

# From Hinengaro to Hineora: Tracing the origins of Intergenerational Trauma to attain Intergenerational Healing<sup>☆,☆☆</sup>

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## ABSTRACT

In Aotearoa New Zealand, colonisation continues to impact Indigenous Māori lived realities. However, Māori have been steadily progressing towards reclamation of all that was suppressed during colonisation, including tūpuna (ancestor) understandings of trauma and healing, of which wairua (referring to spirit) is at the centre. My research aimed to understand the role of wairua in the intergenerational transmission of trauma and healing through exploring my own lived experiences of trauma and healing. My methodology was developed based on tūpuna knowledge, resulting in the implementation of a *Rongo-a-Wairua Framework*, a *Whakapapa Methodological Approach*, *Whakapapa Wānanga* and *Te Pūtake: An Origin Analysis*. Through this application of tūpuna knowledge and the centring of wairua within the research process, I uncovered the origins of the soul wounds I had inherited, enabling me to transform from Hinengaro, The Obscured Daughter into who I am now – Hineora, The Daughter of Healing.

## Kupu Timatanga – Introduction

*Two years old.*

*That's when it began. When my brother was taken from us, his body turned cold, emptied of a soul, and my mum's heart hardened like stone. That's what happened at two years old.*

*At eight years old the foundation of our world, my Grandad, fell down, the house he built to shelter us razed to the ground. My father too is no longer around. That's what happened at eight years old.*

*Time passes by and every day I wake up and wonder why I'm alive. No hope. I can't see anything other than darkness, and time keeps passing by.*

*At eighteen years old I'm shocked that I am here to see the sun dawn. I thought by now I would be long gone, free from the pain of my life's sad song.*

*Days go by and I realise I have very little memories of the time that has passed by – spent so long away from my body, I can no longer feel, laugh, or cry. I spend most of my time away, just trying to survive. And suddenly I'm twenty-five.*

*What would the me at twenty-five, broken-hearted, struggling to stay alive, say to the little two-year-old me she left behind? And what would that little me say in reply? Would she hate me, blame me for leaving her behind? For forgetting her so I could survive?*

*If I go back through the time that passed by, I would take that little girl's hand and tell her that she is not alone. That though she may be too scared to stay in her body, live in this sad and heartbreaking home, one day it will be alright – she will one day be happy, and the world will look bright. Though our brother's time stopped at eighteen, ours will not. It will keep ticking by, and one day we will remember how to feel joy, let go, and cry.*

*At thirty years old I'm still here, and I'm happier than I've ever been. Still don't remember much, but that's ok – there's still more than enough time to make new memories anyway. I have found peace in staying alive. Healed the wounds that were embedded in my soul – no longer feel the need to leave my body to survive. No longer just getting by. I am free and at peace and in love with my life. I am finally living. I am finally alive.*

Healing is hard. It requires so much of yourself, asks you to dive deep into the parts you have tried so desperately to deny, to ignore, to not look too closely at because it is just too painful and scary. I spent most of my life avoiding myself and the realities of my trauma that to be truthful about how my experiences of trauma impacted me was terrifying. The wounds were so raw, and I had become used to armouring up and protecting those wounds from anything I saw as a potential threat. I was just trying to survive, keep my head above the waters that were constantly threatening to swallow me up if even for one second I stopped

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kicking my legs. But I came to realise that as long as I kept trying to run away from these wounds, ignoring the shadows of hurt that had embedded themselves into my soul, mind, and body, they would remain and be passed onto the next generations, just as they had been passed onto me.

My experiences of trauma have a hononga, a connection, to colonisation, to the arrival of the white sails to Indigenous shores.<sup>32</sup> This trauma has been conceptualised in diverse ways by Indigenous health experts, though one of the most commonly used terms is historical trauma,<sup>5</sup> which describes the cumulative psychological, emotional and soul wounding<sup>56</sup> that occurs over the lifespan of the individual and across generations, with its origins in major collective trauma experiences like colonisation.<sup>2,4</sup> The term soul wound is powerful, as it communicates the depth of injury that colonisation has caused and continues to cause. For my tūpuna, their lifeworld's were radically transformed by British colonisers and the violence, systems, and beliefs of Euro-Christian superiority and exceptionalism they bought with them.<sup>7</sup> The theft of land, life, and language; the suppression of education and healing systems<sup>32,34</sup>; and the assimilation of Māori children through Mission and Native Schools,<sup>50</sup> are just a few of the trauma experiences my ancestors were forced to live through and which continue to have an impact on my own lived reality.

Before colonisation arrived in Aotearoa, there were in-depth systems already in place for healing trauma, and an important part of my own healing journey has been to reclaim these systems of knowledge and practice. According to Wiremu Niania – a well-respected Tohunga Ahurewa (expert in spiritual rituals) and matekite (a person who can see the unseen, see into the spiritual world)<sup>28</sup> – one way in which our ancestors conceptualised trauma was as a violation of tapu, a violation of the sacredness of the person.<sup>30</sup> Tākirirangi Smith, in his exploration of archives and manuscripts, identified the term patū ngākau, a blow to the heart or emotional core of the person, as another ancestral conceptualisation of trauma. If a person experienced a violation of tapu or patū ngākau, it was the Tohunga Ahurewa that would help them return to a state of wellbeing. One way in which this was actioned was by taking the person who experienced the trauma event into a space of darkness and peace, enabling them to explore their trauma experience safely, and providing them with the time and space needed to fully understand the experience and how it impacted them.<sup>44</sup>

At the centre of this process of healing was wairua, which is often translated as referring to the spiritual dimension of lived reality,<sup>23,49</sup> though this description only captures a small part of what wairua is. According to Tohunga Ahurewa Wiremu Niania (personal communication, June 23, 2021), the first step in the healing process is to get wairua flowing, as wairua is vital to clearing out the trauma that has embedded itself into the individual. To understand the flow of wairua, it is vital to understand that wairua exists both internally, as each person has a wairua, as well as externally through Te Ao Wairua, the wairua realm. From an etymological perspective, the internal form of wairua can be understood through the translation of the two words that comprise wairua: 'wai' – meaning 'water' – and 'rua' – meaning 'two'. These two waters are inherited from the individual's parents, who inherited their wairua from their parents, continuing back through the generations to the beginning of time.<sup>31,49</sup> The external form of wairua can be understood by breaking wairua down into three words: 'wa', meaning time or space; 'i', meaning eternal or timelessness; and 'rua', meaning knowledge (W. Niania, personal communication, April 8, 2022). In this sense, Te Ao Wairua is the space which holds all the knowledge and potential that exists across all of time and space.<sup>23</sup>

Fig. 1 depicts the flow of wairua, highlighting its central role in ensuring that the different dimensions of wellbeing maintain a state of good health. Here, wellbeing is analogised to a mountain (representing the individual) with three pools of water connected by a single stream of water sourced from the waterfall at the top of the mountain (representing the individual's wellbeing). The four dimensions of wellbeing within this model are Te Taha Wairua (inclusive of the internal and

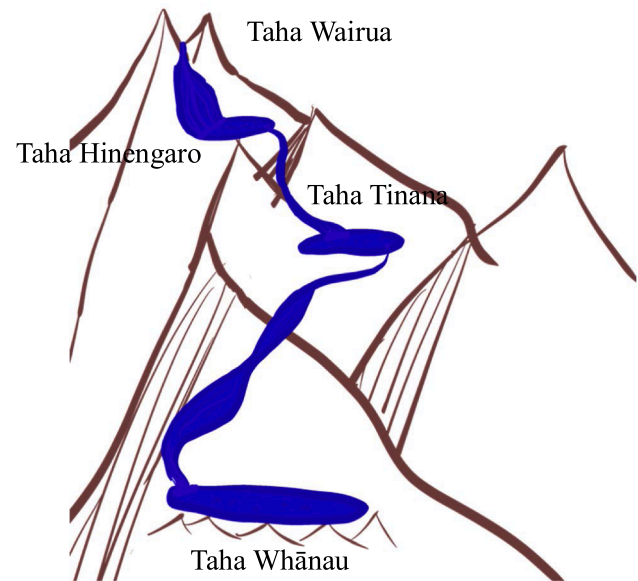


Fig. 1. Wiremu Niania's Model of Wellbeing

Note: Illustration was drawn by the author based on the teachings of W. Niania (personal communication, June 23, 2021) and Wiremu Niania Cultural Therapy.

external dimensions of wairua); Te Taha Hinengaro (the psychological and emotional dimension), Te Taha Tinana (the physical dimension), and Te Taha Whānau (the family and social dimension).<sup>10,11</sup>

The Taha Wairua of the person is represented by the waterfall, which flows into the Taha Hinengaro pool. The water in this pool flows into the Taha Tinana pool, which then flows into and feeds the Taha Whānau pool located at the bottom of the mountain. When wairua is flowing, when the person is connected with wairua internally and externally, all the pools will receive a continuous fresh flow of water, ensuring they are kept clean. But, if the flow of the waterfall, of the Taha Wairua, is disrupted – through experiences of trauma/violations of tapu/patū ngākau – the pools will become stagnant, and without the flow of fresh water each of the pools below will, over time, become contaminated, resulting in ill health. Pollution in the Taha Hinengaro pool will result in mental and emotional distress. If the disruption is left unaddressed then the polluted waters from the Taha Hinengaro will flow into the Taha Tinana, causing physical illness.<sup>26</sup> If the disruption is still not addressed the polluted waters will flow into the Taha Whānau, negatively impacting relationships and the wellbeing of the family.<sup>6,26</sup> So what has been impressed in the mind is being expressed in the body which is now flowing into the family (<sup>10,26</sup>; W. Niania, personal communication, June 23, 2021).

My doctoral research focused on addressing this disruption within myself. Just as the Tohunga Ahurewa took the individual into darkness to begin healing through the exploration of their trauma, I too went into the darkness, tracing the impacts of trauma on the multiple dimensions of my lived reality until I arrived at the source, at my experiences of trauma.<sup>14</sup> This article will describe the process I undertook to understand the impacts of my trauma experiences on my dimensions of wellbeing, providing a glimpse into the Intergenerational Healing that took place and the transformations of self that occurred.

## Tukanga Rangahau - The Research Process

### Rongo-ā-Wairua Explanatory Framework

Rongo-ā-wairua refers to sensing (*rongo*) through the spirit (*ā wairua*), encompassing the physical senses (seeing, hearing, smell, touch, and taste) and the metaphysical senses (seeing, hearing, smell,

touch, taste, vision/premonition, dreaming, and intuition) (28; L. Niania, personal communication, April 6, 2021; 43). I developed this framework to position my own matekitetanga as central to the research process, guiding all the decisions and actions taken during my research. My matekitetanga utilises both the metaphysical and physical senses and are represented by two dimensions of reality: *Ranginui* (the primordial sky father and representation of the celestial realms) which represents the metaphysical senses and *Papatūānuku* (the primordial earth mother and representation of the terrestrial realms), which represents the physical senses. These two dimensions work in tandem together. For example, I can see, through my Papatūānuku (physical) sense of sight, the spirits of the dead. However, it is my Ranginui (metaphysical) sense of sight that is the origin point of this sensory information. Thus, the physical sense of sight provides a pathway for the metaphysical sensory information to be received and understood.<sup>8,53</sup> This interaction between my metaphysical and physical senses were central to designing and implementing my methodology.

### Whakapapa methodological framework

Whakapapa refers to genealogy and can be applied to everything that exists in the universe, as everything has a genealogical origin.<sup>21</sup> Whakapapa, when applied to the person, allows for all dimensions that comprise them to be explored and understood, as the literal translation of whakapapa is “the process of layering one thing upon another”.<sup>21,37,52</sup> Thus, the inclusion of whakapapa ensured that my research, which encompasses multiple dimensions of reality and being, were fully explored.

### Whakapapa Wānanga

Wānanga is an ancient tradition that can take on multiple forms and meanings,<sup>22</sup> though in contemporary times it is most often used to refer to spaces and practices of collective discussion and learning. The origins of wānanga have often been positioned within the Whare Wānanga (the highest form of education),<sup>57</sup> though according to Māori cosmological narratives, the first wānanga was conducted by the atua (divine/spiritual beings from beyond or gods) during the creation of the universe, whereby they discussed and eventually agreed to separate their parents Papatūānuku and Ranginui, freeing themselves from the restriction of their parents' tight embrace. The new world that came into being through their separation was to eventually be inherited by humanity. But before this could happen, preparations were needed. One of these preparations required Tāne – the atua that led the wānanga that resulted in his parents' separation – to ascend into the 12 heavens to attain Ngā Kete o te Wānanga (the three baskets of knowledge) and bring them back to the Earthly realm. These kete, of wairua origins, then formed the basis of the Whare Wānanga.<sup>16,31,35,44</sup> From this cosmological perspective wānanga is a deeply spiritual practice,<sup>22</sup> as its origins stem from the atua. Furthermore, according to healer Hera Cotter (personal communication, November 5, 2022), in the space of wānanga, the wairua of the living and the wairua of tūpuna come together to guide the discussions, ensuring that those of the living that are taking part in the wānanga attain what they need to navigate their human experience and grow as spiritual beings. Wānanga then is a process of the spiritual and physical, comprised of intergenerational collective thinking, discussion, problem solving and knowledge contribution.<sup>42</sup> Thus, *Whakapapa Wānanga* describes a process of intergenerational discussions that occur in the realm of *Ranginui* (the celestial) and the realm of *Papatūānuku* (the terrestrial), guided by the Taha Wairua interactions of multiple generations of ancestors and descendants. Within my research, this has been enacted through three types of interconnected wānanga – *wānanga with self*, *wānanga with whānau*, and *wānanga with wairua*.

**Wānanga with self:** This wānanga is deeply self-reflective, comprised of interviewing myself about my experiences of trauma, with a specific focus on the feelings, sensations, and thoughts that arose during my day-to-day lived reality of my research, such as situations that

triggered trauma reactions within my Taha Hinengaro and Taha Tinana. To help facilitate these wānanga, I also practiced karakia (prayers and incantations), takutaku (chants to heal and clear energies from self and spaces), whakawātea (spiritual cleansing processes), and participated in a tohi (dedication) ceremony to wairua.

**Wānanga with whānau:** This wānanga incorporates whakapapa history research,<sup>38,46</sup> which is used by many Māori in contemporary times to journey into the lived realities of their ancestors, learn about their origins, and bridge the fractures between family members that were caused by colonisation. Royal<sup>38</sup> and Roberts<sup>36</sup> describe the general process of whakapapa research as: speaking with and including whānau members in the research process; searching through archives, libraries, and repositories; visiting ancestral lands to gather information from meetings, carvings, church records, and headstones; and presenting findings back to family.

**Wānanga with wairua:** This wānanga involves engaging with wairua through the senses outlined in my *Rongo-ā-Wairua Framework*. Throughout my PhD I received numerous tohu (referring to signs and messages) to guide me in my journey. At the beginning, these tohu were presented in the form of people that would guide me towards spaces of healing. The healing practitioners in these areas acted as the messengers for my tūpuna, who then provided guidance for the next part of my journey. As I expanded my knowledge and engaged in regular wairua practices, such as karakia and whakawātea, I began to receive more messages via vision, which provided me with the resources, tools, and knowledge I needed to complete my research and heal my trauma.<sup>18,44</sup>

### Te Pūtaka: An Origin Analysis

Te Pūtaka was also developed for my PhD, with its creation inspired by the Takarangi Double Spiral, a Māori art motif which visually narrates the creation of the universe.<sup>54,55</sup> The Identity Analysis (IA) involves utilising and exploring the discussions and information found during the *Whakapapa Wānanga*. During this stage my *wānanga with self* were analysed to explore how I transformed across the course of my research, identifying the different versions of myself, the different *identities* I transformed into. The information I acquired during my *wānanga with whānau* influenced my discussions during my *wānanga with self*, and my *wānanga with wairua* guided the implementation of the other wānanga.

There are four dimensions that comprise the IA, all of which are named after realms within Māori cosmology: Te Ao Mārama (the realm of light), Te Pō (the realm of darkness), Te Kore (the realm of infinite potential) and Te Ao Wairua (the spiritual realm). Within Te Pūtaka, these dimensions represent the different layers of self that comprise the different identities that were identified during the IA. Te Ao Mārama represents the *external world* of the identity, encompassing aspects of the *taha tinana* and the *taha whānau*, including physical health, behaviour, responses towards whānau, and the reactions of the wider social world to that identity. *Te Kore* represents the *origin experiences* which have shaped and influenced what is happening in Te Pō and Te Ao Mārama. *Te Ao Wairua* represents the spiritual world, encompassing wairua beliefs, knowledge, and first-hand experiences with wairua. As shown in Fig. 2, all these dimensions are interconnected. What is happening in Te Ao Mārama (the external world), is influenced by what is happening in Te Pō (the internal world), which is influenced by the origin experiences in Te Kore. Te Ao Wairua is a constant, able to influence what is happening in each dimension.

### Taku Haerenga – My Journey

I began my research with the *wānanga with self*, conducting 14 in total, all digitally recorded and with an average length of 34 min. There were three wānanga that were <10 min long, conducted as unplanned reactionary wānanga to specific experiences occurring at the time. The first *wānanga with self* was structured, whereby I developed an interview

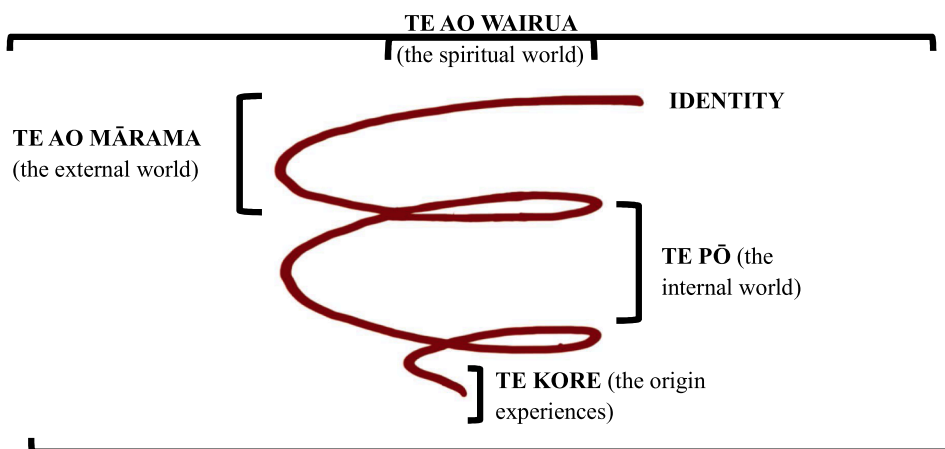


Fig. 2. Te Pūtake – Identity Analysis.

guide to direct the process. Some of the questions I asked include “Where do I see my own trauma starting from?” and “How did I survive my trauma?”. After transcribing this first wānanga, I shifted to an unstructured approach, which allowed for more natural responses to be captured, aligning with processes of Māori oral tradition.<sup>51</sup> I also added comments and notes to the transcripts, engaging in conversations with the identity I identified in that specific wānanga. The rest of my wānanga with self remained unstructured, shaped by the information I acquired during my wānanga with whānau and the messages I received from wairua and my tūpuna during my wānanga with wairua.

**Ngā Kitenga - My stories of transformation from Hinengaro to Hineora**

Originally, four identities were identified during the IA, though this article will focus on exploring the dimensions of two of these identities: Hinengaro and Hineora. Hinengaro represents who I was at the beginning of my research journey. The ‘ngaro’ in her name means to be lost or obscured, and ‘hine’ refers to girl, daughter, or divine feminine. Thus, Hinengaro may be referred to as The Obscured Daughter, reflecting the state of obscurity I embodied at the beginning of my research. This is further reflected in her dimensions of self (Fig. 3). In Te Ao Mārama she ‘Hides behind masks’, in Te Pō she is filled with ‘Fear’, and her Te Kore is comprised of ‘Childhood trauma’. However, within Te Ao Wairua she recognises that she was ‘Saved by wairua’. Hineora is the identity I

embody now. The word ‘ora’ means to be alive, safe, healthy, and healed. In combination with ‘hine’, Hineora may be referred to as The Healing Daughter. Considering that healing is ongoing, I chose to embody the word ‘healing’ into her name rather than ‘healed’. This transformation is also reflected in the transformations of her dimensions of self (Fig. 4). In Te Ao Mārama she is ‘Trigger-free’ and in Te Pō she has achieved ‘Acceptance’, with the origins of these transformations stemming from Te Kore, which is comprised of ‘Breaking intergenerational cycles’. And finally, in Te Ao Wairua, she has attained ‘Intergenerational healing’.

**Hinengaro, The Obscured Daughter**

*Te Ao Mārama*

**Hiding behind masks.** Hinengaro wears many different masks that change depending on her environment. These masks keep her safe, obscuring who she really is from herself and others.

*“I wore masks to hide myself and the ugly me that I thought was there, and to make others feel comfortable so that I am safe and don’t have to worry about becoming the target for anyone else’s unhappiness” (Deanna Haami).*

She must behave in ways that are ‘acceptable’ to stay safe. She cannot allow others to get too close. There is too much vulnerability in

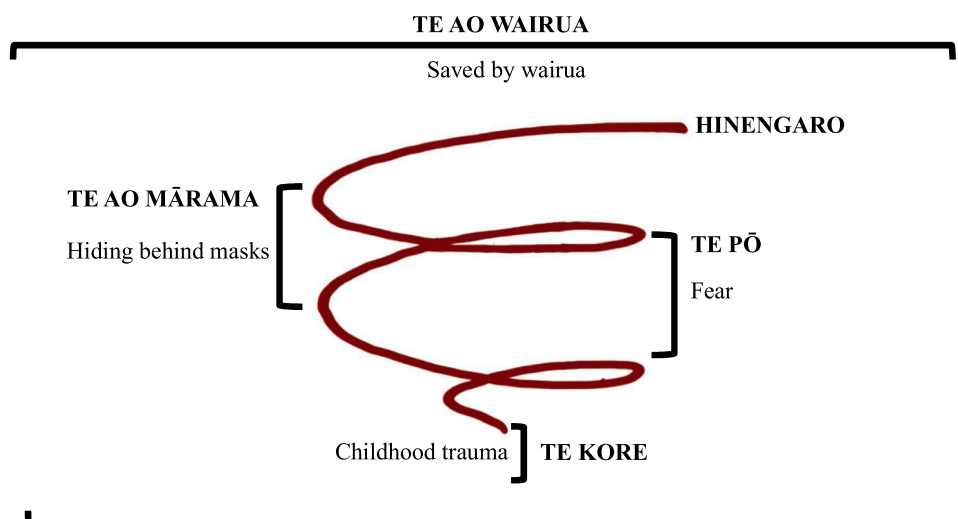


Fig. 3. Hinengaro's IA.

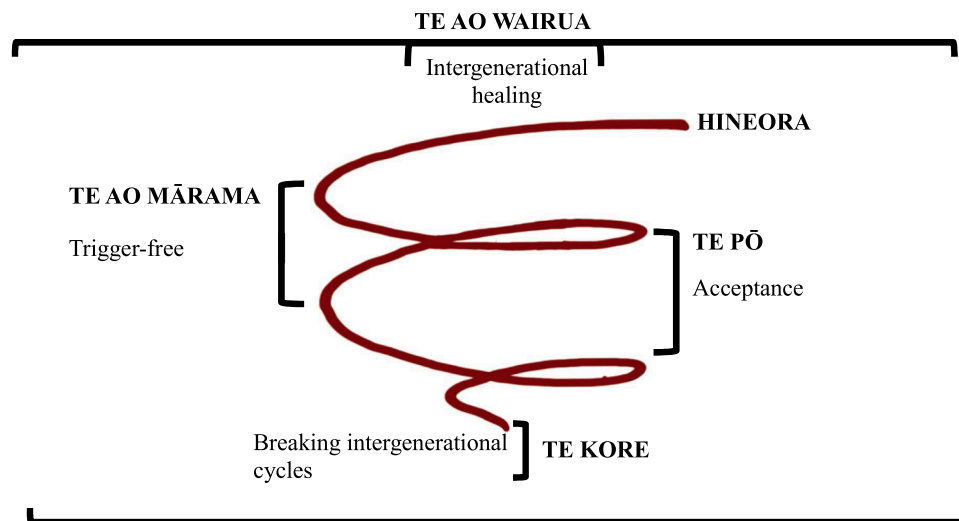


Fig. 4. Hineora's IA.

that, too high of a chance her wounds will be exacerbated.

*"I've always been hiding behind accepted behaviours. I ended up suppressing myself and shaping myself to avoid any negative attention. I couldn't open myself up. I could not be vulnerable because of being betrayed so much by the people who should love you unconditionally... that in my mind it sort of became 'Ah, being alone is so much safer', and it is".*

#### Te Pō

**Fear.** Hinengaro's mind is filled with fear. She fears being hurt, change, the unknown, so she holds tightly to what she knows, even if all she has known is hurt.

*"I know I was running away from fear, the constant fear. I lived in a lot of fear for a long time. I was very, very careful, and that is because I learnt what happens when you expose your feelings. I learnt what happens when you expose yourself. And it was never great".*

Her biggest fear though is love – because the love she knows is the fear kind.

*"Because of my upbringing, because of the relationship I saw between Mum and Dad. It was a shitty ass relationship, and they should have called it quits earlier. I saw their relationship and this fear was entrenched in me of love. If that's what love was, the yelling, the screaming, the hate, and pain that was thrown at each other, then I didn't want to be a part of it".*

#### Te Kore

**Childhood trauma.** From what Hinengaro remembers of her childhood it was comprised mainly of pain, sadness, and emotional neglect. She cannot recall ever being provided with the emotional support she needed to navigate her internal and external worlds safely.

*"My parents weren't the nurturers I needed, so I nurtured myself. Neither of them could provide us with the love and the emotional support we needed or wanted, so we had to figure it out ourselves".*

Fighting was all she could really remember of her childhood. The constant screaming and yelling and hatred that was flung back and forth between her parents.

*"I don't remember much about their relationship other than they fought all the time. I would be playing outside, and I could hear mum screaming*

*down the phone, swearing and angry. When they were home and the fighting started, I would go hide in the room with my sister. I don't remember crying about it though. I think it had become so normal that the tears had long stopped flowing".*

#### Te Ao Wairua

**Saved by wairua.** Though Hinengaro lives in obscurity, she has had one constant companion – wairua. Wairua saved her. When she did not want to continue on in this world wairua told her to keep going.

*"If I think about the essence of what wairua is to me, its guidance, its purpose. It's always been there and it will always be there...I just had a sense that if I keep going it'll be alright. It felt like wairua was saying to me 'Hey, you know this is just a time, a moment in time'. So wairua saved me? I don't think I would be here without wairua, without being tuned in, because humaning is so hard".*

The most important wairua companion in her life has been her brother who died when she was a baby. He was there during the toughest times of her childhood, her place of safety and peace.

*"My brother's role was a guardian, a guide, a protector. I think that's the best way to talk about it. He's been a big part of my life since I was a baby, still is, like I know that he's always there, I definitely feel him".*

#### Hineora, The Healing Daughter

##### Te Ao Mārama

**Trigger-free.** Hineora has healed a lot, but she knows that she still has a lot more to heal. At least now though she can talk to her whānau and not get triggered.

*"When I talk to her [mum] now, it's so different from before. Everything she would say would trigger me in some way. I would get exasperated and be quick to react to her and be mean to her. I would feel my body tense up in anxiety and pain, but that would come out in frustration. But now I talk to her and my body stays relaxed. We laugh and the laughter is actually real. I listen to her words, words that would have triggered me before, and there's nothing. I am just there in the moment with her, enjoying her for who she is. And it's those realisations that make me realise how far I've come".*

## Te Pō

**Acceptance.** Hineora has moved into a space of acceptance, of finding acceptance for the fact that she did experience trauma and that it did have a powerful impact on her life – and that is ok.

*“I think a big part of it was accepting that I did go through trauma. Have I accepted that I’ve changed because of trauma? Or is it about accepting that I don’t actually know who I am? Accepting that everything that I don’t remember from when I was 1 to 24 years old, still created the me that I am now”.*

She has come to the point of acceptance that life really is the way that it is. But that also does not mean that it needs to stay that way – it is up to her to take responsibility for her own healing.

*“Because of the mahi I’ve done I can sit in a space of neutrality more when it comes to dealing with mum. I don’t have any attachment to expectations or specific outcomes with her. I recognise that it is not about mum controlling her behaviour. It’s about me and how I react and accepting and understanding my triggers and that they are my triggers to heal. I can’t expect anyone else to do that for me”.*

## Te Kore

**Breaking intergenerational cycles.** Her mum has been one of the biggest cycle breakers in her life. One of the greatest cycles she broke was nurturing her connection with wairua.

*“After the death of my brother Mum turned away from her Catholic upbringing and towards spirituality. She recognised that I was able to see into the wairua dimension after witnessing me talking to the wairua of my brother and my Koro who had also passed away. She saw it and did the best to make sure that I knew that I was normal. She had no one to ask for help in supporting me, so she read books based on Buddhist teachings instead”.*

Because her mum did her best to support her connection to wairua, Hineora was able to survive. She was able to keep going and surpass her expectations for her life – to continue to live.

*“If I wasn’t able to connect with wairua, to wander off into my taha wairua, to feel the push on my back from my tūpuna to keep going, I don’t think I would have survived, and I am still surprised that I have lived until I was 18. I genuinely thought I’d get to 18 and I wouldn’t be here”.*

## Te Ao Wairua

**Intergenerational healing.** What Hineora has been doing is whakapapa healing, intergenerational healing. She knows now that as she heals, her ancestors’ soul wounds will be healed too. And there will be less trauma passed down to her descendants.

*“It’s about healing the self, which then heals ancestors, providing a nurturing foundation for future generations to flourish and continue to do the healing until the trauma is cleared out of the whakapapa”.*

Her tūpuna have come to her quite a few times across her journey, thanking her, crying with her, letting her know that what she is doing has healed the many wounds that were opened during their lifetimes.

*“I just saw a lot of my tūpuna, a lot of them, standing at my shoulders. Telling me they know better now, so they’ll give me only the good things that I need. That they will try their best from their side so that I can keep on healing. Crying and thanking me, letting me know that as I heal so do they”.*

## Kupu Whakamutunga - Conclusion

The trauma responses I displayed as Hinengaro in Te Ao Mārama, the hiding behind the masks, can be thought of as an act of concealment, a common survival response identified in adults that have experienced childhood trauma.<sup>40</sup> This response stemmed from what was happening internally, within Te Pō, whereby my feelings of fear shaped how I perceived my safety in the world around me, that I needed to protect myself from the possibility of having my tapū violated, of receiving a patū ngākau. This meant that I was also unable to see that my Te Pō, my internal world, was more than a space for holding the seeds of trauma – that there was potential within that space to learn from my experiences of trauma and use those learnings to grow. Such fear has been identified as intertwined with trauma<sup>39</sup> and a central part of the Indigenous experience of Intergenerational Trauma.<sup>3</sup> This makes sense for myself as the origins (Te Kore) of my fear are my childhood trauma, the Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) that have impacted my spiritual, psychological, physical, and social wellbeing in adulthood.<sup>12,15,25,27,47</sup> What enabled me to survive this trauma was Te Ao Wairua. Though trauma had disrupted my connection to wairua, my matekitetanga allowed me to become slightly re-aligned with wairua. Thus, while wairua was not able to flow fully, the drips that did flow into my Taha Hinengaro was enough to keep me going, allowing me to find a safe space to retreat from the trauma. Matekitetanga can then be viewed as a protective factor, as it enabled me to not only survive, but eventually thrive and find purpose in my life, further emphasising the importance of wairua in wellbeing.<sup>1,20,29,48</sup>

My experience as Hineora is very different from when I was Hinengaro. In Te Ao Mārama I no longer feel the need to conceal myself, as I no longer get triggered. Triggers can be thought of as a tohu, a sign or message from the soul to heal, as once this healing is complete the trigger will no longer manifest.<sup>45</sup> This healing can be traced to my internal world (Te Pō), as through this process of healing, I shifted into a space of absolute acceptance of my lived reality, which has been identified as a vital skill for coping with the impacts of trauma<sup>33</sup> and improving wellbeing for Indigenous peoples impacted by historical trauma.<sup>24</sup> Following the thread of healing into Te Kore, the origins of these shifts in my internal and external worlds originates from the breaking of intergenerational cycles that my mum undertook, which then resulted in less barriers for me to overcome in my own healing.<sup>13</sup> Her support of my matekitetanga enabled me to connect to wairua and find a purpose for living, highlighting the importance of parents acknowledging and nurturing the wairua of their children.<sup>17,19</sup> The journey that I took from Hinengaro to Hineora saw my experiences within Te Ao Wairua transform from survival to self-determination, as I am actively taking part in my own healing. I am now aware that not only am I my own rongoā, my own remedy,<sup>41</sup> but as I heal so do my tūpuna. In this sense, I am engaging in Intergenerational Healing, whereby particular soul wounds that were embedded into my whakapapa are no longer present, ensuring that future generations will not inherit the wounds that were transmitted to me.<sup>9</sup>

The transformation I went through from Hinengaro to Hineora was immense, and what I have included above is only a snapshot of that transformation. Where I am now, embodying Hineora, is such a different space to where I have sat for most of my life, and I hope that my research can act as a map, a guide, for others with similar experiences of intergenerational trauma as they navigate their own journeys of healing.

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**Deanna Haami:** Writing – review & editing, Writing – original draft,

Project administration, Methodology, Investigation, Formal analysis, Data curation, Conceptualization. **Natasha Tassell-Matamua:** Supervision. **Pikihuia Pomare:** Supervision. **Nicole Lindsay:** Supervision.

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