The super-narrative effect. The resonance of written letters for whānau in the historical record

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In March 1988, my late aunt Onehou Phillis (1926-2012)[1] and I visited the National Archives (as it was called then) and the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington. Onehou was our Māori language teacher at Edgecumbe College in the Eastern Bay of Plenty and was accompanying our seventh-form English class to Wellington as our kaumatua. We stayed at Bruce Stewart's marae, Tapu Te Ranga, at Island Bay, and during the course of the week there was ample time to take in our capital's highlights. One afternoon, Onehou and I took the opportunity to see what information was held at the archives concerning our Ngāti Awa and Tūhourangi tipuna Maata Te Taiawātea Te Rangitūkehu (c.1849-1929).[2] My father and Onehou were first cousins and Maata was their grandmother. Our whānau had planned a large whānau reunion for the following month during the Easter weekend at Kōkōhīnau Marae at Te Teko in the Eastern Bay of Plenty for all of the descendants of Maata and her husband Te Hāroto Riini Mānuera (c.1845-1931). Nearly one thousand people were coming to attend the event. Onehou and I, with a number of others, were on the Reunion Book Committee and we wanted archival material on Maata that we could include in the book. By that stage the publication was in its final drafts, but we were still able to include any interesting archival material on Maata or Te Hāroto that we might find, including any possible photographs of our tīpuna.

We were not disappointed with our archive visits. We located a photograph of an unidentified Māori woman from the late nineteenth century that we were almost certain was a close relative of Maata. This was because of a distinctive tattoo on her arm that recorded Maata's maternal whānau name "Rangiheuea". It was only in 2017, after Onehou had died, that I was able to identify the Māori woman as Maata's aunt, Mere Rangiheuea, a tipuna of the Messent whānau of Murupara. Unfortunately, back in 1988 we could not include this photo in our reunion book, but we managed to include a few letters from the archives that Maata had written to various government officials between 1908 and 1909, including to the Minister of Native Affairs at the time, James Carroll; the Prime Minister Joseph Ward and Maata's local Māori M.P., Apirana Ngata. Maata was approximately 60 years old at the time of the letters. In her correspondence she complained that a block of land at Ōhiwa, some twenty kilometres east of Whakatāne belonging to her late father Te Rangitūkehu had been given to a Pākehā by the Government.[3] Put simply, Maata wanted her father's land back.[4] In regard to the subject matter of the letters, Maata's letters are unremarkable in terms of Māori espousing their land grievances. There are thousands of letters written by Māori to the British and New Zealand government officials in the nineteenth and early twentieth century about major losses of their traditional lands. At the time of Maata's letters, already three-quarters of New Zealand's land mass was no longer owned by Māori and was in the hands of the New Zealand Government or Pākehā.[5] The deprivation of Māori from their lands is a well-known story in the modern-day New Zealand historical narratives, reinforced by the massive amount of research produced for the Waitangi Tribunal since the mid-1980s concerning breaches of the Treaty of Waitangi and the alienation of Māori from their lands.[6]

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However, as a result of being published in our reunion book, which was distributed to hundreds of our whānau members, the letters have since become part of an iwi super-narrative that has been created in the later twentieth century about Maata and her father Te Rangitūkehu in the tribal history of Ngāti Awa. In this tribal history Maata and her father are portrayed as having played a dominant role in Ngāti Awa's social and political history in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. The letters were included in *Maata Reunion Book* to show that Maata was heavily involved in land claim cases during her life, and with their publication they entered into the social consciousness of some 500 of Maata's descendants. The letters therefore corroborate a dominant narrative about Maata and her family's position in Eastern Bay of Plenty Māori politics and history.

The ability to maintain such super-narratives has been aided by the descendants of Maata re-emphasising, accentuating and moulding such narratives. These actions of re-telling and reiterating stories in general have the ability to influence all sorts of stories, not just confined to my own family and tribal group, but within all Māori kin and tribal groups. In the process of re-telling and moulding stories, some narratives become a self-perpetuating truth amongst Māori. Essentially, they have the ability of becoming political statements, and with repeated assertion they become authoritative.[7] This is what I call the "super-narrative effect" through which the perpetuation of stories conveying particular versions of people, events and social situations are deemed to be authoritative and authentic, accurately reflecting life as it was at the time. Using the example of Maata's letters and their impact on Ngāti Awa history, this article examines how such stories can develop into super-narratives over time. It also highlights some of the implications of super-narratives for Māori generally.

The letters (1908-1909)

There were three letters in total written by Maata, to James Carroll on 20 March 1908, to Sir Joseph Ward on 28 August 1908, and to Apirana Ngata on 31 March 1909, all written in te reo Māori. Officials rendered translations of the letters when they were received, and both versions appear in the archival files. They all contain their usual diplomatic introductory statements that were common in Māori letters written to government officials at the time, such as:

> *Kia Te Honore Te Minita mo nga mea Maori ara Kia Timikara e hoa tena ra koe.*[8]
>
> To the Honourable Minister for Native Affairs, James Carroll, friend, greeting.
>
> *Kia Te Honore Te Waari Te Pirimia mo nga raruraru o te iwi Maori o te motu o Aotearoa*[9]
>
> To the Honourable, Ward, the Prime Minister for the troubles of the Māori people of Aotearoa [New Zealand]

The March and August 1908 letters went on to state the grievance regarding the land being that of Maata's father, Te Rangitūkehu.

> *He whakaatu tena naku kia koe mote whenua o toku matua Tukehu kei te Wainui nama 314 Parihi o Waiwana, nga eka 288 kei te takiwa.* [10]

> This is to inform you in regard to the land of my father Tukehu, in Wainui 314, Parish of Waimana containing 288 acres.
>
> *Ko taua whenua kua rarururu ara kua kiia mai kia hau i te Rehita o Akarana no te Karauna ke taua whenua. Kaore au i mohio he aha te take iriro ai i tetahi atu tangata tenei whenua toku mahara no ake ko te pakeha e noho ana i te taha o taua whenua whenua nei kite tono atu kite karauna kia tukua mai mona*[11]
>
> There is trouble about this land, that is to say the Registrar at Auckland has informed me that the said land belongs to the Crown. I do not know what is the reason that this land has passed into the possession of any other person. My supposition is that the Pakeha who is living by the side of the said land has applied to the Government to hand it over to him.

Maata went on to explain further in her August 1908 letter to Sir Joseph Ward.

> *Kaore au e mohio ana he aha te take i tangohia ai tenei whenua mehea mea mo nga moni utu reiti mehemea ranei na tetahi tangata i tono mo na taua whenua e he ana kati ake tena*[12]
>
> I am not aware of the reason why the said land was taken for payment of rates or whether some person applied for the said land for himself, (if so) it is wrong.

Maata then pleaded to Sir Joseph Ward by reminding him of her father's service to the Government.

> *Rangitukehu mo te mana rangatira me tona kaha kite pupuru i te mana o te Kuini Wikitoria me te Kawanatanga o tenei motu me te aroha tonu hoki te kawanatanga ki a ia, e hoa ma, Heinoi atu tenei naku kia koe….*[13]
>
> In consideration of the chieftainship and man of Rangitukehu and his power to uphold the mana of Queen Victoria and the Government of this Island, and also in consideration of the esteem which the Government had of him, O friends, this is a petition from me …

When Maata wrote to Apirana Ngata in March 1908, the parliamentarian sought clarification from the Native Affairs Under Secretary, who explained the position of the land.[14] According to the government, the lot had been sold to Christopher Mathieson Hansen for £260, but he failed to complete the sale. According to the Registrar of the Native Land Board:

> Waimana Lot 314, 284 acres is Crown land. It was recently sold by the Crown but the purchasers having failed to complete the purchase it reverted back to the Crown. There is nothing I can discover that indicates that Tukehu had any interest in the Lot.[15]

Like many of the letters written by Māori to the Government concerning land rights in the nineteenth and early twentieth century, nothing came of Maata's letters. And our myriad other land issues subsequently subsumed our efforts to maintain what lands we still had left in the Eastern Bay of Plenty.

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The implication of the letters.

Maata clearly had the ability and confidence to communicate effectively with the Government over land belonging to her father Te Rangitūkehu. But within the letters there are also various assertions and contentions that shape and add to the modern-day understandings of the political and social circumstances of Ngāti Awa in the early twentieth century. There was the assertion that her father was a loyalist chief (kūpapa) to the Government. The nature of Te Rangitūkehu's chieftainship, however, as well as the extent of his authority are unknown from these letters.[16] An important aspect of the correspondence is that Maata received responses from the several government representatives thereby setting off a process of engagement with the Government. This not only legitimised her role as spokesperson for her whānau and her wider kin group but also cemented recognition from the New Zealand Government that she was a successor and appropriate heir to Te Rangitūkehu's chieftainship and authority. Within Maata's letters, there are no references to any male kin or other heirs to Te Rangitūkehu.

The letters tell us something of Māori gender relationships at the time, at least as far as Ngāti Awa is concerned. By implication, Maata could be an heir to Te Rangitūkehu's authority and, more widely, that Māori women in Ngāti Awa could inherit chiefly authority from their parents.[17] Maata also did not need to go through her other male kin as intermediaries in order to engage with and receive a reply from the Government regarding her father's land at Ōhiwa. The effect of these letters, published in 1988 in the *Maata Reunion Book* (commonly referred to in my whānau as the "Green Maata Book" in respect to its colour) cannot be overstated. They have contributed to the super-narratives around Maata and her father Te Rangitūkehu. The book had an eventual print-run of 500 copies, with a reprint produced in the early 2000s. The book is constantly read and re-read by descendants of Maata, who now number in the thousands. It is not only the letters that have been read, but also the written explanation that accompanied them. Onehou Phillis wrote the following interpretation in the *Maata Reunion Book* with regard to the letters:

> This file of the correspondence from her [Maata] to the Minister for Native Affairs, the Hon. James Carroll, to Sir Joseph Ward and to Sir Apirana Ngata in 1908 and 1909 reveals the extent of her responsibilities and the hassles she encountered with regard to land.
>
> The beautiful handwriting reveals that our Kuia was an educated woman and it certainly appears as though she was well able to attend to her own affairs.[18]

I have highlighted the last portion to note an interpretation about Maata that Onehou had inferred from the letters. My aunt had concluded that she had beautiful writing and was an educated woman. The implication that flows from this is that the letters implicitly increase Maata's importance. We do not know what level of educational instruction that Maata received in order for her to create her letters. When she was a girl in the early 1850s, there was no organised state education system in the fledgling New Zealand colony.[19] It is also debatable whether Maata could in fact read and write given that the letter dated 31 March 1909 shows an 'x' indicating her mark instead of her signature.[20] However, Maata did come under the influence of one of her paternal uncles, Tiopira Hūkīkī. Tiopira could competently read and write as a result of his ongoing relationship with various missionaries not only in the Ngāti Awa area but also the wider Bay of Plenty.[21] Therefore, Tiopira might have taught his

niece Maata the ways of engagement with the Government in spite of questions of literacy on her part.[22] Tiopira was a paternal first cousin to Maata's father. He took on the role of scribe when our whānau, hapū and iwi needed to deal with the plethora of government representatives and processes from time to time in the 1860s and 1870s.[23] But narratives about Tiopira's life are not widely known by Maata's descendants, nor amongst most members of Ngāti Awa today. The stories surrounding Maata and Te Rangitūkehu have overshadowed stories surrounding Tiopira who died without direct descendants to maintain a dominant narrative about him. Yet Tiopira was amongst the shrewdest of Ngāti Awa's nineteenth century leaders,[24] but in the absence of progeny to tell narratives about him, others do fill the void. Regarding my own whānau, these are the offspring of Maata and her father Te Rangitūkehu. The letters by Maata therefore are part of the narratives leading up to the prominence and dominance of Maata and her father Te Rangitūkehu in Ngāti Awa history that has been developed and built up from the 1980s until today.

In 1977, my cousin Lauren Hunia's unpublished history thesis, *A Māori history of the Rangitaiki*, did not mention Maata.[25] This is despite Lauren Hunia being a great granddaughter of Maata and having interviewed her grand uncle Eruera Riini Mānuera (Onehou's father), a son of Maata, for her thesis.[26] Lauren had a measured view of Te Rangitūkehu throughout her work. She mentioned other Ngāti Awa leaders, such as Wepiha Apanui and Kaperiere, but most notably Tiopira Hūkīkī who had a prominent position in her narrative. From her work, there was a portrayal of Te Rangitūkehu in a nuanced way in the social fabric of Ngāti Awa, who was characterised as an important character, but not as an overwhelmingly dominant character. It was with the publication of *Te One Matua* in 1982, that written stories of Maata and Te Rangitūkehu were given significant prominence in the social consciousness of Ngāti Awa.[27] This book celebrated the centenary of the construction of the wharenui Ruataupare at our marae Kōkōhīnau in Te Teko in 1882 by the Māori leader Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki.[28] Kōkōhīnau was the homestead that Te Rangitūkehu shared with his whānau and one of his hapū, Ngāti Pahipoto.[29] The significance of *Te One Matua* was that it was constructed for a tribal audience. For the first time in history, a written book was being circulated amongst Ngāti Awa members about portions of their history and for them to read and observe the narratives within them. This separated the book from Lauren Hunia's thesis which was only available at the Auckland University library. Ngāti Awa members also gave significant authority to *Te One Matua* because of the combined prominence of its authors; Professor Hirini Mead of Victoria University of Wellington and Onehou Phillis. Professor Mead is also a descendant of Maata and the gravitas that he held at the time as being one of the few Māori academics in charge of an academic department within one of New Zealand's universities, lent weight to the written accounts in *Te One Matua*.[30]

Within its introductory chapters, *Te One Matua* gave an explanation of the confiscation of land from its Māori owners by the New Zealand Government in the mid nineteenth century.[31] It used a lot of material that was mentioned in Lauren Hunia's thesis, and like Lauren's work, it mentioned many of the principal chiefs of Ngāti Awa at the time, including Tiopira Hūkīkī. However, *Te One Matua* gave particular prominence to Te Rangitūkehu:

> Te Rangitūkehu had to lead Ngāti Pahipoto through one of the most dramatic periods of our history. At the same time since he was also related to and a member of all the other hapus of Ngati Awa-ki-Rangitaiki, he had to try and look after their interests too, to the extent that he was able. He was of Ngāti Aotahi, Ngāti Poua, Warahoe and

> Hamua, Ngāti Ahi, Ngāti Ruamataura, Nga Maihi, Ngai Tamaoki-more or less-and he was Ngāti Awa, a big man in his own right.[32]
>
> There is absolutely no doubt that Te Rangitūkehu was a man of considerable mana at the time. He was the acknowledged chief of Ngāti Pahipoto. [33]

Maata also begins to appear in the narratives of *Te One Matua*, noted in genealogies alongside her brother Paihau as children of Te Rangitūkehu. But it was the photographs contained within *Te One Matua* that gave an extra meaning to the book's narratives, the majority of which are those associated with Maata's family. There are photographs of Maata in addition to all of her six children, Rangiwhakawaitau, Te Mokohaerewa, Te Rongopai, Pohoira and Makarita as well as one of her sons-in-law, Hunia Wi Haare and two of her daughters-in-law Te Moetu Moko and Pareake Eruera. There are no known photographs to date, that exist for Te Rangitūkehu or his son Paihau. Out of Paihau's five children, only one portrait of a daughter, Parehuia, was included in the book.[34] *Te One Matua* was therefore the genesis of the dominant narratives surrounding Maata and Te Rangitūkehu. It was as a result of her work on *Te One Matua*, that allowed Onehou Phillis to put together the *Maata Reunion Book* in 1988 which contributed to the narratives of Maata and Te Rangitūkehu gaining their importance in Ngāti Awa political history. In essence, the super-narrative was starting to form.

In 1996 another descendant of Maata, Tania Rei (a niece of Onehou),[35] wrote a biographical entry for Maata in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, from which the story of Maata entered the national consciousness.[36] Maata was given a prominent role in land claims before the Native Land Court and continued the narrative of Maata's involvement with land issues from the *Maata Reunion Book*. In Tania Rei's entry, Maata was also portrayed as being generous in giving out land to her kin:

> By the 1880s Maata had assumed many of the responsibilities of her father, who was by then in his final years. She spent long hours in the Native Land Court asserting her interest in tribal lands, and used several versions of her name to register herself on certificates of land title. She succeeded to her parents' and grandparents' interests by using their names to support her claims. Most of the land to which she acquired a title was given to members of the tribe. As a consequence, descendants ended up with less than some of those whom she assisted. Maata had a reputation for being generous. [37]

Maata's close male kin such as her uncles Tiopira Hūkīkī, Hiriwetiri Motutere,[38] Matutaera Te Wharau,[39] as well as her brother Paihau are not mentioned at all in Tania's account. Maata was also mistakenly noted as the only child of Te Rangitōwhare, the mother of both Maata and Paihau and principal wife of Te Rangitūkehu.[40] This oversight allowed Maata to be portrayed as senior to her brother Paihau. The effect of Rei's account, building upon *Te One Matua* and the *Maata Reunion Book* was that Maata was portrayed as being a powerful matriarchal figure who was generous with the gifting of land. The reality was that the land was not Maata's or her father's to give out to the rest of her relatives, but land communally owned with their other kinfolk.[41] This was the case with all the blocks of land, whether for the Pūtauaki, Pokohu, Matahina, Ōmataroa or various Matatā and Rangitaiki Parish Blocks.[42] Nonetheless, with Tania Rei's account, Maata had evolved as being the dominant heir to Te Rangitūkehu, who was himself also portrayed as dominant in Ngāti Awa affairs in the late nineteenth century.

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This particular narrative about Maata and her father had begun to dominate by the late 1990s. These narratives were further buttressed and enhanced by Te Onehou Phillis in 2002 with the publication of the book on her father, Eruera Riini Mānuera, who was the son of Maata and the grandson Te Rangitūkehu.[43] The book, although published entirely in te reo Māori and therefore not accessible to the wider non-Māori speaking New Zealand public, nonetheless continued to reemphasise the importance of Maata and Te Rangitūkehu within Ngāti Awa. It further relegated Tiopira Hūkīkī into a lesser and in fact negative role in the narrative of Ngāti Awa.

> *Ko te tangata i mahi i te taha i a Rangitūkehu i nga tautohe ki te Kāwana mo nga whenua murua, ko Tiopira Hūkiki. Ko tō Rangitūkehu hinengaro he hūmarie, Ko tō Tiopira, he tangata uaua.* [44]
>
> The man who worked alongside Rangitūkehu in the arguments with the Government over land confiscations was Tiopira Hūkīkī. The nature of Rangitūkehu was one of being humble and Tiopira was as a hard man.[45]

The dominant narrative involving Maata and Te Rangitūkehu in Ngāti Awa's political and social history was fully developed by the beginning of the new millennium. It had been leading up to this point from the written and pictorial narratives produced in *Te One Matua* in 1982, the *Maata Reunion Book* in 1988, and Tania Rei's account of Maata in 1996. The *Eruera Mānuera* book in 2002 had just re-emphasised a now self-perpetuating truth. By the time the book *Māori Peoples of New Zealand – Ngā Iwi o Aotearoa* was published in 2006 the super-narrative for Maata and Te Rangitūkehu was now fully crystallised. That book detailed the Māori people and the principal tribal groups throughout the whole of New Zealand. When Layne Harvey wrote the chapter on Ngāti Awa, Maata and Te Rangitūkehu's dominant place within Ngāti Awa's history in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was complete:

> Te Rangitūkehu Hātua was the chief of Pahipoto, a central tribe of the Ngāti Awa people. His daughter Maata Te Taiawatea was brought up as a puhi (ceremonial virgin) until she married Te Hāroto Whakataka Riini Mānuera, the son of a chief. Later in life she took over many of her father's responsibilities, spending long hours in the Native Land Court as an advocate of tribal lands.[46]

The super-narrative effect

The super-narrative effect that I have just described operates in other iwi as well. Each generation has built up powerful stories and their own super-narratives that are moulded, evolved and used as self-perpetuating truths for various purposes across time. The older iwi histories are classic examples. In Ngāti Awa's ancient history the story of Wairaka saving the Mataatua waka from drifting out to sea from its moorings in Whakatāne is one example.[47] However, the Whakatōhea iwi attribute their tipuna Muriwai, a paternal aunt of Wairaka, as saving the Mataatua canoe in that instance.[48] For Ngāti Porou there is another example where they assert that their tīpuna Porourangi and Tahu Pōtiki are brothers, whereas Ngāi Tahu contend that Tahu Pōtiki is a paternal uncle of Porourangi.[49] These stories have been repeated time and time again amongst iwi members. These examples of super-narratives have the purpose of helping maintain tribal identities for their members and are generally viewed as absolute truths. In the Native Land Court processes of the nineteenth century, whānau, hapū

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and iwi were forced to employ super-narratives to claim lands. The adversarial British judicial system was foreign to them. The Government no longer allowed customary law to operate amongst Māori in maintaining title to their lands, instead imposing new titles through a state-operated land registration system. Within the new system, Māori had to prove their titles in the Native Land Court. Such processes fostered a zero-sum game where Māori were pitted against Māori in order to have their land titles backed by the state bureaucracy. Kin groups employed super-narratives lest they be deprived of their lands, and others who had not previously occupied them take ownership. Genealogies were regularly cited in Native Land Court hearings that asserted that ancestors and their descendants lived on the land and always held title to the land.[50] The Matahina Block in the Bay of Plenty is one of the many examples where Ngāti Awa was involved in Native Land Court hearings. Hamiora Tumutara,[51] an important Ngāti Awa kaumatua and a relative to Maata and Te Rangitūkehu, cited the tipuna Mahu and her descendants as having ownership to the block.[52] Whether Mahu had the title to the Matahina block under Māori customary law is highly unlikely given the nature of kinship and land relationships, but this narrative had to be employed nonetheless in the Native Land Court process.

The modern-day judicial process of the Waitangi Tribunal that allows investigation of Māori grievances against the New Zealand Government for past breaches of the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi also fosters competing super-narratives.[53] At times, like the nineteenth century Native Court hearings over title to land, these also lead to zero-sum processes. Some tribal or kin groups have always had to assert ownership or authority over geographical territories or areas of land to justify an exclusive claim against the New Zealand Government. For example, in its case before the Waitangi Tribunal, Ngāti Awa asserted the following territorial coastal land claims:

> In 1865 Ngāti Awa held …(a) The islands of Motiti, the Rurima group, Moutohora (Whale Island), Volkner Rocks, Whakaari (White Island), Ohakana and Uretara (both the latter two islands being situated in Ohiwa Harbour) and the seas from Waihi Estuary (near Maketu) to Ohiwa Harbour…[54]

This claim is very typical of the types of territorial narratives asserted by tribal groups before the Tribunal. In this case, another tribal group Ngāti Tūwharetoa-ki-Kawerau also claimed authority over similar lands, such as the Rurima group indicated by Ngāti Awa.[55] Super-narratives have been employed everywhere in the Waitangi Tribunal hearings, with scholars able to track the genesis and the evolution of many of them presented before the Tribunal, along with the development of new narratives that the Tribunal itself would present in its own deliberations about Māori social and political histories.[56]

Conclusion

Maata's letters of 1908 and 1909 occupy a particular place in Ngāti Awa political and social history. At face value they were letters that were part of wider land rights claims between Māori and successive New Zealand governments since the nineteenth century. However, in the process of expressing land grievances and a desire for righting wrongs Maata inadvertently created a lasting written historical marker. Her letters were subsequently used to explain the political and social positions that Maata and her father, Te Rangitūkehu occupied in the mid nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. When the *Maata Reunion Book* was published in 1988, the letters were seen by an array of Maata's descendants for the first time, together with my aunt Onehou Phillis's interpretation on Maata's place within the iwi.

Even though they were just letters, they contributed to an ongoing super-narrative in Ngāti Awa history that gives prominence to Maata and her father Te Rangitūkehu. This super-narrative involving Maata and Te Rangitūkehu as dominant Ngāti Awa figures continues to be emphasised today. The descendants of Maata, now in the thousands, have kept this narrative going and it is self-perpetuating and self-sustaining. The letters of Maata at the beginning of this article thus helped in the development, enhancement and support of this super-narrative.

There are lessons for other Māori in understanding this super-narrative effect in whānau, hapū or iwi contexts. At an elementary level, they have the purpose of helping maintain whānau and iwi identities for their members. In their minds they are absolute truths providing a degree of comfort for Māori in the certainty of knowing one version of events and the roles that their tīpuna played in them. They are powerful tools of making sense of the past and the present. A secondary effect, however, is that super-narratives crowd out the richness and nuances of other stories. They tend to overly generalise social situations, often glossing over the often hard and difficult questions such as the true nature of relationships between whānau, hapū and iwi members. A tertiary effect is that super-narratives foster larger-than-life characters which emphasise greatness, wisdom and omnipotence within our tīpuna. However, these gloss over the complex human characteristics of ancestors who were involved in complex kin and tribal relationships through their lifetime. And those of us in the present need to constantly understand that historical records such as letters are historical markers written at a particular point in time, with a particular purpose. However, they can be used in processes that create and enhance super-narratives. And for Māori, as the descendants of tīpuna, we must remember that our ancestors were human beings with all the abilities as well as frailties of the human condition. They were simply a part of rich and diverse whānau dynamics and my tīpuna, Maata and Te Rangitūkehu, need to be seen in this particular light.

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[1] Te Onehou Phillis, *Maumahara: The Memories of Te Onehou Phillis* (Otaki, NZ: Kapohia, 2012).
[2] Tania Rei, "Te Taiawatea Rangitūkehu, Maata", *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1996. Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3t19/te-taiawatea-rangitukehu-maata (accessed 26 April 2022).
[3] It is to be noted that Te Rangitūkehu is sometimes referred to as Rangitūkehu or Tukehu in the letters and correspondence. These are variations of his names.
[4] "Received: - From: Maata Rangitukehu, Te Teko. - Subject: Waimana Lot 314, alleges that land has wrongfully passed into hands of a Pakeha", Item R22402324, Series 16036, MA1, Box 258, Record Number 1908/547, Archives New Zealand, Wellington.
[5] See the various maps in Alan Ward, *An Unsettled History* (Wellington, NZ: Bridget Williams Books, 1999), 162-66.
[6] See the plethora of reports either commissioned by the Waitangi Tribunal concerning lands, or reports issued for the various tribal groups at https://www.waitangitribunal.govt.nz/ (accessed 26 April 2022).
[7] This is a general theme in storytelling and in narratives involving indigenous peoples. See Bain Attwood and Fiona Magowan (eds.), *Telling Stories: Indigenous History and Memory in Australia and New Zealand* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2001). See also the observations about the uses of tribal stories and narratives in Tipene O'Regan, "Old Myths and New Politics", *New Zealand Journal of History* 26, no.1 (1992): 5-27.

[8] Letter, Maata Rangitukehu to the Minister of Native Affairs, James Carroll, 20 March 1908, "Received: – From: Maata Rangitukehu". All excerpts follow the original orthography used by Maata. The translations are the official ones used in the file itself.
[9] Letter, Maata Rangitukehu to the Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward, 28 August 1908, "Received: -– From: Maata Rangitukehu".
[10] Letter, Maata Rangitukehu to the Minister of Native Affairs, James Carroll, 20 March 1908, "Received: – From: Maata Rangitukehu".
[11] Letter, Maata Rangitukehu to the Minister of Native Affairs, James Carroll, 20 March 1908, "Received: – From: Maata Rangitukehu".
[12] Letter, Maata Rangitukehu to the Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward, 28 August 1908, "Received: – From: Maata Rangitukehu".
[13] Letter, Maata Rangitukehu to the Prime Minister, Sir Joseph Ward, 28 August 1908, "Received: – From: Maata Rangitukehu".
[14] Letter, Maata Rangitukehu to Apirana Turupa Ngata, 31 March 1909, "Received: – From: Maata Rangitukehu".
[15] Note, A. Holland to Thomas Fisher 14 April 1908, "Received: – From: Maata Rangitukehu".
[16] During the New Zealand wars over tribal authority and land issues in the mid nineteenth century, Te Rangitūkehu and his kin were placed in a most difficult political position. This was over whether to support other central North Island Māori tribal leaders in their wars with the Government or to either side with the Government or the myriad other options available to them. Each option had a range of particular social costs attached to them.
[17] Traditionally it has been opined that only Māori males could inherit leadership positions. However, there are variations between tribal and kin groups. See Selwyn Kātene, "Modelling Māori Leadership", *MAI Review* 2, (2010), 4.
[18] Maata Reunion Book Committee, *Maata Reunion April 1988*, (Kōkōhīnau, Te Teko: Maata Reunion Book Committee, 1988), 11.
[19] See Judith Simon (ed.), *Ngā Kura Māori. The Native Schools System 1867-1969* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 1998); John Barrington, *Separate but Equal. Māori Schools and the Crown 1867-1969* (Wellington, NZ: Victoria University Press, 2008).
[20] Letter, Maata Rangitukehu to Apirana Turupa Ngata, 31 March 1909, "Received: – From: Maata Rangitukehu".
[21] The missionary Thomas Grace referred to him as 'Theophilis' and noted that he was "very clever and has always been well disposed". S.J. Grace, G.F. Brittan, C.W. Grace, & A.V. Grace (eds.), *Thomas Samuel Grace, Pioneer Missionary among the Maoris 1850-1879, Being Letters and Journals of Thomas Samuel Grace* (Palmerston North: G.H. Bennett & Co, 1928), 171.
[22] Maata, while not knowing how to read and write, nonetheless, like other Māori appreciated the influence and the power of literacy, and eventually the need to engage in literary practices such as correspondence. See Lachy Paterson, "Māori literary practices in colonial New Zealand" in *Indigenous Textual Cultures: Reading and Writing in the Age of Global Empire*, eds. Tony Ballantyne, Lachy Paterson and Angela Wanhalla (Durham, USA, London, UK: Duke University Press, 2020), 80-96.
[23] See, for example, his letter dated 6 April 1866 as a petition to the Government in Hirini Moko Mead, *Te Muru nga Hara: The Pardon* (Whakatāne: Te Runanga o Ngāti Awa, 1986), 49-51.
[24] Lauren Te Aorangi Hunia, "Tangi Putauaki: A Māori History of the Rangitaiki", (Masters thesis, University of Auckland, 1977), 39-40.
[25] Hunia, "Tangi Putauaki".
[26] Lauren Hunia's father was Te Kani Hunia who was a son of Te Rongopai, a daughter of Maata.
[27] Hirini Moko Mead & Te Onehou Phillis, *Te One Matua: The Centennial of Ruataupare at Kōkōhīnau Marae, Te Teko, 1882-1982* (Te Teko: Ngāti Pahipoto & Te Komiti Māori o Kōkōhīnau, 1982).

[28] See Judith Binney. "Te Kooti Arikirangi Te Turuki", *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1990. Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/1t45/te-kooti-arikirangi-te-turuki (accessed 26 April 2022).
[29] Ngāti Pahipoti is also known as Te Pahipoto or just Pahipoto.
[30] Hirini Moko Mead is a grandson of Te Mokohaerewa who was a son of Maata.
[31] See Richard Boast and Richard Hill (eds), *Raupatu. The confiscation of Māori land* (Wellington, NZ: Victoria University Press, 2009).
[32] Mead & Phillis, *Te One Matua*, 18.
[33] Mead & Phillis, *Te One Matua*, 59.
[34] Mead & Phillis, *Te One Matua*, 197.
[35] Tania Rei is a daughter of Anaru Rangiheuea. Anaru's father was Eruera Riini Mānuera, a son of Maata.
[36] Tania Rei, "Te Taiawatea Rangitūkehu, Maata", *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1996. Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3t19/te-taiawatea-rangitukehu-maata (accessed 26 April 2022).
[37] Rei, "Te Taiawatea Rangitūkehu, Maata".
[38] Hiriwetiri Motutere was a half-brother to Tiopira Hūkīkī. He was also a paternal first cousin to Te Rangitūkehu.
[39] Matutaera Te Wharau was a paternal first cousin to Te Rangitūkehu. His father Te Wharau was a half-brother to Te Rangitūkehu's father, Hātua.
[40] Māori from an older generation still practised polygamy in the mid nineteenth century. Some marriages involving political alliances were sometimes referred to as principal spouses. This was the case with Te Rangitūkehu and Te Rangitōwhare.
[41] See the complex nature of traditional Māori land tenure in Richard Boast, Andrew Erueti, Doug McPhail, Norman F Smith (eds), *Māori Land Law* (Wellington, NZ: Butterworths, 1999), 25-45.
[42] See for example the evidence and the land lists for Pūtauaki, *Whakatāne Minute Book No.1*, 165-212, 339-340 & 349; Matahina, *Whakatāne Minute Book No.2*, 219-268 & 311-322; Ōmataroa (also known as Rangitaiki 60), *Whakatāne Minute Book No.5A*, 251-358 & 324-341. The land was divided communally according to long held customs, not as a result of the instructions of just one person.
[43] Te Onehou Phillis, *Eruera Mānuera* (Wellington, NZ: Huia Publishers, 2002).
[44] Te Onehou Phillis, *Eruera Mānuera*, (Wellington, NZ: Huia Publishers, 2002), 152.
[45] This is my own translation.
[46] Layne Harvey, "Ngāti Awa", *Māori Peoples of New Zealand – Ngā Iwi o Aotearoa. Te Ara-The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, (Wellington, NZ: David Bateman, 2006), 149.
[47] Hirini Mead, Pouroto Ngaropo, Layne Harvey, Te Onehou Phillis, *Mataatua Wharenui* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 2017), 216-17.
[48] A.C. Lyall, *Whakatōhea of Ōpōtiki* (Auckland: Reed Books, 2005), 6-7.
[49] Rawiri Te Maire Tau has pointed out the rich and diverse traditions related to the relationship between Porourangi and Tahupōtiki not only between Ngāti Porou and Ngāi Tahu, but also other tribal groups as well. See Rawiri Te Maire Tau, *Ngā Pikitūroa o Ngāi Tahu. The Oral traditions of Ngāi Tahu* (Dunedin, NZ: University of Otago Press, 2003).
[50] See David V.Williams, *"Te Kooti Tango Whenua": The Native Land Court 1864-1909* (Wellington: Huia Publishers, 1999); Ann Parsonson, "Stories for Land" in *Telling Stories: Indigenous history and memory in Australia and New Zealand*, eds. Bain Attwood and Fiona Magowan (Wellington, NZ: Bridget Williams Books , 2001), 21-40; Richard Boast, *The Native Land Court. A Historical Study. Cases and Commentary 1862-1887* (Wellington: Brookers, 2013).
[51] Angela Ballara. "Tumutara, Eruera Hamiora", *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, first published in 1998. Te Ara – the Encyclopedia of New Zealand, https://teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/4t27/tumutara-eruera-hamiora (accessed 26 April 2022))
[52] *Whakatāne Minute Book No.1*, 117.

[53] See Giselle Byrnes, *The Waitangi Tribunal and New Zealand History* (South Melbourne, Australia: Oxford University Press, 2004); Michael Belgrave, "Colonialism Revisited: Public History and New Zealand's Waitangi Tribunal" in *A Companion to Public History*, ed. D. Dean (London, UK: Wiley-Blackwell, 2018), 217-30.
[54] Waitangi Tribunal, *Ngāti Awa Raupatu Report 1999* (Wellington, NZ: Legislation Direct, 1999), 148.
[55] See Waitangi Tribunal, *Ngāti Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau Cross Claim Report*, (Wellington, NZ: Legislation Direct, 2003), 40.
[56] Giselle Byrnes and Michael Belgrave have commented on the tensions on historical narratives when presented for the legal and political purposes of the Waitangi Tribunal. See Byrnes, *The Waitangi Tribunal*; Michael Belgrave, "Colonialism Revisited", 217-30.