

## METAPHORS IN MAORI VOCABULARY AND TRADITIONAL POETRY\*

Viktor KRUPA

Institute of Oriental Studies, Slovak Academy of Sciences,  
Klemensova 19, 813 64 Bratislava, Slovakia  
e-mail: kaorvikr@savba.sk

The appearance of metaphors in speech is stimulated by factors inherent in problem situations, when the speaker (or writer) is looking for an adequate, telling, potent expression, or to name a new phenomenon. We can distinguish two functionally divergent types of metaphors, namely, poetic and cognitive metaphors (transitions between them are not excluded). Predominantly cognitive metaphors, for example, typically occur not only in (the terminology of) science, especially at its forefront where we stumble upon something new, but also in the spontaneous speech of children, and, for example, also in the early phases of the existence of pidgin languages. Here we have to do with lexicalized metaphors that generally serve practical purposes of communication and their basis is in a way cognitive or based upon the parallelism of sensual perceptions and psychic impressions. The resulting expressions may be stylistically marked (if emotional factors are in the foreground) or neutral.

**Key words:** poetic and cognitive metaphor, lexicalized metaphor, periphrastic expressions.

The Maori language abounds in such expressions. They are quite common in the vocabulary of Maori. Below a survey of classified Maori lexical metaphors from H. W. Williams' dictionary (Williams 1957) is given. In this list of metaphors nature is very frequently utilized as a source of metaphorical devices or vehicles for various semantic classes. About half of all lexical metaphors recorded here take their vehicles from the realm of nature and majority of them come from the domain of fauna and flora including both animal and plant anatomy.

### **Sea animals as metaphorical vehicles:**

*angaanga* /*anga* shell, husk, skeleton, stone of fruit, vessel; head/ > elder, chief  
*ika fish* > prized possession, fighting man, warrior, victim  
*ika a Whiro* /Whiro god of evil and darkness/ > old, tried warrior  
*ika toto nui* /*toto* blood, *nui* great/ > a chief of high birth  
*ika nui* a god (synonymous with *atua*)

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*ika paremo* /*paremo* to drown/ > a victim slain to propitiate Tangaroa, the god of the ocean/

*ika takoto a Tiki* /*takoto* to lie down, Tiki god of creation/ > a corpse

*ika purapura* /*purapura* seed/ > human victim buried during erection of a house

*ika wheua* /*wheua* bone, to be firm/ > main range of hills

*ika iri* /*iri* a spell/ > object of a love charm

*Ika Wheua o te Rangi* Bone Fish of the Sky = *Te Ika o te Rangi* Fish of the Sky = *Ika Roa* Long Fish > The Milky Way

*Te Ika a Maui* Maui's Fish > North Island

*kaakahi* a whale, large porpoise > chief

*kekeno* sea-lion > chief

*kina* sea-urchin, sea-egg > a globular calabash, stomach distended with food

*ngohi* fish > victim, person slain in battle

*nguu* sepia, apama, squid > a person unable to swim, ghost, silent, dumb, speechless

*pae wai* a species of eel > person of importance

*paraaoa* sperm whale > chief, well born, aristocratic

*ika paremo* /*ika* fish, *paremo* drowned/ > a human victim killed to secure good luck

*poorohe* > a large species of mussel > chief

*taniwha* a fabulous monster, shark > chief, prodigy

*unahi o Takero* /*unahi* scales, Takero a fish/ > shooting stars

*unahi roa* /*roa* long/ > ignis fatuus, comet

*Te whai a Titipa* /*whai* sting-ray/ > The Coalsack

*haku* kingfish, *Serida grandis* > chief

### **Birds or flying creatures:**

*huia* *Heteralocha acutirostris*, a rare bird, the tail feathers of which are prized as ornaments, its feathers > anything much prized

*kaaeaea* bush hawk, to act like a hawk fool > to look rapaciously, wander (as the eyes)

*kaahu* hawk, harrier > chief, kite for flying

*kawau pu* *Phalacrocorax carbo*, shag > a chief

*koohanga* nest > birthplace, fort

*kahu koorako* /an old hawk with light plumage/ > chief

*kootare* kingfisher > beggar, sponge

*kura* red, glowing, ornamented with feathers > precious treasure, valued possession, darling, chief, man of prowess, knowledge of karakia, ceremonial restriction

*manu* bird > person held in high esteem

*manu kura* /*kura* something precious/ > chief, leader in council

*manu a Tane* /*Tane* a deity/ > man

*manu a Tiki* /*Tiki* a deity/ > man

*manu waero rua* /*waero* tail, *rua* two/ > violent wind

*moho* *Notornis hochstetteri* > blockhead, trouble, stupid

*muri manu* /manu bird/ > inferior or secondary wife  
*piipii* /pii young, of birds/ > the young fighting men of an army  
*pokai tara* /pokai swarm, flock, tara a bird, thorn/ > band of warriors  
*weu* a tuft of hair, feather > chief

### **Animal anatomy:**

*angaanga* /anga shell, husk, skeleton, stone of fruit, vessel; *angaanga* head/ > elder, chief  
*hiku* tail of a fish/reptile > rear of an army on march/company of travellers, tip of a leaf, headwaters of a river, eaves of a house;  
*hiku tau* end of a season, *hiku toto* expedition to avenge murder, *hiku wai* source of a stream, light early rains

### **Plants including trees:**

*ahi kauri* soot from kauri gum (used for tattooing stone weapons) > hatred  
*harore* an edible fungus growing on decayed timber > shell of the ear  
*hua* fruit > egg, roe, product, progeny, abundance, number, to be full (of a moon), wax  
*kahika* Podocarpus excelsum (white pine) > chief, ancestor  
*kaapeka* branch of a tree > branch of a river  
*karihi* stone of a fruit, kernel > testes  
*kakau* stalk of a plant > handle of a tool  
*kau ati* the piece of wood to produce fire > chief, man of importance  
*kore kaupeka* /branchless; kaupeka branch/ > a childless person  
*kaawai* a/ shoot, branch (of a creeping plant) > pedigree, lineage; b/ tentaculæ of a cuttlefish, loops or handles of a *kete*, strand in plaiting  
*koouru o te matangi* /koouru top of a tree, head of a river; *matangi* wind/ > first puff of a breeze  
*kiokio* a/ a fern, b/ palm lily c/ the moon on the 26th day > lines in tattooing  
*mahurangi* > flesh of a kumara > used to denote importance; applied to persons, food, etc.  
*manga* branch of a tree > branch of a river, brook, rivulet, watercourse, ditch, snare  
*miha* young fronds of fern > distant descendant  
*more* tap-root > cause, extremity, promontory; bare, plain, toothless, blunt  
*parito* centre shoot or heart of endogenous plants > offspring  
*peka* branch, faggot, fernroot > turn aside; *whakapeka* pervert, distort  
*tumatakuru* a thorny shrub, spear-grass > to show consternation, be apprehensive  
*wana* to bud, shoot > ray of the sun  
*wanawana* spines, bristles > fear, thrill, fearsome, awe-inspiring, to quiver, shiver, trill  
*whaa* leaf > flake, feather  
*mae* withered > languid, listless, struck with astonishment, paralysed with fear, etc.

**Natural elements and atmospheric circumstances abound in lexical metaphors:**

- ahi tere* /*ahi* fire, *tere* swift, active, hasty/ > causing discord  
*aho rangi* /*aho* radiant light, cf. also above, *rangi* heaven, sky/ > teacher of high standing in the school of learning  
*amai* swell on the sea > giddy, dizzy; *aamaimai* nervous  
*aawangawanga* /*awanga* SW wind/ uneasy in mind, disturbed, undecided, distress  
*anu* cold > *anuanu* offensive, disgusting, disgusted  
*hau* wind, air, breath, dew, moisture > vital essence of man, of land, etc., food used in ceremonies, portions of a victim slain in battle, used in rites to ensure good luck  
*hinapouri* very dark, darkness > very sad, sadness  
*huene* swell of the sea > to desire  
*huka* foam, froth, frost, snow, cold > trouble, agitation  
*whakakaa* /*kaa* to burn, take fire/ > to incite, inflame  
*kahu kura* rainbow > butterfly, a garment  
*kare* ripple > lash of a whip, object of passionate affection, to long for, desire ardently; *kakare* agitated, stirred, emotion, agitation  
*karekare* surf, waves > agitated, disturbed, eager  
*kiwakiwa* black, dark > gloomy, sad  
*koohengi* (*hengi*) breeze, light wind > yearning, feeling (for absent friends)  
*komingo* to swirl, eddy > to be disturbed, be in a whirl, agitate  
*koomingomingo* whirlpool > to be violently agitated  
*koorehu* haze, mist, fog > regret, disappointment  
*kootonga* cold south wind > misery  
*kororiko* black, dark > angry, lowering  
*maapuna* to well up, ripple, sway, undulate, form a pool > to grieve, sigh  
*maarama* light, not dark, clear, transparent > easy to understand, plain  
*whakamarama* /*marama* moon/ > crescent-shaped top of a *ko*  
*marau* meteor, comet > raiding party  
*mumu* baffling, boisterous wind > valiant warrior  
*muri* breeze > to sigh, grieve  
*nawe* to be set on fire > to be kindled or excited (feelings)  
*pahunu* fire, to burn > anxiety, apprehension  
*pakiwaru* settled fine weather > person of high birth  
*paoa* smoke > gall, bitterness (e.g. *tupu te paoa ki tona ngakau* "smoke is rising to his heart")  
*ahi paaraweranui* widespread fire > war  
*paawera* hot > stirred, affected  
*pui* source, headwater > origin  
*poo* > night, season > place of departed spirits  
*whakapoo* to darken > to grieve  
*poko* to go out, be extinguished > to be beaten, defeated  
*pouri* dark > sorrowful, sad, distressed

*puna* spring of water, hole, oven > wife, ancestor  
*rangi* heaven, upper regions, sky, weather, day, period of time > stanza, air,  
 tune head, chief, sir, seat of affections, heart  
*roku* to wane (of the moon) > to grow weak, decline  
*taahuna a tara* /shoal, sandbank, *tara* tern/ > an assemblage of chiefs  
*taahurihuri* to rock (as a canoe at sea) > to be perturbed, be at a loss  
*tai* sea > anger, rage, violence  
*tai tamatane* /*tai* sea, *tamatane* virile/ > the sea on the west coast  
*tai tamawahine* /*tamawahine* feminine/ > the sea on the east coast  
*tail* in phraseology:  
*Ka hura te mata o te tai* "The tide has begun to flow";  
*Ka ara te upoko o te tai* "same meaning as above";  
*Ka paa te upoko o te tai* "The tide is at its highest";  
*tai whawhati rua* /*whawhati* be broken, *rua* two, double/ > error in reciting a  
 spell  
*take* root, stump, base of a hill > cause, reason, means, origin, beginning,  
 chief, head of a *hapu* or *iwi*  
*tarakaka* southwestern wind > fierce, boisterous  
*taawhati* to ebb > to die  
*taitea* pale, white > fearful, timid  
*tarakaka* southwestern wind > fierce, boisterous  
*taumata okiokinga* /*taumata* resting place on a hill, *okiokinga* resting/ > a  
 great chief  
*tore* to burn > to be erect, inflamed  
*toretore* rough sea > rough, bad, unpleasant  
*tua o rangi* /*rangi* sky, day/ > distant time, past or future  
*Tuahiwi o Ranginui* /*tuahiwi* hill, Ranginui Great Heaven/ > The Milky Way  
*tuarangaranga* rough, boisterous (of sea), broken, rough (of country) > un-  
 settled, perplexed  
*tutae whatitiri* /*tutae* excrement, *whatitiri* lightning/ a net-like fungus  
*ura* red, brown, glowing > *uraura* angry, fierce  
*wairua* shadow, unsubstantial image > spirit  
*wairua atua* /*atua* god/ > butterfly

### **Inert objects (less attractive as metaphorical vehicles):**

*hiwi* ridge of a hill > line of descent  
*kaweka* ridge of a hill > indirect line of descent  
*maakoha* soft slaty rock > tranquil, undisturbed  
*maara o Tane* /plot of ground under cultivation, *Tane* a deity of forest/ >  
 singing of birds together at dawn and dusk  
*maataarae* headland, promontory, spur of a hill > person of importance  
*pari kaarangaranga* echoing cliff, echo > uncertain, deceptive talk  
*tara* point, spike, thorn, tooth, peak of a mountain, papillae > horn of the  
 moon, rays of the sun, shafts of light, membrum virile, courage, mettle, to wane  
 (throw out horns), shoot out rays, disturb

*taratara* spine, spike, prickly, rough, barbed > offensive  
*tongarewa* greenstone > darling, treasure, precious  
*tuumuu whakarae* /*tuumuu* promontory, headland, *whakarae* prominent/ > chief

*tutae atua* /*tutae* dung, *atua* god/ > puff-ball fungi  
*tutae ika moana* /*ika moana* whale/ > New Zealand spinach  
*tutae kaahu* /*kaahu* a bird/ > a plant  
*tutae kehua* /*kehua* ghost/ > a net-like fungus  
*tutae kereruu* /*kereruu* pigeon/ > a climbing plant  
*tutae kiore* /*kiore* rat/ > a plant  
*tutae kurii* /*kurii* dog/ > a grass  
*tutae manu* /*manu* bird/ > an inferior variety of flax  
*tutae tara* /*tara* tern/ > an opprobrium  
*tutae whatitiri* /*whatitiri* lightning/ > a net-like fungus  
*wanawana* spines, bristles > fear, thrill, fearsome, awe-inspiring, to quiver, shiver, trill  
*waro* deep hole, pit, abyss > abode of the dead  
*whatu* stone, hailstone > pupil of the eye, eye, core of a boil, victim slain at the dedication of a house or a *pa*  
*whenua* land, country, ground > placenta, afterbirth

The poetic metaphor is largely dominated by emotional factors and may be characterized as a manifestation of additional linguistic creativity, namely, creativity that transcends the standard level of creativity hidden perhaps behind many utterances (if speech activity is defined as generating utterances from a ready-made inventory of units by means of the application of syntactic rules given in advance).

Poetry is an ideal ambient for extra creativity due to a poet's irresistible ambition to be more inventive and original than his predecessors or contemporaries.

Creatively valuable conceptual associations or configurations expressed in metaphors correlate with hidden, profound and/or surprising links. The functions of cognitive and poetic activities diverge, and the aim of metaphorical creativity in poetry is to achieve individually adequate self-expression and at the same time to arrest the attention of the recipients as well as to provoke in their author's minds a desirable reaction to his poetic work. This, of course, holds for non-anonymous poetry.

I think we can accept Embler's view that poetry is an expression of the internal world of the poet through the external world (Embler 1966). Thus especially human feelings and moods (admiration, joy, sorrow, loneliness, desire, and so on) are very frequently characterized via images borrowed from nature (for example, "storm of excitement").

In non-anonymous poetry the highest ambition of the poet is to be winningly original, and therefore unusual, surprising metaphors, metaphors that stimulate thinking and associative activity on the part of the recipient and provoke his or

her creative approach during the process of interpretation, are highly valued. In lexicon, however, elementary, more straightforward and conventional metaphors are preferred (often based upon human anatomy, natural phenomena, social organization, family, etc.) because of their explanatory force and openness to interpretation.

Traditional poetry ought to be carefully distinguished from non-anonymous, individual verse. The former tends to be essentially stereotypical and canonized. A fairly restricted inventory of elementary metaphors displays a high frequency of occurrence in folk poetry. Here metaphor strives to carry out a comparison with the conventionally accepted standard of the society. This gives us a fairly reliable insight into the naive "philosophy" of the people concerned, into their system of values as well as attitudes to their surroundings and nature.

There are additional differences between traditional and non-anonymous poetry (however, in New Zealand there is traditional Maori poetry written by known authors since the early 19th century). The author of traditional poetry usually borrows metaphorical images from his immediate environment with which most if not all recipients are familiar so that no serious problems may hinder their process of interpretation. Since traditional poetry is passed from generation to generation orally, variation is known to occur but generally the degree of such variation tends to be low.

Another typical feature of Maori traditional poetic metaphor is its heavy reliance on nature as the main source of poetic imagery. This psychological parallelism seems to be a universal feature throughout the world. And yet a question arises, to what extent this could be interpreted as a confirmation of the non-alienation of the traditional poets from their natural environment and of their individual involvement with nature. This attitude to nature seems to be mediated through their religion as well.

In Maori poetry of the pre-contact era the feeling of unity with the cosmos was obviously very strong. Heaven (*Rangi*) and Earth (*Papa*) were parents of the gods and these gods were linked with the particular natural phenomena: Tane with the trees and forests (as well as with birds), *Rongo* with various cultivated plants, *Tangaroa* with the sea and its creatures, *Tawhirimatea* with the wind, *Tuu* with the man and war, etc. Maori examples confirm the assumption that the cultural orientation of a society finds its reflection in the inventory of canonical metaphors. This list of equations is far from being exhaustive.

A careful investigation of the representative selection of Maori traditional poetry published under the title *Nga Moteatea* (1959) confirms the importance of the sea and everything linked to it. Additional examples are quoted from M. Orbell's impressive book *The Natural World of the Maori* (Orbell 1985).

The Maori, who reached the shores of New Zealand as able seafarers after a dangerous voyage, were originally a seafaring people and it comes as a surprise that subsequent attempts to sail in the opposite direction were obviously far from easy. Men tended to reserve the surrounding ocean for themselves, just as in other parts of Polynesia. The country was extracted by Maui from the depth of the sea, becoming thus his *ika*, fish, his prey. Actually there was a state of



war between the gods Tangaroa and Tane. People conquered in war are often spoken of as fish (*ika*) caught in a net, and in love poetry a woman may be a canoe (*waka*) and her lover a paddler (*kauhoe*, Orbell 1985: 135). In the 19th century a number of sayings identified the Maori with the land while the Pakeha, the white people, invaded the country from the sea: *Inaianei kua haa te haa-haa tai* "Now the sound of the waves has gone far inland" (Orbell 1985: 137). The ebb tide was associated with misfortune. A warrior is taking leave of his dying comrade with these words:

*Haere ra, e tama e! Moou te tai ata,  
Mooku te tai poo!*  
"Farewell, friend! The morning tide is for you,  
The evening tide will be for me!" (Orbell 1985: 138)

Poet's tears were often likened to crashing waves. And when the mourning has been done, the poet sung:

*Kaati te tangi, aapoopoo taatou ka tangi anoo.  
Aapaa ko te tangi i te tai, e tangi roa, e ngunguru tonu.*

"We have cried enough, for soon we will cry again. It is not like the crying of the waves, which ever cry, ever sound." (Orbell 1985: 138). This, by the way, proves that the poet is aware of the difference between the crying of human beings and waves.

The word *ika* ("fish") is one of the most common metaphorical images. Most human "fish" were victims of warfare. Any person who crossed the path of a war party must have been killed... and such a person was called *he maroro kokoti ihu waka* "a flying fish that cuts across the bow of a canoe". The first slain enemy was metaphorized as *maataaika* "the first fish". For example, *ika*, "fish", occurs in the following metaphorical expressions: *He ika ano au ka hae-hae* "A fish I am ripped in pieces" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 38); *Kai parahua ai te ika ki te mounu* "A fish nibbles at the bait" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 58). While the former is readily accessible through the lexicalized meaning of *ika* as victim, the latter metaphor refers to a lover who does not take his mistress too seriously. A slightly different prototypical meaning of *ika* "fish" is contained in the following metaphor: *He mea i motu mai i te waha o te ika* "Scarcely escaped from the mouth of the fish" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 32), meaning really "He barely escaped from death". Here death is metaphorized as *te waha o te ika* "the mouth of the fish". The metaphorical expression *Ko he ika whakawera no roto i te kupenga* "You, the most combative fish in the net" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 76) fuses the unfavourable shade of meaning of *ika* ("victim" in general) with the image of a wriggling fish helpless in the fisherman's net. Fish may also be specified, for example the *kaharoa*, namely in the metaphor *tautenga o te kaharoa* "the kaharoa harvest" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 112) where *tautenga* ought to be understood as "hauling ashore the nets, and scaling, gutting, drying and roasting the victims killed in the battle", which is a treatment similar to that of a fish. The



dead chief Te Heuheu is described metaphorically as *Koe ika pawhara na te atua*, as a "disembowelled fish offered to the gods" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 196). In another verse the image of a disembowelled fish, that is, *ika tuaki*, is complemented with that of a stray fish or *he ika pakewha* (Nga Moteatea 1959: 276). Sharks were seen as fighters and chiefs killed in a battle as stranded whales. *Pa-kake* "whale" is a metaphor for chiefs and *kakahi* "whale" may be metaphorically used for the beloved person, as in the verse *Tena te kakahi ka tere ki te tonga* "Verily their whale has drifted to the south" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 174). Enemies, on the other hand, could be compared to small and harmless fish.

Other sea creatures are sometimes metaphorized. Thus *kekeno* "seal" in a derogative way symbolizes a woman who seduces men; a chief successful in battle is called *he honu manawa-rahi* "a great-hearted turtle" (Orbell 1985: 146).

The kingfish could also be regarded as a chief and because red was a highly valued colour, red-eyed mullet could be a description of a chief (cf. Orbell 1985: 146).

A traveller is "like the garfish" (*ihe*) which moves about fast on the surface of the sea.

The butterflyfish is a night creature and thus someone committing murder in the dark was "a butterflyfish that feeds at night" (*he rarii kai po*).

Obstinate warriors were like mussels or *paua* clinging tightly to rocks or crayfish that keep to their holes (Orbell 1985: 146-147).

*Karoro* "seagulls", *kawau* "shags" and *toroa* "albatrosses" are likewise part of the marine world, for example, the expression *karoro tipi one* "startled beach sea-gulls" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 112), *Kawau aroarotea, ka tu tenei kei te paenga i o riri* "The white-breasted shag has come and gazes on your many fields of battle" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 196) where the white-breasted shag is an omen of death, just as *paenga toroa* "a stranded albatross".

One of the favourite images referring metaphorically to someone left alone and suffering is that of a canoe (*waka*) that may be shattered or overturned, as in the following examples: *He mea nei hoki au ka pakaru rikiriki te waka ki te akau* "I am a canoe shattered to fragments on the breakers"; *He waka tenei au ka huripoki* "I am now a canoe overturned"; *Tia te tinana, he waka pakaru kino* "Age will come upon me, a derelict canoe".

To describe a situation of helplessness, *tawhaowhao* or *maero* "driftwood" may be employed, as in *Ka whanatu, ka haere, Hei karoro tipi one, Hei tawhaowhao paenga tai* "Arise, go forth and be As startled beach sea-gulls, Or as driftwood from the sea; *He maero au nei* "Like flotsam am I" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 276).

Sea as such may undergo metaphorization reminiscent in some ways of mythology, as in the expression *Kei te whaonga o te maara na Tangaroa* "Put in the field of Tangaroa" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 102), in other words drowned in the ocean.

Canoe is often metaphorized as a lover who obeys the whims of his/her partner or as an unreliable partner but these metaphors are mentioned here only briefly because a canoe is not a natural object even if it is directly linked to sea,

cf. the following examples: *Nau te waka nei he whakahau ki te awa* "I heeded your every wish like your canoe by the river"; *E mahara iho ana, he waka ka urutomo, He waka he ika rere ki Hikurangi ra ia* "Me thought the canoe was securely moored, The canoe, alas, became a flying fish to Hikurangi yonder" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 122).

The personified sea may be crying, as in *E tangi haere ana nga tai o te uru* "The waves of the western sea are moaning" (Moteatea 1959: 14) or, in very much the same spirit, *Whakarongo ki te tai e tangi haere ana* "Listen to the tides lamenting as they flow" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 266).

Wind is another element that undergoes metaphORIZATION in Maori traditional poetry and it sometimes produces negative associations: *Haere ra, nga rata whakaruru hau ki muri* "Farewell, o thou sheltering rata from the north wind" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 192). Tears are often represented as rain or deluge, as in *Ko au ki raro nei riringi ai te ua i aku kamo* "Whilst I here below pour forth a deluge from mine eyes" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 236).

Birds of all sorts are viewed in mythology throughout the world as mediators between land and sky, able to freely move between them and thus were qualified to be messengers of gods or spirits. Therefore they were metaphORIZED predominantly for their positive qualities.

An orator may honour a distinguished visitor by comparing his visit to that of a white heron – *he kootuku rerenga tahi* "A white heron of a single flight" (Williams 1957: 150); an important man comes as seldom as that bird.

The white heron could represent the male, just as the *huia*, another remarkable bird, could be associated with the female. Because herons stand motionless in the water and await their prey, a proverb spoke of *he kootuku kai whakaata*, "a white heron that feeds upon its reflection" (Orbell 1985: 209). William Colenso explains that this proverb was used of a chief who concerned himself with feeding his guests and of one who quietly and courteously awaits the arrival and sitting of others to their repast before he eats his own food. Such manners were a sign of good birth (Orbell 1985: 207-208).

Bitterns were expressing their loneliness and melancholy; a woman unhappy in love might view herself as a bittern:

*Me he huuroto au kei roo repo,  
Me he kaaka, e whakaraaoa ana!*

I am like a bittern in the swamp,  
A bittern with its choking cry!  
(Orbell 1985: 208-209)

The singing of birds at dawn was a sign of the triumph of light over darkness associated with oratory. And birds metaphorically lament on the account of the death of the chief Te Heuheu who died unexpectedly during a landslide: *Titaka kau ana nga manu o te ata, ka riro ko koe ra, i!* "The birds of the morning fly distressfully about, now you are gone!" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 196). The same

chief may be described in multiple manners, as in *Ka riro te mumu, ka riro te awaha; ka tere te parata.... taku kaka haetara ki te iwi ra ia* "Gone is the valiant warrior, and the raging tempest is stilled. The carved stem-head of the canoe has drifted away.... My bright-plumaged bird, admired by the tribes..." (Nga Moteatea 1959: 196-198).

Someone with bad manners could be said to have been hatched by a bird, and a babbler might be accused of making as much noise as a baby bird. Usually, however, images based upon birds were favourably appreciated. Brave warriors were "flapping birds" and "stubborn birds". Bird's nest is not surprisingly someone's birthplace or safe abode. For example, young mothers lived with their newly born children in a separate hut termed nest house. A talkative person was sometimes labeled as *kaakaa*, namely a large gregarious parrot, as *he kaakaa waha nui* "a big-mouthed parrot" (Orbell 1985: 187).

Eloquent orators and accomplished singers were said to sound like the *tui* or the bellbird (*koopara*). Bellbirds are restless creatures and therefore suitable to characterize a frivolous woman (*he koopara kairerere*; Orbell 1985: 193).

A chief whose death was mourned in a lament might be called by the poet *he huia tuu rae* "a huia plume on my brow", and in love songs a sweetheart was sometimes *te huia kai-manawa* "the huia that consumes my heart" (Orbell 1985: 196).

Interestingly enough, the morepork (*ruru*), as elsewhere in the world, was associated with the night and with the ancestors' spirit. Its presence was taken as a warning of death in someone's family.

According to George Grey, the hawk was a symbol for a great chief and the falcon for "a treacherous, cruel man". High chiefs might be spoken of as white hawks, cf. the saying *Me haere i raro i te kahu koorako*, "Travel under the protection of a white hawk", which meant a good reception for everybody (Orbell 1985: 205).

Cosmic imagery is by no means exceptional in Maori poetry and even rhetoric abounds in cosmic metaphors. Many of them tend to be applied to chiefs, especially to their death. Thus the verse *Naana i horo te whetuu, te maarama?* "It is him who swallowed the stars and the moon?" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 28) refers to fights where the warriors are identified with the stars (*whetuu*) and the chiefs with the moon (*maarama*) when they were killed by the Tuuhourangi. When a warrior or a chief dies, the poet declares *I whati ai te maarama* "The moon was broken". The same meaning is delivered by the metaphor *I makere iho ai te tara o te maarama* "The point of the riven moon has fallen" as well as by an analogous expression *Kaa whati raa, ee, te tara o te maarama, e-i* "Alas, severed now is the point of the crescent moon" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 138, also 174).

The forest was perceived by the Maori as a hierarchy of trees similar to that in human society, and they distinguished the most stately ones as *raakau rangatira*, "chiefly trees", from the common trees, the so-called *raakau ware* (Orbell 1985: 170) The class of the chiefly trees includes above all the *totara*, *kauri*, *kahikatea*, *rata*, and *maire* (Orbell 1985: 172).

A tree may symbolize a tribe, but it is usually viewed as representing an individual; a distinguished person who died was metaphorized as a majestic tree in poetry. Cf. the following poem by Te Wharerangi:

*Ehara i te tangata koe, maahuri tootara!  
He waa kahikatea i rutua e te hau,  
Pae ana ki te one, ngaa tuakirikiri i waho Wairehu.*

You were not a man, you were a young totara!  
A Kahikatea forest uprooted by a gale  
Lies cast up on the sand, on the gravel beaches beyond Wairehu.  
(Orbell 1985: 172)

The noblest of all trees was the totara with red wood and thus suitable to chiefs. Since the best timber is found within a forest, not on its borders, a chief was likened to a totara – his proper place is in the midst of his people, says M. Orbell (Orbell 1985: 173).

A cosmic metaphor may be used to underline the brilliancy of one's eyes, for example, *Ko aaku mata i rehu, e whakawhetuu mai ana roto* "My misty eyes are quite bedimmed and shine forth from within like stars" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 188).

The motivational basis of cosmic metaphor may be derived from mythology. This is the case of the following verse: *He maarama kia mate, kaa ea mai ki runga i ee* "Thou art the waning moon which dies, later again seen on high" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 90).

These types of metaphor do not exhaust the imaginative variety of Maori traditional poetry; *taakohutia* "being wrapped in mist" refers to sorrow, seaweed may refer to internal emptiness, for example, *Waiho au kia pooaha ana, he rimu puka kei te aakau* "So let me remain empty, (like) the porous seaweed on the shore" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 72); *poo* "night" hints at death, as in *te tira o riri poo* "the company of the battle of night", meaning the dead ones (Nga Moteatea 1959: 154); *huka moana* "sea foam" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 276) refers metaphorically to something valueless.

Maori poetry abounds in sequences of metaphors that characterize their tenor from several points of view. This perseverance of emotional effect makes the semantic interpretation easier. The dead chief is wept over in the following way: *Kaa whati raa, ee, te tara o te maarama* (1), *Taku ate* (2) *hoki raa, taku piki kootuku* (3), *Teena te kaakahi* (4) *kaa tere ki te toonga* "Alas, severed now is the point of the crescent moon (1), You were my heart (2), my kotuku plume (3), Verily the whale (4) has drifted to the south" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 174). It is usually deep sorrow that provokes such an outburst of emotions as the next poetic sequence: *Tirohia mai au he ika tuaki, Paenga toroa he koroirirangi, He ika pakewha 'hau na Rehua, e tama ma ee! He huka moana, paringa-a-tai akahu ki te whanga* "Look and see me here a disembowelled fish, A stranded albatross, tossed by the whirlwind; A stray fish of Rehua am I, o youthful ones!

Like the sea foam, faintly seen at the inlet" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 276). A mournful seaside scenery is metaphorically applied to the mood of loneliness and old age as follows: *Tia te tinana, he waka pakaru kino, kaa ruha noa au ki te aakau, ee* "Age will come upon me, like a derelict canoe, discarded I shall be upon the strand, ah me" (Nga Moteatea 1959: 302).

Metaphorical and periphrastic expressions abound in Maori ritual and rhetoric (called metaphorically *te kai a ngaa rangatira* "the food of chiefs"), that rank among the finest in Oceania. The motivating mechanisms behind them are euphemism, eulogy and mythical considerations.

Death is sometimes described as *haere ki tua o te aarai* "to go beyond the veil or screen" or *te uurunga tee taka, te moenga tee whakaarahia* "the pillow which does not slip, the bed from which there is no arising". Easy to decipher is likewise the expression *te ringa kaha o aituaa* "the strong hand of misfortune", or even *te iwi wahanguu i te Poo* "the silent people of the Night" meaning the deceased ancestors.

However, many metaphorical expressions can only be properly understood within the conceptual framework of Maori mythology. Here natural images overlap with mythological beliefs. In the expression *Kua hinga te tootara o te wao nui a Taane* "A totara tree of the great forest of Tane has fallen down", mankind is metaphorized as a forest (of which, as we know, Tane is a god) and the expression itself can be translated as "The great chief has died". Burial is often described as *ngaro ki te koopuu o Papatuanuku* "disappearance within the bowels of Mother Earth" – perhaps as a hint at the unsuccessful attempt of Maui to enter the bowels of the goddess Hine-nui-te-poo and thus, reversing the normal procedure, to gain immortality for mankind.

And yet death is not interpreted as something final or separating. Just as visitors to the tribal house (*whare whakairo*) were welcome by their hosts as *ngaa kanohi ora o ngaa tiipuna* "the living faces of the ancestors" or as *ngaa moorehu o te hunga mate* "the survivors of the dead", those who had died were present with those who are still here when entering the tribal house. This was viewed as the ancestor's body and the entry was equated to the return to the cosmogonical past. The past could not be clearly separated from either present or future and the unity of the living with the dead was repeatedly underlined. Even the cosmogonical parents, Heaven (*Rangi*) and Earth (*Papa*) were ever present with each generation, the creation was no closed or terminated process. God Tane who as the only one from the circle of divine brothers managed to push their heavenly father Rangi into the height, farther from mother Earth (Papa) is actually identical with the trees (or present in them?) that incessantly grow and (perhaps) are supporting the sky with their very heads and limbs. Similarly clouds were regarded in Hawaii as bodies of Lono, god of crops (and rain, of course) and likewise, rain was interpreted as tears of Heaven: *Uwe ka lani, ola ka honua* "When Sky weeps, Earth lives".

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