahia Black, Tuhitaare’s great-grandson; translation by courtesy of Tama Nikora.
5. Porter translated Ropata’s speech into English.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Meaning</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ariki</td>
<td>‘chief’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>aukati</td>
<td>‘boundary’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hau</td>
<td>‘spirit/essence’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hangi</td>
<td>‘earth oven’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hapū</td>
<td>‘sub-tribe’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>hui</td>
<td>‘gathering’</td>
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<tr>
<td>huia</td>
<td>‘bird (Heteralocha acutirostris) whose tail-feathers are prized’</td>
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<tr>
<td>kāinga</td>
<td>‘settlement’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>kaumatua</td>
<td>‘elder’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>koekoeā</td>
<td>‘long-tailed cuckoo’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mauri</td>
<td>‘life principle, vitality and material symbol thereof’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mana</td>
<td>‘power, authority, influence, prestige’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>mana whenua</td>
<td>‘power/authority based on association with land/place’</td>
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<tr>
<td>mana motuhake</td>
<td>‘autonomy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>marae</td>
<td>‘ceremonial ground’</td>
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<td>matakite</td>
<td>‘seer’</td>
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<tr>
<td>ōhākī</td>
<td>‘dying words’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>pā</td>
<td>‘fortification’</td>
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<tr>
<td>paepae</td>
<td>‘speakers’ bench on marae’</td>
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<tr>
<td>paepae poto</td>
<td>‘threshold’ as in “te paepae poto o Houmaitawhiti”</td>
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<td>pātere</td>
<td>‘abusive song’</td>
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<tr>
<td>pōtāe</td>
<td>‘hat, cap’ as in “Rohe Pōtāe”</td>
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<td>rohe</td>
<td>‘boundary’ -ditto-</td>
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<td>taiaha</td>
<td>‘spear-like weapon’</td>
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<td>taonga</td>
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<td>‘mourning ceremony’</td>
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<td>tapu</td>
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<td>‘shelter’</td>
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<tr>
<td>tihi</td>
<td>‘summit, upper platform’</td>
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<tr>
<td>tohu</td>
<td>‘omen’</td>
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<td>‘skilled person’</td>
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<td>tokotoko</td>
<td>‘walking stick’</td>
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<td>upokokōhua</td>
<td>‘curse’</td>
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<td>‘song’</td>
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<td>wero</td>
<td>‘challenge’</td>
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<tr>
<td>whaikōrero</td>
<td>‘orate, speak formally’</td>
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<tr>
<td>whakapapa</td>
<td>‘genealogy’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>whakataukei</td>
<td>‘proverb’</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
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