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# **Kia Ngāwari ki te Awatea:**

The relationship between  
Wairua and Māori well-being:  
A psychological perspective.

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*A thesis  
presented in partial fulfilment  
of the requirements for the degree of*

**Doctor of Clinical Psychology**

at Massey University,  
Palmerston North, New Zealand.

Hukarere Valentine

2009

## TOHI RITE

*(Dedication)*

*Ka tohia atu koe, ki te tohi nuku, ki te tohi rangi.  
Kia hoia koe ki te putiki whara, kia tiaia koe ki te manu rere rangi.  
Te rau o titapa kia pai ai koe, te haere i runga ra.  
I rangahaua koe i te po-uriuri, i te po tangotango.  
I rakaitia koe ki te piki kotuku, te rau o te toroa, te huia titama.  
Whakina e tama nga kupu o te riri, nga kupu o tawhiti hemea ka mau mai.  
Ka kapiti runga e, ka kapiti raro e, he pokangu nuku, he pokangu rangi.  
Pou hihiko, pou rarama, tiaho i roto, marama i roto.  
Tena te pou, te poutokomanawa, te pou o enei korero.  
Hui te marama, hui te ora e-e.*

*(Translation)*

*Thou wilt be anointed (tohi) by the blessing of earth and heavens.  
Thou wilt be decorated with top-knot, and be dressed as the flying bird.  
The leaf of titapa (tree) to enable thee, to march forward above.  
Thou wast acclaimed from the depth of darkness, and in the changeable nights.  
Thou has been beautified with kotuku's feather, and the feathers of toroa and huia.  
Display my son the action of war, and those far reaching words you have learned.  
Heaven will be closed and earth be united and will be at thy command.  
Be ambitious and clear-minded, be shining within thee and brightness upon.  
Those the pillar, the main post of wisdom, the post of protector of these saying.  
Assembled brightness, and settle life. (Mitira, 1972, p. 5)*

The above excerpt is a tohi whakawahi taken from the book titled *Takitimu*. A tohi whakawahi traditionally served three general purposes; “to instil...insight and wisdom, to fortify...against the effect of black magic or evils brought about through trespassing on sacred places and to implant courage to face and overcome any danger brought about by man’s power.” (Mitira, 1972, p. 6)

## **ABSTRACT**

Western health professions have historically struggled with the notion that spirituality could be studied empirically. This trend has changed in recent decades with there being a marked increase in the health literature pertaining to spirituality. For indigenous people spirituality is a fundamental attribute of their worldviews. Māori, as the Indigenous people of Aotearoa, have always acknowledged the importance of wairua, (spirituality as defined by Māori worldviews) to their health and well-being. This thesis aims to explore wairua as an important aspect of Māori well-being from a psychological perspective.

Two research goals underpin this thesis. The first goal involved developing an understanding of what Māori mean when they talk about wairua. This was achieved through a qualitative study. While there are implicit shared understandings among Māori regarding the nature of wairua, this study was one of the first attempts to make some of those shared understandings more explicit. The second goal involved investigating the relationship between an orientation to wairua and Māori well-being using a newly developed measure. This was a quantitative study.

Conceptualisations of wairua fell into four themes; direct descriptions, personal experiences, personal beliefs and Māori worldviews. According to the qualitative information, wairua was described as a fundamental attribute that enables Māori to engage with their reality; an intuitive consciousness. Through wairua Māori identity is expressed, relationships are forged, balance is maintained, restrictions and safety are adhered to, healing is transmitted, and the connection between te ao wairua and te ao Māori are maintained. These aspects of Māori reality are inclusive and interconnected.

The qualitative study information led to the formation of a 30 item self report measure named the Kia Ngawari ki te Awatea Orientation to Wairua measure. This measure was used to investigate the relationship between an orientation to wairua and Māori health and well-being. The results showed that orientations to wairua had relatively modest associations with wellbeing when conceptualised and measured in a variety of ways. Due to the variability in the results, support for the overarching hypothesis of a relationship between wairua and well-being was mixed. A number of limitations were acknowledged with recommendations for future research offered. The findings of these studies have a number of implications for clinical psychological practice with Māori clients.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Nāu te rourou nāku te rourou  
Ka ora ai te iwi*

*With every contribution that we make to the areas of health and well-being for Māori the dignity of our people will be restored*

This thesis has been the product of many hands and many hearts. My contribution alone is only a minute portion. The journey has been long and arduous at times and I must first thank my immediate whānau who have sat and waited tirelessly for me to finish this thesis. The long hours taken in constructing this thesis would not have been possible without their support and patience. Over the duration of my doctorate journey I received assistance, both financially and academically, from a number of sources; School of Psychology Massey University, Department of Corrections, Health Research Council, Ngati Kahungunu Iwi Incorporated and Te Rau Puawai. Without the support of these institutions and scholarships the progression of my thesis would have been a lot longer and more stressful.

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## GLOSSARY

Aboriginal-----	The first inhabitants
Ähua-----	demeanour
Atua-----	Gods
E kore au e ngaro i kākano i ruia mai i Rangiatea-----	I will never be lost, I am a seed sown from Rangiatea
E rere wairua e rere-----	Fly spirit fly
Hikoi-----	Walk
Indigenous -----	Native to a particular area
Iwi-----	Tribe
Karakia-----	Prayer
Kaumātua-----	Māori elders
Kaupapa-----	Topic
Kaupapa Māori research-----	A Māori research methodology
Kawa-----	Etiquette
Kia Ngāwari ki te Awatea -----	Describes a state of enlightenment; spiritual clarity
Ko te ihu, ko te rae ka tikina houhia te rongo-----	Nose and forehead pressed together peace will prevail
Kohanga reo-----	Māori language nest
Kōrero-----	Talk, speak
Koro/Koroua-----	Shortened version of Koroua, male elder
Kupu-----	Word
Mana-----	Spiritual power
Manawatu-----	Is a district in the Manawatu Wanganui region of the North Island of New Zealand
Māori -----	Indigenous people of New Zealand
Marae-----	Terminology given to the enclosed space in front of a whareniui or meeting house (literally "big house"). However, it is generally used to refer to the whole complex, including the buildings and the open space
Mātauranga-----	Knowledge
Matakite-----	Terminology for people who see spiritual beings.
Mauri-----	Life principle
Me-----	And
Mihimihi-----	Greeting
Moko-----	Grandchildren, shortened version of mokopuna

Nga-----	The (plural)
Nga pou mana-----	Four supports, Māori health model Described by the Royal Commission on Social policy in 1988 as pre-requisites for health and well-being.
Ngati Kahungunu ki Heretaunga---	The tribal affiliation of Hastings
Ngati Kahungunu ki te Wairoa ----	The tribal affiliation of Wairoa
Noa-----	Free from restriction
Paepae-----	Threshold usually refers to the place where the male orators sit on the marae.
Pākehā-----	Term used to describe non Māori Europeans
Papatuanuku-----	Mother Earth
Pounamu-----	Greenstone
Purea nei e te hau-----	This is part of a song written by Hirini Melbourne translated means “buffeted by the wind”.
Rangitane -----	Tribal area relating to Tāmakinui-a-Rua (around present-day Dannevirke), Wairarapa, Te Whanganui a Tara (Wellington), wairau in the south, and Manawatū and Horowhenua to the west.
Rongoā-----	Māori medicine
Taha wairua-----	Wairua dimension
Tainui-----	Area covering Waikato
Takitimu-----	Tākitimu was one of the great Māori migration canoes that brought Polynesian migrants to New Zealand – relates to the Ngati Kahungunu iwi.
Tangihanga-----	Funeral
Taonga-----	Treasure
Tapu-----	Setting apart of things, places and persons
Te ao Māori-----	The Māori world
Te ao Mārama-----	The world of light
Te ao wairua-----	The spiritual world
Te awatea-----	Dawn light
Te hoe nuku roa-----	A longitudinal study conducted by Department of Māori studies, Massey University, intended to correlate cultural, economic and personal factors of Māori households.
Te kore-----	The potentiality
Te manu e kai ana i te miro nōna te ngahere, te manu e kai ana i te	A bird that partakes of the miro berry owns the forest,

mātauranga nōna te ao-----	a bird that partakes of knowledge owns the world.
Te po-----	The darkness
Te reo-----	The language
Te reo Māori-----	The Māori language
Te Whānau a Apanui-----	This tribal area extends from Te Taumata-ō-Apanui (between Tōrere and Hāwai) to Pōtaka. There are approximately 13 hapū are situated along the narrow coastal strip between the Raukūmara Range and the eastern Bay of Plenty.
Te whare tapa wha-----	The four sided house. One of the three most well known Māori models of health and the most utilised.
Te wheke-----	Māori model of health by Rose Pere.
Tikanga-----	Customs
Tikanga Māori-----	Māori customs
Tinana-----	Body
Tino rangatiratanga-----	Self governance
Tohi Whakawahi-----	A baptism or dedication
Tohunga-----	Māori healer, expert, authority, scholar
Tohunga Suppression Act-----	Enforced in 1907, this Act was instrumental in outlawing Māori spiritual healing practices.
Tōku reo, tōku ohooho, tōku reo tōku mapihi maurea-----	My language my awakening, my language my strength, an ornament of grace
Tuhoe-----	Children of the mist, a tribal area of New Zealand which take their name from an ancestor Tuhoe Potiki
Tupuna/Tipuna-----	Ancestor
Waiata-----	Song
Waiata mōteatea-----	Chant, lament, folk song
Wairua-----	Spirituality defined by Māori worldviews
Wanganui-----	Part of the Manawatu/Wanganui region. It is 200 kilometres north of Wellington and 75 kilometres northwest of Palmerston North, at the junction of State Highways 3 and 4.
Whai mārama-----	Understanding
Whakaaro-----	Thought
Whakapapa-----	Geneology
Whakapono-----	Belief
Whakatauki-----	Proverbial saying

Whakawhānaungatanga-----	Relationships
Whakawhiti whakaaro-----	Communication
Whānau-----	Family
Whānau whanui-----	Extended family
Whenua-----	Land

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## PREFACE

It was another warm Kahungunu summer and my uncle (considered by some to be like a tohunga) and I were sitting together yet again discussing yet another of my confusing dreams. But this day was different, his approach was different. Of course, he was still vague with his answers as he had always been, especially with me. He still redirected the conversation so that I answered my own questions, but somehow his āhua was different. Toward the conclusion of our talk my uncle turned to me and said, “I know what you are going to be doing, I know when you will do it and I know how you will do it, but every time you come and talk to me about your dreams and so forth a woman comes in, stands between us and says to me you can’t tell her or give her the answers”. I cautiously reply to him, “Nanny? (my grandmother)”. My uncle nods his head in agreement.

My uncle had never revealed this before! Why did he tell me this? And why now? What was I meant to do with this information? I was confused. “What makes him think I will end up anywhere anyway? Well anywhere important that is? Is that what he was saying or am I over-exaggerating?” I had so many questions and I was so confused but I knew my uncle was going to do what my grandmother had ordered him to do or not to do in this case. It has been approximately twenty years since I had that conversation with my uncle. I never comprehended that I would be sitting here writing a doctoral thesis about wairua for the purposes of fulfilling the requirements of a Doctorate in Clinical Psychology. But nevertheless here we are.

It may not be any surprise then that the inspiration behind this thesis has been heavily influenced by my own upbringing and personal understandings. My grandmother was a strong influence in my life. Her influence, albeit mostly silent in nature, had a very

strong impact on who I was to become and as the above story shows even after her death she still played an integral role in my life. I grew up amongst matakite, healers and tohunga and spent a great deal of my childhood on marae. Wairua was present in my every day existence. Whānaungatanga, whakapapa and tikanga were all influenced by aspects relating to wairua. Thus, I learnt from an early age that wairua was an important positive element in my life.

My presence at university was very much influenced by experiences relating to wairua (but that's another story). Over the course of my study I learnt a number of important factors. I learnt that generally Māori experiences, understandings and beliefs of wairua existed on a continuum between positive and not so positive. I learnt that my experiences of wairua were more the exception than the norm. I learnt that wairua was not a prominent feature of normal discussions amongst Māori. I also learnt what colonisation was and how it affected Māori. There was no question in my mind that my thesis topic would relate to wairua especially in light of the new information I had learnt about Māori worldviews. For me conducting a thesis relating to wairua was pre-ordained if you like. I was fortunate however to find that the Māori literature also indicated that wairua was important. What was less obvious amongst the literature though was how and why. This thesis provides the beginning of what I suspect will be a very long journey but for me a necessary one.