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# **Wairua, Affect and National Commemoration Days**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of  
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Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa

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## **Abstract**

Wairua, a Māori (indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand) concept, somewhat restrictively translated as spirit or spirituality, resonates with many indigenous peoples globally. While spirit is recognised as an important human dimension, the denigration of non-western spiritual understandings means that indigenous peoples often choose to remain silent. Transferring these concerns to research approaches, we edit our voices, with a view to what we think will count as knowledge and what we choose to share with academic audiences.

The aim of my study is to explore wairua and investigate how wairua might provide an analytical approach to understanding emotions and feelings evoked by Waitangi Day and Anzac Day. This project sits within a major research programme “Wairua, Affect and National Days” funded by the Marsden Fund of the Royal Society. The overall objective of the wider project was to explore wairua and the affective politics evoked as people relate, engage and grapple with observance and charged acts of remembrance around national days in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Drawing on literature, qualitative in-depth interviews and haerenga kitea, an audio-visual method recording people’s experiences of national days, I arrived at several overlapping domains that provided a starting point for the development of A Wairua Approach (AWA) to research. The literature revealed wairua as a topic that appears in diverse sources but is rarely investigated in its own right; while wairua is acknowledged as central to Māori experience, and ‘in everything’, it is rarely engaged with explicitly in research. People understand and experience wairua in diverse ways, with wairua weaving in and out of everyday life for some people. However, for many Māori, living in a western society that has largely determined what is considered reality, such understandings are often discounted, marginalised and a source of discomfort.

A wairua approach, when applied to haerenga kitea data was able to frame participant experiences within wider meanings, relating to diverse concepts such as identity and mana. Addressing wairua explicitly in research, was a challenging exercise, but one that enabled a depth of emotions and feelings to be uncovered.

## Dedication

*I roto i toku ngākau, e mohio ana ahau e tiaki tonu koe i ahau, me a maatau tamariki. Moe mai ra tāku aroha.*

*To my husband Maurice Gunn, I will always be truly grateful for the unconditional love and support you gave during our time together. Thank you for always believing in me; for giving me the courage to take that first step and for telling me not to give up, because there were many overwhelming times, I felt like it. You sat and watched me cry and struggle through many moments to complete this work. I know, like all my tupuna you will be watching and so very proud, because it's done! You deserved to share in what comes next, so this is for you, my love.*

***'Sleep well my darling, you know you are loved'***

## Acknowledgements

I have to acknowledge and thank the many people who helped, gave me inspiration and in some way or form encouraged me to complete this work. It was a process that was not without its challenges but, in the end, I got there.

Although first, I want to say, during the process of completing my thesis I have experienced the grief and trauma associated with death, when my husband Maurice passed. Then absolute happiness with the arrival of my newest mokopuna, Mya Atarangi TeRaina Leabourn-Gunn and Reece Arohaina Tangimoana Gunn. I think their names are meaningful and strong and they are a combination of my husband's, my sisters' Whiti and Joanne and my name.

Sadness always lingers when I look at them because they never knew their Paka (my husband's name he acquired in place of pāpā) in this lifetime. My girl was five months hapu with her first child, Tairawhiti Exodus Maurice Gunn, when he suddenly passed, and I used to think the same thing - that he never got to meet his Paka. But, each time he looks at Maurice's photo hanging pride of place in our home, Tairawhiti acknowledges him and says, 'hi dada' (the name he has for all the significant men in his life). I don't know why he knows him, maybe I am wrong?

And so, I want to acknowledge all five of my beautiful, clever mokopuna, Morehu Leabourn-Gunn, Amelia Leabourn-Gunn, Mya Leabourn-Gunn, Tairawhiti Gunn and Reece Gunn, because they are my future and carry my whānau lineage within them. They are all amazing little human beings who fill my heart with unimaginable love and joy. I am so very blessed and fortunate to have them in my life and I get to share in all their successes that are yet to come. I can't wait for the day I get an opportunity to read and comment on their Doctoral theses and I am expecting a doctoral thesis from each of them.

My words of wisdom for my children Maurice (aka Morehu) Gunn and Kristine Gunn, because they will read this; always remember, strength comes from within and when you face adversity, support will always be given, if you only ask. Stand up for what you believe and drive towards success, whatever you believe success to be. If you have to be anything in this world, have the courage to be kind and considerate to others regardless, you never know what they have been through.

To my mum (dec), my dad and all my brothers and sisters and yes there is a lot of us, thank you all for the support, tenderness, and kindness you gave without hesitation. I think our whānau are truly incredible and have achieved so many outstanding, phenomenal successes that could only be achieved through hard-work, drive, and sheer determination. Considering where we came from, our whānau story is one of inspiration and resilience that many people would struggle to believe. I love you all to the moon and back.

While I have been on this learning journey, so many people I love have passed away, and although I know death is an inevitable outcome, we must all experience, losing someone you love is never an easy thing. I want to mention two people, that I think were significant in life. My beloved uncle, Uatuku Taite, died in 2020. Albeit he was in his late 80s, and he was the oldest of my dad's siblings, I will miss him dearly. He was very well read and was so proud of me, because when I finish this mahi, we will have a 'doctor' in our Taite whānau. And, my cousin Tania Ratapu who died early 2021, I loved her so very much. Boy, she could sing and had the most amazing voice. She was that piece of my childhood that reminds me of kindness and home. I am going to miss her for the rest of my life. Ahakoa, kei te haere tonu te koiora!

It is important to acknowledge and thank my three supervisors, because without them this would not have happened. To Professor Helen Moewaka Barnes, Professor Tim McCreanor and Professor Margaret Wetherell, thank you all so very much for choosing me to be your

PhD student all those years ago. Your support was unconditional and the passion you demonstrated about the topic was always astonishing. I remember when I started my undergraduate degree many, many years ago and reading articles that were authored or co-authored by one of you. I never imagined for a moment that I, would not only get to meet you, but would be your student, how lucky was I...ngā mihi, ngā mihi, ngā mihi ki a koutou.

To my whānau of the Ongare Trust and Matiu Dickson Memorial Tertiary Grant, thank you for believing in me and for the kind contribution you gave. Every little bit helped and allowed me to concentrate on completing my thesis. I hope one day I get an opportunity to repay your kindness, tēnā koutou katoa tōku whānau.

This study was part of a research project on *Wairua, Affect and National Days*, supported by The Marsden Fund Council from Government funding, administered by the Royal Society of New Zealand (contract MAU019). Without this funding my thesis would not have been possible. I have learned so much about a fascinating topic that gave insight into the importance Māori hold about their belief and value systems.

Lastly, to all the people who took part in this study. Thank you for opening up and sharing your beliefs and thoughts with me, without you all this work would not have been possible. It was an absolute pleasure talking to each and every one of you and I am truly grateful.

*Ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou katoa...*

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## **Glossary of Māori Terms**

Aotearoa - New Zealand

Atua - gods

Hapu - sub tribe

Iwi - tribe

Karakia - prayer

Karanga - call

Kikokiko - the physical element of human beings

Koha - gift, present

Kupu - word

Mana - prestige, status

Mana atua - supernormal qualities in both inanimate and animate

Mana tupuna - descent from ancestors

Mana whenua - authority or ownership over land

Mana tangata - derived through sheer personality, leadership or achievement

Māori - indigenous people of aotearoa, ordinary

Mauri - essence, life force

Mihi - greeting

Mihimihi - greet pay tribute

Noa - just, ordinary, unrestricted

Pākehā - english, foreign, European, non-Māori

Pepehā - introduction

Pōwhiri - welcome

Taiaha - wooden thrusting spear

Taita - suburb in lower hutt, Wellington

Tapu – restrictions, wellbeing and sacredness from violation

Tangihanga - mourning, funeral

Te - the

Te Hokowhitu A Tu - Māori battalion

Temepara - Temple

Tewhatewha - long-handled weapon with an axe-shaped blade

Tikanga - method, formality

Tupuna - ancestor

Tumatauenga - god of war and humans

Waiata - song, sing

Wairua - spirituality

Whaikōrero - formal speech

Whakapapa - genealogy

Whānau - family

## Chapter 1 Introduction

*Whakataukī*

*Kua mahana haere te whenua he wā rūmaki kai*

*He wā ano hoki tēnei hei titiro whakamua*

*Ki nga take hōhonu hei whakamaaro i te huarahi mo tōu ara whaingā*

*He aha te wairua o pārekereke*

*Kimihia te huarahi hei whakapakari i te matauranga.*

*The warmth of the earth signals the season for planting*

*and a time also to focus inward*

*On important matters that shape the path for the future.*

*What is the essence of pārekereke?*

*It is to seek out the shoots and pathways for knowledge and growth!*

*(Te Taite Cooper date unknown)*

The above whakataukī is included at the very start of this thesis to set the scene for my growth journey and highlights that every important journey you undertake requires a starting point. That point in time is important because it is the period in which interest is fuelled and learning initially begins.

Finding my beginning for this journey was no easy task because there are many moments throughout my life which influenced what I believe as truth. When I started writing this thesis nearly eight years ago, I believed that, through my many years of lived experience, I knew all that was necessary about wairua. This was because my understanding of wairua was demonstrated through my parents' and grandparents' actions and behaviours, which made

wairua an ordinary component included as a 'normal' part of our daily lives. Their acknowledgement and acceptance of spirituality as a common experience created a belief that the 'uncanny component of wairua' was a natural part of Māori life that everyone accepted. However, I quickly learned this was not the case and that some Māori choose not to share their experience or guard their beliefs of the 'uncanny' and other wairua experiences.

While I initially struggled to see outside my own knowledge base of what I perceived was true and correct about wairua, overall, this has been an interesting pathway to undertake. This journey involved some good learning that contributes to what I view as important and how I see the world today.

In all tasks I undertake I have always been impatient, wanting to get to the end as fast as I could. I am constantly told that sometimes it is not the end destination that is the prize, but the journey you undertake to arrive at it. In this instance, the prize was absolutely the journey where every moment along this rocky pathway provided significant learning, necessary to understanding the importance of wairua as the focus of this study.

## *Whakataukī*

*“Mai I te Kōpae ki te Urupa tatou āko tonu ai”.*

*From the cradle to the grave, we are forever learning.*

This whakataukī illustrates that learning is fundamental to all that we are and occurs throughout the entire course of one’s life, sometimes without any considered effort.

### Study overview

This project sits within a major research programme “Wairua, Affect and National Days” funded by the Marsden Fund of the Royal Society. The overall objective of the wider project was to explore wairua and the affective politics evoked as people relate, engage and grapple with observance and charged acts of remembrance around national days in Aotearoa New Zealand.

This thesis focuses on the Māori data of the larger project, examining wairua as a central component to being Māori and how it is included in research literature. I found research literature acknowledges wairua as a key component of Māori understandings, experience and practice, however, few studies include wairua as a central concept or an explicit analytical theme or domain.

### The aim of the study

The aim of my study is to explore wairua and investigate how wairua might provide an analytical approach to understanding emotions and feelings evoked by Waitangi Day and Anzac Day. Using a kaupapa Māori methodological approach, the study employed a range of qualitative and audio-visual methods to meet the aims of the research. Specifically, the study looked at how wairua is included in research and literature; how it is talked about and how it is expressed or ‘seen’ as participants experience Waitangi Day and Anzac Day.

## Thesis structure

The thesis is structured as a thesis by publication. I begin with the discoveries that occurred as part of the doctoral process; this is not structured as a research article but presented as my journey. Three other findings chapters – 5, 6 and 7 make up the body of the thesis. They are either submitted or published papers or book chapters. Below is an overview of each chapter.

Chapter 2 describes my journey and explores key discoveries in my learning during the initial stages of my research. It outlines my lived experiences and how they contributed to my understanding of wairua, much of which I took for granted.

Chapter 3 reviews literature to explore meanings of wairua, how it is discussed and how it has been entered into research.

Chapter 4 provides an overview of the research methodology and methods used in this research. It includes a description of how kaupapa Māori approaches informed each phase of the study and describes the qualitative methods utilised to collect and analyse the data.

Chapter 5 explores how key informants talk about wairua. This paper highlights experiences and meanings participants place on wairua and its place in their lives.

Chapter 6 outlines the development of a wairua approach (which we have referred to by its acronym, AWA) as a potential way of centring wairua in research, analysis and meaning making. The chapter includes two examples of what the application of a wairua approach to experiences of Waitangi Day might tell us.

Chapter 7 presents and explores the experiences of two participants in haerenga kitea video interviews as they experience and talk about Anzac Day. This enabled the further application of AWA as evident in everyday understandings and experiences.

Chapter 8 provides concluding comments on the study, including a summary of research findings, recommendations for further research and an outline of implications. I argue that sometimes a little courage is needed to discuss wairua in public fora and in research but doing so has the potential to lead to beneficial outcomes for whānau Māori across all domains of social life.

## Chapter 2 My journey and research background

*Whakataukī*

*Mā mua ka kite a muri*

*Mā muri ka ora a mua*

*Those who lead give sight to those who follow*

*Those who follow give life to those who lead*

In this chapter I describe my journey as I explored wairua, both for this study and in my own life. Although I report on the findings from the data in later chapters, this chapter, in a sense, is about my findings, the key discoveries I made grounded in my life journeys.

### Home is where the heart is

I grew up in Wairoa, a small town just north of Napier in the Ngāti Kahungunu takiwa. Growing up there, my favourite childhood place was Kihitu just on the outskirts of Wairoa and was where my grandfather lived. While Aotearoa houses some of the most beautiful places on earth that look untouched and peaceful with the most stunning scenery, Kihitu is not one of those places. I have never thought of it as an overly attractive place where natural beauty is a defining feature, but it is one of the places I loved as a child and it was full of joy and happiness.

Although my immediate whānau never lived there, we visited my grandfather often and I spent many hours playing in his fields. It was once a thriving Māori community and home to about 10-15 Māori whānau. Nowadays there are just a few empty, old rundown houses left, and the once green paddocks that were home for healthy, fat livestock are now covered in dry brown maize. The shell of grandfather's house still stands, showing signs that it has long

been abandoned. Nevertheless, my fondest childhood memories are of Kihitu and of his tiny little house there.

*Illustration 1: My Pāpā's house*



Photo: Te Raina Gunn

## Learning about wairua

As a child I loved going to Kihitu. We collected blackberries, picked wild mushrooms and played on the hills and in the paddocks. It was also the place where my mother framed her experiences of wairua. She was both very religious and a very spiritual person who spoke often about her experiences growing up in Kihitu.

She was one of many children that were cared for as whangai by the Māori couple I called my grandparents and, for my mother growing up as the child of farmers, life was hard. She would often tell my siblings and me, stories about her life growing up in that small Māori community where tohungatanga was openly practiced and mākutū was the cause of everything bad that happened.

There was one story she told us about a burial cave by the beach at the very start of the straight, heading towards the marae in Kihitu. She said, in the early days before the urupa, Māori of Kihitu put their dead into this cave and it was a very tapu place. When she was young, she remembered being told of three children going into the cave and playing. All three children died a few days after. She said everyone in Kihitu said it was because they went into the cave and touched things they were not supposed to.

Another story was about a man who passed away. He was buried upside down and outside the Kihitu urupa on the side of the hill. A tree was placed on top of his grave, so the community knew where he was buried. My mother said he was a bad tohunga and did some very bad things to many people.

I remember that tree always looked half dead and looked like it would fall over in a slight breeze. Yet, it is still there today as the marker for this man's burial place. We were told many stories like these, and I never questioned their validity or truth, I just believed them.

My grandfather and parents were also very religious and, when I think back, we were always having church. When we travelled, when someone got sick or when the weather was bad, we prayed. As a child I can recall our whānau heading to Rātana pa<sup>1</sup> with my grandfather at the head of our convoy. We would travel from Wairoa to Whanganui in the early hours of the morning or late at night, and pāpā would pull his car to the side of the road, just outside of Wairoa. We would all stop behind him and we would have church in the dark on the side of the road. When asked why we did that, my mother said we did so to ask for safe passage on our journey and to give thanks for the many blessings we have received. I never thought this was odd, because my whole whānau participated and I remember seeing so many other Māori

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<sup>1</sup> Rātana pa, is a town in the North Island of New Zealand, in the Manawatū-Whanganui region. It continues as the centre of the Rātana Church.

whānau stopped in the same spot, just outside of Wairoa, on the side of the road, in the dark and gathered around their pāpā just like we did.

My grandfather and mother told many stories about Rātana and how the church was created to unite the Māori people. One of the key stories I remember being told, is of the healing Rātana performed on both Māori and non-Māori people. There is a whare at the Rātana pa that houses the remnants of all those healings and there are a number of walking sticks and old wheelchairs left behind by people who had been healed. There are also many greenstone mere, pendants and other artefacts which Rātana lifted mākutu from in that whare.

My pāpā died when I was 14 years old and I still make that pilgrimage each year to the Rātana pa, with my children and now my grandchildren. This is because I believe it is a place that rejuvenates my soul and a piece of my history or belief I can impart to my children and my mokopuna.

*Illustration 2: Rātana Temepara*



Photo: Te Raina Gunn

As children we are all told what to believe and many do so without questioning. As you grow so does your ability to question the, what, why and how to investigate the mechanics of systems, concepts, ideas, and beliefs. All those years ago, I never asked my pāpā or mother to explain the intricate details of wairua or what purpose it serves but considered the practices of my whānau as part of daily life and the experiences I had, were enough to inform my understanding and meaning of wairua. Thus, my initial understanding of wairua was not learned from books but deeply imbedded in a cultural, religious context which was practiced as part of daily life that my whānau treated as ‘normal’ behaviour. It was through my doctoral research that I learned how to identify and articulate aspects of wairua within the stories we were told and the practices my whānau preformed daily.

As a result of this study, my understanding and knowledge of wairua has increased significantly and I learned a great many things about it, or at least, how to articulate these things. For example, wairua is multi-faceted and relates to culture, religion, spirituality and changes by individuals and their perceptions of reality. Further, it is considered multi-dimensional and creates the connection between the tangible and intangible. In addition, wairua informs Māori beliefs and value systems that are key to understanding, creating and maintaining a person’s wellbeing.

I now wonder how many other whānau Māori did the exact same, or similar, things as we did, growing up and believe that through their lived experiences, they know all that is wairua.

Prior to this research I considered I knew and understood all that wairua touches and represents. I now know there is no one meaning that encapsulates the full essences of wairua.

Among other things, in this study I am tasked with articulating expressions of wairua to assert its importance in te ao Māori and for Māori wellbeing.

### *Whakataukī*

*“Life is a series of natural and spontaneous changes. Don't resist them; that only creates sorrow. Let reality be reality. Let things flow naturally forward in whatever way they like.”*

— Lao Tzu

### Grief and wairua

Every situation you experience provides an opportunity to learn something new; to find new beginnings or new pathways that increase your experiences or levels of understanding.

Change is the most constant thing in this world, so I was told and for some people, there are significant moments that have the potential to change their life forever.

I was 11, maybe 12 years old, when my older sister was preparing to leave our home in Wairoa. I remember thinking, life is never going to be the same, now that she is leaving and through teary eyes, I asked her why things always change. She said to me, ‘change is the most constant thing in this world; you can fight to keep the status-quo, or you can embrace the change and take the learnings that situation brings with it.’ She was all of 16 years old at the time, and already had this profound understanding of many things. Now, I am much older, and it took many years and many situations to learn what that actually meant and how to articulate my thoughts as well as she could when she was only 16 years old. It is evident, that some people just take longer to learn than others and for many learning is a never-ending journey!

While there have been many life changing situations in my life-journey, the ones that had the most profound impact are the situations that caused an extreme emotional response and there are just a handful of those.

For example, 2018 was a terrible year, full of anxiety, frustration, pain and tears. It was different from other years because, for the first time in my adult life, I was unemployed by choice and had taken time off work to study. While unemployed, my studies had not progressed any further than in the previous two years. I struggled to find the reasons why it was important to analyse and discuss a concept as personal as wairua in a forum that was open to criticism and judgement, by both Māori and non-Māori. During all that time, I searched for those reasons and could not find them.

Then, one moment in June of 2018, my life changed forever; my husband of many years suddenly passed away. He had just turned 60 years old and was on holiday on the other side of the world in Scotland visiting his sister Ereti and other whānau when he died.

While most people expect their parents or terminally ill whānau to die, this was sudden, unexpected and devastating. When unanticipated death occurs, it is difficult to imagine that, in the moments thereafter, you will be strong enough to put your emotions and grief aside to organise for an unintended traumatising event. Initially you surround yourself with people who support your immediate grief and then others who ensure that each direction you give is followed and unquestioned.

There were many mechanisms that could have helped manage the grief and, for me, one was a comment a participant made during the data collection phase of this study, nearly four years earlier. It was something that resonated with me and I thought of it often during this time.

He said that human beings are not made to live forever and no matter what, we will all eventually die. The processes and rituals we do after that death, are for the living to help us deal with our grief and make ourselves feel better. He said that those rituals make no difference to the dead because they are dead, and that outcome will never change. While I believed part of what he said, my religious background compelled me to do the ceremonies

and rituals, which I was taught ensured my husband's safe journey and passage to the place where spirits go.

I am not sure why, but during this time, I constantly asked myself, if I truly believed and understood my research and what I was writing about wairua and the connections it creates. I should know that, like my tupuna, his wairua would now exist in a different realm and would never be too far away. I guess it was my way of coping with the situation.

## *Whakataukī*

*Ehara taku toa I te toa takitahi engari, he toa takitini*

*My successes are not mine alone, they are ours – the greatest successes we will have are from working together.*

### The Health Quality and Safety Commission

For one month after his death, each day, alone, I travelled 45 minutes to where we laid my husband to rest and cried. At that time, I considered this was an action I needed to undertake to begin healing but, as each day passed, I began to think it would be better to fill my days with something more productive. So, by the end of that first month I started working at the Health Quality and Safety Commission (HQSC - the Commission) on a short-term contract. For me, the Commission was a great place to heal and to learn the importance of including te ao Māori concepts in the development and implementation of policies, procedures, programmes, and systems aimed at improving Māori health outcomes.

In general, the Commission works with many health clinicians, health providers and consumers to improve health and disability support services across Aotearoa New Zealand. As Sir Mason Durie argued in his foreword to the Commission's recent report on Māori health equity:

*“Good health for everyone demands a society that is fair and just, committed to equal opportunities as well as equal outcomes, and ready to shift the focus if that is needed.”* (HQSC, 2019, p, 6).

The Commission strives to achieve equity and better health outcomes for Māori as tangata whenua, in the first instance. This was the first organisation I had worked in that invested a significant amount of resource and effort into achieving equity and continuously looked at ways to contribute to improving Māori health outcomes across the country.

It was through this role that I began to see why elements of te ao Māori are key to service delivery. I also began to consider that, while there are many Māori models, frameworks, and approaches (i.e., Te Whare Tapa Whā, Te Wheke, cultural safety, kaupapa Māori methodologies) to the delivery of care for whānau Māori, something was missing. This was because, regardless of all those models, frameworks and approaches, Māori still experience high levels of disparities across the nation.

Formulated over the last few decades, Māori models, frameworks, or approaches in general, aim to illustrate the importance of including te ao Māori concepts to support service delivery and educational provisions across the broader context of whānau Māori. While gains have been made, the gap between Māori and non-Māori across many western institutions (health and education) still exists.

*“Māori are over-represented in almost every type of illness and every known determinant that leads to poor health.” (HQSC, 2019, p, 6).*

Wairua is included as an important component of all Māori models, frameworks, and approaches. However, through my study, I learned wairua can be considered the most difficult concept within te ao Māori to understand, operationalise and implement across many western domains.

I considered the idea that, if wairua is key to Māori culture, why is it not at the forefront or centralised as the vital focus of each Māori model, framework, or approach. There was nothing missing from these frameworks because all the elements that contribute to wellbeing were there. What I questioned was, did we not provide enough direction or information that seeks to understand how and why wairua is important to Māori. Moreover, while wairua is acknowledged, no avenues to operationalise or practically apply wairua within those models

were offered. I considered, if people understood it better, what benefits would be possible;  
'and so, it begins'.

## *Whakataukī*

*Hapaitia te ara tika pumau ai te rangatiratanga mo ngā uri whakatipu*

*Foster the pathway of knowledge to strength, independence and growth for future generations*

### My study journey

I started working on this thesis in 2014 and, as part of my confirmation year, I completed a brief literature review on wairua to inform proposal development. My initial dive into the literature identified a variety of vague, descriptive meanings that provided a starting point. To ensure I had a general understanding of people's views about wairua, I also completed a range of initial key informant interviews with 10 Māori individuals.

As I began analysing the interview data, the ideas about wairua presented in the literature began to unfold through the findings of the key informant interviews. They highlighted participant views of wairua were broad, informed many aspects of their daily lives and influenced cultural practices. I believed these initial steps would identify a purpose and assist in developing a way forward for this study. However, as I started reading further and investigating more deeply, I found many gaps in the literature, which offered very little to my understanding.

Although the literature acknowledged the importance of wairua, in general it went on to describe practices rather than exploring the concept itself. My initial searches also illustrated how wairua was couched within cultural concepts that influence how Māori interpret the world that surrounds them.

While there is no universal definition for wairua, it requires unpacking to identify the many components that are associated within it and to give it meaning. When we consider its significance, including wairua as a central focus of research and other pathways designed to

support or lead the way in understanding Māori experiences across a range of spheres, is a necessary step to undertake.

The next section provides an overview of literature associated with wairua. While the purpose of this section is to begin unpacking and describing the range of ways wairua is written about, it also looks at why it is important and how centring wairua in research might provide greater depth of understanding and meaning of Māori experience. Literature review material related to each paper is also included in the relevant chapters.

## Chapter 3 Literature review

*Whakataukī*

*Ka tangi te Titi. Ka tangi te Kaka. Ka tangi hoki ahau*

*Tihei Mauri Ora*

*The Titi is calling. The Kaka is calling. And I wish to call*

*Behold there is life!*

This chapter presents a review of literature, both contemporary and historical. It looks at how wairua is included in research and how this has contributed to understanding the many facets of wairua. It also examines factors that, overtime, have contributed to the denigration of the meanings of wairua. I begin with some introductory writing around colonisation, racism and knowledge, followed by a discussion of wairua and research.

### Colonisation, racism and knowledge

New Zealand's colonial history has shaped what is considered valid knowledge and, in many ways, influenced how cultural concepts are perceived and the forums in which they are discussed. For Māori, colonisation and forced assimilation, which the "*British colonial cultural infrastructure imposed by force on Māori in the decades following the 1840 signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi*", (Came, McCreanor and Simpson, 2017, p, 516), were processes initially used for land and resource acquisition.

These aggressions significantly affected Māori wellbeing in general. Along with the loss of land and the attempted destruction of Māori systems, colonisation drove the denigration and invalidation of Māori knowledge, beliefs, and practices. Many practices, beliefs and values were relegated as superstitious or heathenistic behaviour (see Voyce 1989).

The negative intergenerational effects of colonisation can be seen in the stark inequities between Māori and non-Māori in health and other outcomes (Bécares, Cormack and Harris, 2013). However, Harmsworth and Awatere (2013) suggest, for many Māori traditional or historical concepts continue to influence thinking and values in today's society:

*“...traditional concepts and knowledge still shape the thinking of most Māori today and traditional values resonate strongly in contemporary Māori society, forming the basis for indigenous perspectives” (p, 274).*

Racism was a central driver and mechanism used in colonial engagement that, along with forced adaptation and assimilation, is maintained through government policies and procedures that contribute to *“...the disproportionate burden of disease carried by indigenous people globally”* (Came et al., 2017, p, 515). Talamaivao, Harris, Cormack, Paine and King (2020), argue that racism is an underlying cause of ethnic health inequities both in Aotearoa New Zealand and internationally.

Burne-Field (2020) described racism as a tiring, wearisome experience where a person's wairua becomes exhausted and frayed. It accelerates and creates

*“sickness, fear, anxiety, sadness, resentment, and worry. In today's society, racism is entrenched in our tired civil institutions, a worn framework that holds up our very way of life”, (p, 1).*

Burne-Field (2020) goes on to say the framework of our society includes government policies that are aimed at ensuring and protecting the functionality of our country but,

*“...it is not affirming (for Māori), no, it becomes the bars of a prison cell, or worse, the snuff box of false hope. We sniff it, daily, trying to rally, knowing it will rot our septum as easily as a cocaine habit” (p, 1).*

Morgan and Fa’au (2018) argue

*“Māori have adapted to a colonised societal context where their values and beliefs, the basis of their identity, and their ways of being have been systematically undermined and oppressed over more than one and a half centuries. As a result, Māori have, out of necessity, had to develop ways of retaining their values and beliefs while accommodating the enforced changes associated with destructive colonisation processes, also experienced by indigenous peoples in many other parts of the world”, (p, 986).*

Accordingly, Mikaere (2003, p, 68) argues the

*“colonists also brought with them the arrogant assumption that their religious and cultural beliefs were superior to those of peoples whom they deemed to be primitive and the unshakeable view that such primitives needed to be converted to those superior beliefs”*

As a result, we can assume that colonisation and assimilation have, in general, contributed to caution as to the fora where Māori choose to share their beliefs and values and the silence that exists in research literature about many elements of culture, including wairua.

Colonisation and racism create and perpetuate the environment in which research operates, silencing some voices and privileging knowledge that reaffirms dominant paradigms and reflects the academy’s idea of itself as the centre of rational thought and practice. Wairua challenges these hierarchies.

## The ghost in the room: Wairua and research

Indigenous scholars generally acknowledge the importance of spirit and wairua in their writings. However, there is an ongoing argument about whether such matters should or should not be included in academic writing. Some posit that we should not speak directly of reverent things because this sacred knowledge does not belong to the academy (Kirkness and Barnhardt, 1991) or that the academy is not ready to receive these gifts, (Kuokkanen, 2007). Whilst there is tension between inclusion versus exclusion, should consideration be given to the injustice or the disservice to ourselves by leaving the meaning to be explained through the lens of non-indigenous writers? This is particularly relevant for Māori, as our colonial past and present illustrates how many elements of our culture, our traditional concepts and practices have been translated by non-Māori and continue to be interpreted through a western lens.

Whilst Māori culture has traditionally been holistic, non-Māori academics have isolated or compartmentalised ‘cultural’ components so they may explain and understand it for themselves. Like many concepts, the importance of wairua has been lost in translation and misinterpreted to represent elements of another, non-indigenous culture. Holman (2007, p, 30), argues,

*‘no matter how deep in the language and culture Pākehā might become, in the end they were not Māori, and Māori had to speak for themselves...’*

We can ponder what information relating to wairua and spirit is appropriate to share or consider the components that should remain within our own traditions and knowledge. However, while there is still uncertainty about including or excluding wairua in the research narrative, there is general agreement that it has not been widely or explicitly discussed. For example, Love (2004, p, 22) states,

*“while Māori spirituality may persist in some form and Māori spiritual beliefs may be held, they have been rarely spoken about openly and in public forums”.*

Some writers describe wairua as a pervasive concept and an inherent part of Māori culture that should not be overlooked. However, research has generally addressed wairua in broad terms, with little explicit analysis and limited discussion. In so doing it creates a ‘ghost in the room’, an unacknowledged dimension, understood by insiders, but exoticized and seen as uncanny (Hook, 2005) by outsiders.

It is a difficult place to be in! If we share this knowledge in the academy, we are cognisant of the issues surrounding interpretation and the ownership of our information. However, if we do not speak of it, we risk our world being presented, understood, and reflected inaccurately and thereby we inadvertently legitimate the academy as it continues to misinterpret and misrepresent wairua and its meaning.

At heart of this argument, we should always remember that, as indigenous writers, our presence in the academy presents us with an opportunity to set the record straight and control the narrative through our own research. We have the ability to correct non-Māori misinterpretations and misunderstandings and include valid, lived experiences and the well-informed views of our own cultural concepts.

When we look at how wairua has been examined in the current or existing literature we begin to see some consistent themes. These include recognition of its importance, acknowledgement that wairua is inherent in both our tangible and intangible worlds and some focussed discussion of particular aspects. However, a predominant and under-acknowledged issue is the interconnection of wairua and all elements of the cosmos and its inherent relationship with human thriving and wellbeing.

In the following section of this chapter, I investigate how wairua has been represented in literature and the extent to which such work provides guidance for ongoing and future research. In doing this, I provide a basis for discussing wairua as a central focus in research. This exploration contributed to the development of A Wairua Approach (AWA) to research presented in the following chapter. In this study, my interest is in how wairua was written about and how this influenced our concepts and practices, particularly in research.

There is a growing body of academic literature and thought emanating from Māori scholars about the broad topic of wairua. The knowledge and information available come from diverse sources including older anthropological accounts, the teachings of acknowledged experts, the understandings of Māori healers, kaumatua knowledge, church documents, and interpretative work from scholars working in health and education. Aside from efforts to distil the essence of wairua, it has been written about in several keyways including: wairua and spirituality; descriptions of wairua; as part of a Māori worldview and; components or elements of wairua and their related practices. Following a discussion of sources of literature, I use these headings to structure the chapter.

### Sources of information

Throughout the process of assimilation and, in turn, enculturation there are many processes that contributed to changing the interpretation of some Māori concepts. However, as Henare (2001) claimed, translating Māori terms into English is difficult. Further, when Māori concepts and practices are translated into English, non-Māori meanings are used to describe and define the concept or practice, usually from a western viewpoint.

Early examples of descriptions of wairua or spirituality include the writings of Elsdon Best and more recently Reverend Māori Marsden (Best, 1922; Marsden, 2003); these are both commonly cited.

Although Best (1922) is commonly cited as an authoritative source, there are debates about this. He relied heavily on what he was told, along with observations and translation. Yet, as Holman (2007, p, 330) argues, ‘his work is never far from the surface in Māori visions of themselves, and Pākehā constructs of Māori identity’.

As early as 1953, (Davidson, 1953, as cited in Lian, 1997, p, 447) Davidson warned,

*“...for most commentators on New Zealand history in the period 1820-70, the Māori people and their leaders remain cardboard figures, conventional savages (noble or ignoble), part of the stage scenery rather than actors in the drama”.*

Sources of historical information that specifically discuss wairua are scarce. However, caution should be exercised when using Best to describe elements of Māori culture, as his findings are at best, subjective and influenced by his own cultural belief systems (see Holman, 2007):

*‘...trying to examine Māori culture and values inside what was essentially a European discursive mode’, (Holman, 2007, p, 30).*

In 2007, Holman’s doctoral thesis looked at the influence Elsdon Best’s work has had on Māori cultural constructs including spiritual life and identity. He wrote,

*“Best has had a far-reaching influence on visions of Māori-being and their spiritual life in particular. He was able to define Māori spirituality and assist in its re-invention, after the massive shifts in Māori culture from orality to literacy, in the wake of the 19<sup>th</sup> century missionary era. In detailing such words as mauri, hau and wairua and conceptualising their meanings, relationships, and application in the pre-contact world... Best began a process of re-invention and expansion that continues to this day. Such definitions and other terms influenced by his work – now found in essentialist texts of the Māori identity movement – are often considered to*

*be purely Māori in their origin and deployed as part of a kaupapa Māori methodology...*” (p, 14)

This judgement illustrates a deep-seated problem of authenticity in the entire corpus of naive anthropology that characterised Pākehā research and lay characterisations of Māori people, culture, and practices from first contact. The cultural lens of prejudice, racism and empire that underpin and shape such depictions mean that they actually tell us reliably more about Pākehā than they do about Tangata Whenua (Salmond, 1991).

In contrast, the writings of and on Reverend Māori Marsden (Marsden, 2003) and the other Māori sources drawn on in this review, are grounded in the lived experience of Māori who are explicit about their standpoint and perspective. In particular, Marsden highlights the holistic nature of Māori culture and how one aspect of it cannot be detailed in isolation from others - something anthropological non-Māori writers like Best fail to include (Holman, 2007).

It is interesting that, more than 20 years ago, Egan (2000) argued the inclusion of spirituality in western institutions such as education was considered a new concept. However, in recent times, discussions of wairua in literature are more evident and its inclusion more prominent. Historical accounts of wairua are justified by continuously citing the handful of research articles available, conducted by non-Māori anthropologists or ethnographical researchers.

### Wairua and spirituality

For diverse indigenous cultures world-wide, spirituality is not just about religion but is at the heart of life. Walker-Morrison, 2020, argues for “*indigenous peoples across the globe, the spiritual dimension covers cosmology, ontology, and social relationships*” (p, 123). Others, (see Barlow, 1991; Kingi, 1992 and Marsden 2003), have described it is a “*construct that*

*involves personal beliefs or values that provide a sense of meaning and unity with self, people, nature and universe”*, (Tse, Lloyd, Petchovsky and Manaia, 2005, p, 181).

Further, Neeganagwedgin, (2013, p, 322) stated,

*“indigenous knowledge systems and spiritual traditions are intricately interwoven. They sustained First Nations peoples for centuries, are part of the everyday lives of Indigenous peoples and are at the core of Indigenous epistemologies”*.

Walker-Morrison (2020) claimed,

*“spirituality is the cornerstone of cultural identity and physical and psychological health, linking the individual to his or her community, to the natural and other worlds, a fact that contemporary discourse is finally beginning to acknowledge. For many Māori, wairua precedes and exceeds Christian (or other) religious and moral strictures and beliefs, and is grounded in a deep sense of respect for an interconnectedness with the human and natural world, encompassing all living things, past, present, and future, for earth, ancestors, family and peaceful existence”* (p, 123).

Similarly, Valentine and Tassell-Mataamua (2017) write that spirituality is inextricably linked to ways of being. They acknowledge,

*“Māori realities primarily revolved around an interconnectedness with a spiritual realm, conceptualisations of illness and healing practices were influenced by such understandings, resulting in beliefs that ‘illness was a result of wrong living’ or intervention from the spirit world”* (p, 65).

While it is rarely discussed in open forums, wairua is acknowledged as fundamental to culture and how we make sense of our world. As Walker-Morrison, (2020, p, 125) suggests, wairua cuts across human feeling and thinking and reaches into dreaming states:

*“the line between the emotional, psychological world and the spiritual domain is highly porous, symbolised by the role of dreams...”*

Some Māori authors use wairua and spirituality interchangeably, which is not uncommon but creates a potential confusion in terms of the meaning that wairua acquires. The interpretation of spirituality brings with it notions of religiosity and supernatural, mysterious phenomena.

Ahuriri-Driscoll (2014), Newman (2009) and Edwards (2002) include spirituality as the uncanny component of wairua. In these writings, wairua is seen as an overarching entity that encompasses a number of elements including spirituality. In her Master’s thesis, Ihimaera (2004) uses spirituality and wairua without distinguishing between. However, after an inclusion and examination of the World Health Organisation’s definition, which broadened its view of health to recognise the importance of wairua/spirit and family in health outcomes, Ihimaera began illustrating the differences between spirituality and wairua.

The inclusion of concepts such as wairua in health care has been considered important for many years no, (see Durie, 2001), which Ihimaera discusses in her research. She examines taha wairua and how the inclusion of it impacts on overall wellbeing for Māori clients. She provides some analysis of where wairua begins and the link it has to mauri.

While she highlights a form of separation between the meaning of wairua and mauri, it becomes indistinct when a definition of mauri is provided. This is similar to how many other authors (see Love 2004; Melbourne, 2011) have described components of wairua. Ambiguity results when a vague or no relationship is noted between various elements and wairua. It

seems the relationship between wairua and each component is taken for granted or is to be assumed.

Eckersley (2007) stated that spirituality is a cultural representation of religion. Further, that spirituality is

*“deeply intuitive but not always a consciously expressed sense of connectedness to the world...”* (p, 54).

Valentine (2009, p, 30) stated, *“...indigenous worldviews on spirituality do not conform to the same views as western worldviews”*, building on Ihimaera (2004, p, 28) who argued that *“some Māori do not necessarily connect wairua with religion”*. Valentine (2009) begins her research on the relationship between wairua and Māori wellbeing by illustrating the importance of wairua. She then discusses western notions of spirituality for comparison and as a way of describing or examining wairua. She provides a brief history and definitions and investigates measurement issues, particularly with spirituality.

There is no universal definition for wairua, but understanding its importance requires more detailed discussion of key concepts and practices to identify the many components that are associated with it and to give it meaning. For many Māori, wairua goes far beyond religion or spirituality alone, to encompass or impact on all things Māori including our belief and value systems, so that spirituality and religion could be considered components of wairua. By examining the role that wairua serves within Māori practices we begin to see that wairua is a fundamental part of being Māori. Wairua can be considered visible within the ritualistic practices of Māori culture but, for many Māori, wairua is also an ordinary, everyday experience that weaves together beliefs and values and is key to identity.

## Māori worldviews

There are many concepts and practices that speak to the multifaceted nature of wairua. Māori epistemologies and ontology are valid ways of knowing because they are how many Māori understand and make sense of the world that surrounds them. Encompassed within a Māori worldview are concepts, practices and broad perspectives on life and the universe (Runco, 2014). White and Bargh, (2016, p. 176) claim that,

*“Te ao Māori’ is a term used to define the Māori worldview which is based on the cultural, historical and modern experiences of Māori and provides a unique perspective that, in turn, develops shared values”.*

As Walker-Morrison, (2020, p. 125) so eloquently states,

*“Indigenous spirituality is not separated but is an integral, infused part of the whole in the Indigenous worldview...indeed, a growing body of academic and scientific work suggests that “spirituality is a substantial constituent of holistic well-being.”*

Māori worldviews are holistic (Wilson, Heaslip and Jackson, 2018) and interconnected with all things. Our culture is not static. Worldviews are fundamental to who we are and may vary in relation to an individual’s perceptions of their reality. Wairua is inherent in all that life means and, as Māori, we do not compartmentalise our culture.

Māori identity shows us our current or present state and experience, is rooted in our past and on the continuum of time, and for many, there is no separation between the physical and spiritual being. While explaining the spiritual could be considered a necessary task we undertake for those who sit outside of our group knowledge and understanding, it is however, a difficult, arduous task. There are tensions in explaining an inherent component of our

culture that is not linear but interwoven with all things, to those who privilege empirical, scientific information over everything else.

Māori spirituality is about identity, connection, and experience, so wairua offers ways of understanding and enacting our lives. When describing or defining components of wairua, considerable literature draws on the same sources (Love, 2004; Durie 1985; R. Pere 1991; L. Pere 2006 and Barlow 1991). Moreover, although much of the literature acknowledges its importance there are very few in-depth investigations that centre wairua. Commonly, discussions of wairua start with a broad statement of how it relates to everything. For example, Barton and Wilson, (2008, p, 12) claim, “*wairuatanga is the basis of all things*”.

Some authors are more explicit and claim wairua is related to everything Māori (see Winiata, 2002; Barton and Wilson, 2008; Melbourne, 2011; Ataria, et al., 2019, and Lockhart, et al., 2019) providing examples of Māori concepts or practices and how they relate to wairua. For example, Melbourne (2011) uses whakapapa and the history of Tuhoe to demonstrate the unseen links between the Tuhoe people and all that surrounds them (i.e., whenua, whānau, tupuna, awa).

Egan (2000) suggests that spirituality was a broad and flexible construct which traditionally was tied to religion and evolving. He defined taha wairua as values, beliefs, meaning and purpose in life, awareness, and identity, but argued that it was distinct popular spiritualisms. Although taha wairua should be described from within the holistic cultural context in which it sits and while attempts to highlight this are briefly made, in this article it relates specifically to religion in its broadest sense.

A number of writers have directly or indirectly sought to define wairua, often using an etymology of the term as a way into the topic. I provide a sample of such approaches, not to limit my analysis, but in order to give a sense of the range and scope of what it is that these

knowledgeable writers understand to be entailed and important about this complex and central concept.

Love (2004), in her analysis and commentary on the works of Rangimarie Rose Pere and, in particular, her Te Wheke model of Māori social relations, notes that Pere translates the term as meaning “spirituality”, elaborating that wairua turns on the flows of life through self, whānau, environments, past, present and future. Pere (1991) in turn draws on the writings of Reverend Māori Marsden in which wairua is conceptualised as an emanation from the creator Io Matua Kore, instantiating the translation between non-being and being at the beginning of the universe (Marsden, 1992) and thus present in all aspects of life:

*“...the material proceeds from the spiritual, and the spiritual (which is the higher order) interpenetrates the material, physical world of Te Ao Mārama.”* (Marsden, 1992, p, 23)

Further, Lockhart, Houkamau, Sibley and Osborne (2019), suggest Māori spirituality is not only a belief that everything has a soul both animate and inanimate, but also about whakapapa, explaining,

*“all things, including Māori themselves, originate from Rangi and Papatuanuku”, (Roberts et al., 1995 Thus, the atua are kin to Māori, creating a network of relationships that connects all things in existence and which can be traced back through whakapapa. This holistic framework serves as the organising principle of the universe and is a central worldview for Māori; to ‘know’ something is to know its whakapapa, and to make sense of the world is to understand its origins and history (Kawharu, 2000; Roberts 2012; Whitt et al. 2001). Accordingly, knowledge must be considered holistically. Accordingly, to know something is to (a) acknowledge one’s relationships with the subject matter, (b) recognise one’s*

*obligations to the subject and what could be expected in return, and (c) understand how the subject relates to all other phenomena.” (p, 2-3).*

Wairua is the fundamental element that connects all things within Māori culture. However, in many descriptions of specific cultural concepts, wairua is rarely acknowledged for the role it serves within those concepts.

## Elements of wairua

In laying out the role of wairua in a Māori worldview, I have drawn on a number of features that, while holding their interconnection in mind, can be drawn out to elaborate the understandings of wairua that animate this thesis. Several authors (e.g., Love 2004; Valentine 2009; Melbourne 2011; Wilson et al., 2012 and Henry 2012) claim that wairua is multifaceted, containing many elements with each impacting on or influencing the other. To illustrate this, the story of the creation, identifying where wairua begins, is often included and for many is the starting point for an overview of wairua, followed by a description of the elements contained within (see Love 2004; Henry 2012; Valentine 2009).

Commonly discussed elements include tapu, noa, mauri, whakapapa, te reo Māori, religion and death (e.g., Love 2004; Henry 2012; Taitimu, 2007; Valentine 2009). Although authors may go on to describe details of these, they do not describe how this relates to wairua; the links to wairua appear to be largely taken for granted.

Authors have discussed specific elements of culture providing full descriptions, however, wairua and what it attends to is generally not included. When it is not discussed, the role of wairua within those elements becomes uncertain and ambiguous. One element that concepts such as, tapu, noa, mauri, and whakapapa have in common is wairua, yet its place and importance often have to be inferred.

## *Tapu*

Tapu is described as salient in both divine and temporal dimensions (Jackson, 1988; Marsden, 1992) impacting on spiritual connections in people's lives and in the way people perceive events, objects, people and places in everyday situations. It is a complex concept that is intrinsic to a cultural worldview and sacred (Sachdev, 1989), with particular relevance to death and burial rituals.

Some authors (e.g., Ataria, et al., 2019) talk about the relationship between tapu and wairua. Although wairua is rarely described, the writers suggest that tapu is an element of wairua. In addition, they argue that *“just focusing on the practical aspects would be to miss other important aspects of tapu”* (p, 6). Ataria, et al., (2019) also note,

*‘early ethnographers and academics wrote extensively on tapu, [and] despite the obvious western cultural lens through which they were interpreting this custom, there are some useful observations’,* (p, 5).

Gilmore, Schafer and Halcrow, (2013) discuss the conceptual meaning rather than providing a precise description, because they believed it was a difficult term to define precisely with an English lexicon. Gilmore et al., (2013), describe tapu as

*“intrinsic to all beings, both animate and inanimate, a sacred state connecting the being of the earth with the spiritual realms and the atua”,* (p, 335).

They go on to say that *“Tapu signified a connection with the power and influence of the atua, a state which was to be treated with respect and caution’* (p, 334). They highlight the challenges in using historical non-Māori descriptions and suggest that, in early anthropologists', ethnographers' and academics' pursuit of knowledge and understanding of cultural concepts, their interpretations lack the *“comprehension of the spiritual significance and the cosmological underpinnings that were essential to the concept of tabu/tapu in*

*Polynesian society*” (Gilmore, et al., 2013, p, 335-336). Through the western gaze, changes to the meaning of tapu have occurred, which is

*“an indication of the difficulty of expressing a social and spiritual concept belonging to one specific culture in terms of quite a different form of cultural understanding”*, (Sachdev, 1989, p, 959).

The colonial disregard for spirituality contained within concepts such as tapu not only devalued the foundation of Māori social and kinship structures but also dismissed as absurd all the associated ontological understanding of their place and the significance of tapu in the relationship between natural and supernatural worlds. Gilmore et al., (2013) argue

*‘Māori had and still have no difficulty in understanding the innate rules of tapu and its relationship to their lives and wellbeing’* (p, 334).

There are now a handful of contemporary studies that acknowledge wairua or a spiritual element in all things Māori and have included wairua in their discussion. For example, Ataria, et al., (2019) conducted research that looked at Māori cultural views on biowaste management. While their argument centres on tapu and noa, they acknowledge a spiritual element and links through reference to the divine and through the ways in which spirituality is also seen to pervade the commonplace:

*“Tapu and noa are inextricably linked to a suite of other cultural values that inform a complex philosophical and spiritual framework within Te Ao Māori”* (p, 1).

Love (2004) stated that there are a range of English words utilised to provide a meaning for tapu which include *“sacred, holy, and forbidden”* (p, 12). Love goes on to say, tapu is a complex institution having two major facets: a major cohesive force in Māori life because

every person was regarded as being tapu or sacred and each life was a sacred gift which linked a person to the ancestors and hence the wider tribal network.

Moreover, Barlow (1991) also claims that nothing can be totally free of tapu. The condition of extreme tapu serves as a protective function and carries with it enormous restrictions. It is the contractual relationship with the atua by which tapu is established and persons or objects become imbued with mana.

### *Noa*

Like tapu, noa is a key cultural construct that is discussed as central to ‘traditional’ Māori society and continues to inform thinking and practice in Māori society today, (Ataria, et al., 2019).

Although Barlow describes noa and tapu as opposites but not negations of each other (Barlow, 1991), Mead (2003) suggests it is not useful to think of noa as being the opposite of tapu or as the absence of tapu. The state of noa indicates that a balance has been reached, a crisis is over, health is restored and life is ‘normal’ again.

Noa is discussed in the literature less frequently than tapu, (Sachdev, 1989), which is evident by the lack of research particularly focused on noa in isolation of tapu. Fletcher, (2007, p, 54) suggests, a delineation of

*“tapu and noa that is sacred and profane as dualistic, spatial categories that have to be kept separate”.*

Although her discussion is on both tapu and noa, Fletcher looks at the practical application of tapu and noa in daily life and there is no reference to the spiritual elements. In contrast, Jones (2014), acknowledges tapu/noa in order to consider the spiritual character of all things.

Noa entails a conceptual relationship with tapu and is used in a relative sense with something being tapu in one situation and noa in another, (Sachdev, 1989). Similarly, Ataria et al (2019) argue noa is seen *'as the antithesis of tapu'*, and describe noa as

*'something deemed 'ordinary and safe' suggesting it is bestowed with 'randomness' and 'uncertainty', hinting perhaps at the flux and tension between tapu and noa as permeable and entwined'* (p. 7).

In his description of tapu and noa, Jones, (2014, p, 199) goes on to say,

*"tapu and noa are complementary opposites and are both central to the operation of a Māori constitutional tradition. The concept of tapu recognises the spiritual quality of all things and the associated restrictions and regulation which necessarily relate to the spiritual dimension. Noa, on the other hand, suggests a freedom from such restriction and is often used in the context of processes which normalise or make safe interaction with things which would otherwise be restricted"*.

### *Mauri*

Commonly, mauri is seen as having very similar characteristics to wairua (see Marsden, 1992; Mead, 2003; Ihimaera 2004; Holman, 2007 and Morgan & Fa'au, 2018). For example, Morgan and Fa'au, (2018) claim mauri can be used to explain the well-being and potential of phenomena with physical and/or metaphysical characteristics:

*'it is the binding force between the physical and everything else that makes life possible'* (p, 987).

Marsden (2003) claimed that mauri-ora is the life-force and that every form of life owes their continued existence and health to mauri. He goes on to say that when the mauri is strong the flora and fauna flourish. Marsden (1992) states,

*'immanent within all creation is mauri; the life-force which generates, regenerates and upholds creation. It is the bonding element that knits all the diverse elements with the 'Universal Procession' giving creation its unity in diversity. It is the bonding element that holds the fabric of the universe together'* (p, 44).

However, clear differences are also noted. For example, Webber-Dreadon (2012) states that wairua embraces the whenua, whānau and whakapapa, whereas mauri relates to the essence or energy of an object, person, or place. Houkamau and Sibley (2015, p, 3) claim that mauri, along with whakapapa, are the building blocks of identity. Not all authors make these kinds of distinctions.

### *Whakapapa*

Simply translated as 'genealogy', on a deeper level, whakapapa provides an understanding of how the world came to be as it is, and how Māori continue to live (Mikaere, 2011). Similarly, Mead (1993) suggests whakapapa loosely interprets as connections and genealogical links, which provide a sense of belonging, affinity and membership to particular iwi and hapu.

Mead writes that when Māori introduce themselves, particularly at formal gatherings, they locate themselves within space and time by reciting their whakapapa and naming aspects of te ao tūroa with which they affiliate; for example, the mountain, river/lake/sea, and rohe (region) from which their iwi, hapū and whānau originate.

Graham (2005) states,

*"in a contemporary context, whakapapa may be regarded as a shared illumination of the interconnections between people and their spiritual and physical connections to the land and not just collective biological connection", (p, 2).*

Lawson-Te Aho, Fariu-Ariki, Ombler, Aspinall, Howden-Chapman and Pearce (2019) suggest whakapapa forms the foundation of Māori society and our relationships and interactions, as an indigenous people, with the world around us. For example, whakapapa serves the purpose of identity, and the spiritual connections or links it creates between a person and nature can be inferred. Interestingly, Graham, (2005, p, 89) suggests,

*“whakapapa not only represents the genealogical descent of living things, but also legitimates Māori epistemology, forms the central core of Māori ways of knowing and mātauranga Māori and provides the means to organise that knowledge”.*

For many Māori, whakapapa is also about identity and details the connections or relationship between whenua or nature to people, the past and present. It outlines a person’s genealogy or ancestry, which Lockhart et al., (2019) embed in the belief that Māori have a shared ancestry with all aspects of the environment. As such, *“Māori see themselves as part of the environment, not masters of it”* (Lockhart et al., 2019, p, 4).

Describing, defining, or explaining whakapapa goes some way to illustrating the *“holistic nature of Māori culture and how each component of culture is weaved throughout Māori epistemologies, ontologies and how we make sense of the world that surrounds us”* (Cheung, 2008, p, 7).

In essence, the epistemologies of indigenous peoples, including Māori are *“based on principles of interconnectedness, holism, relevance over long periods of time, inter-generational equity, uniqueness to place and reciprocity* (Lockhart et al., 2019, p, 4).

Carter (2003) claimed whakapapa is about relationships based on experiences in the past and present that help to shape the future. Further, Lockhart et al., (2019, p, 3) argue *“whakapapa considers all things to be part of an unbroken familial lineage, the natural and the supernatural are rendered indistinguishable as are the world and the self”*. They also note

that land rights and other aspects of indigenous sovereignty do not separate subsistence from spirituality.

According to Pitama et al., (2002, p, 27), the significance of whakapapa is that it is “*glue that binds whānau, hapū and iwi together*”, and it is a vital aspect of being Māori. They suggest that whakapapa “*defines both the individual and kin groups and governs the relationships between them*” (p, 27).

In the simplest of definitions whakapapa means genealogy or lists names that act as keys to unlocking the way Māori understand the way the world operates and maintains stability (Carter, 2003). Apirana Mahuika in Coats and McHugh 1998, p. 219) argued whakapapa,

*“It is the heart and core of Māori institutions...to deny whakapapa therefore as the key to both culture and iwi is a recipe for disaster, conflict, and disharmony. Implicit in whakapapa are notions of kinship, descent, status, authority, and property. Whakapapa is the determinant of all mana, rights to land, to marae, to membership of a whānau, hapu and collectively, the iwi... whakapapa determines kinship roles and responsibilities to other kin as well as one's place and status within society. to deny whakapapa therefore as the key to both culture and iwi is a recipe for disaster, conflict, and disharmony.”*

Mildon (2016) suggests whakapapa is often used in oral Māori literature and found in waiata, karakia, takutaku, moteatea, whakataukī, and pūrākau:

*“the ancient mother energies of nature are often found in these whakapapa and, as these energies relate to unconditional familial love, they are very important to the holistic wellbeing of whānau Māori”* (p, 12).

In many ways, descriptions of whakapapa offer specific elements that are important to Māori identity and outline connections between many things considered key to who Māori are.

However, wairua is not included in many of those discussions. While the role that wairua plays may be taken granted in this context, when it is left out of the conversations we are left to infer connections.

### *Whānaungatanga*

Pitama et al., (2002) assert whānaungatanga is crucial to Māori existence. In their description of whānaungatanga they articulate,

*“It embodies the nature of the Māori person’s relationships to other members of their whānau, hapū and iwi; to other Māori; and to the world around them. It entails a complex web of responsibilities and obligations. Concepts such as utu, which demand reciprocity in all things, ensure that the wealth of a community is constantly being distributed according to need and binds the members of the community to one another in a never-ending cycle of benefit and obligation”* (p, 22).

Mildon’s (2016) ideas about whānaungatanga are very similar to those presented by Lockhart et al (2019) about whakapapa. Both writings refer to a holistic worldview and emphasis the “kinship that Māori share with all facets of nature due to their shared ancestry that stretches back to creation”, (Lockhart et al., 2019, p, 3). Similarly, Mildon (2016) suggests that a Māori worldview encompasses nature, and the philosophy of oneness with all connects Māori with mother earth and all her progeny. She goes on to say,

*“This wider concept of whānaungatanga (family togetherness) therefore extends way beyond the contemporary concept of the nuclear family with links to Papatūānuku (earth mother), Hine-nui-te-po (ancestress of darkness), Hinemarama (ancestress of the moon), Hine-nui-te-ra (ancestress of the sun), and Hine-te-iwaiwa (ancestress of the stars). These divine feminine epistemologies position the ancient mother energies as the foundation of Māori healing, a*

*socially constructed phenomenon, laden with timeless cultural, spiritual, and social rituals” (p, 13).*

Whānaungatanga is about oneness or kinship not only to people and for many Māori it is about connecting to all things. It is interesting that, in their discussion about whakapapa and nature, Lockhart et al., (2019) state Māori spirituality is inextricably linked to the environment. They go on to say that *‘Māori spirituality should be the strongest predictor of value of uniting with nature’* (p, 3).

### *Mana*

Niania, Bush and Epston (2017) propose mana is the spiritual authority, energy or power embodied in a person or whānau that comes from their relationship with Te Kaihanga (The Creator) and other key relationships. They go on to say mana gives the person authority to have control over themselves, their circumstances and other entities that may be impinging on them. This is very important for people who are having unusual experiences that are spiritual, but might be misdiagnosed as psychosis, in forms such as hearing a voice or seeing something others cannot see and that mana (is) necessary to healing and reclaiming wellbeing. Similarly, Laughlin (2018, p. 410) argues,

*“...despite definitions in different languages and cultures, the root meaning of mana derives from the direct, transpersonal experience of psychic energy which may then be interpreted in cultural traditions as associated with efficacy, healing, transmission of status, political authority, orientation to land, and so forth”.*

Barlow (1991) argues, in modern times, the term mana has taken on various meanings including the power of the gods, the power of ancestors, the power of the land and the power of the individual.

Writers expressed concern over interpretation and use, with Tomlinson and Tengan (2016) claiming that early anthropologists lifted mana out of its cultural context and used it in a more global theoretical way. Similarly, Patterson (2000, p, 229) said mana is not an English word and “...has been borrowed which...has lost some of its meaning in the process of borrowing”. While Patterson goes on to say that this is a constant reminder that Māori concepts are not always well understood by English speakers, this borrowing has, in essence, contributed to how Māori concepts are understood and interpreted.

### Key practices

In many instances the role wairua plays in Māori events and practices is not discussed.

However, while we may not be able, nor want, to define wairua, we can explore practices to understand ways in which wairua influences and informs such practices. Moreover, unpacking specific examples begins to expose the multidimensional nature of wairua.

There are many activities that contain multiple processes where wairua is key to the function of that process. These concepts are infused in Māori culture and/or belief systems. Henare (2001) suggests everything has a wairua otherwise they could not exist. He goes on to say, as part of culture, there are combinations of components that are vital to who Māori are, and that

*“...worldviews, values, ethics, morals, and associated cultural practices are integral components of Māori ancestral legacy that preserve both unity and identity with roots in the continuity with the past”* (p, 201).

Similarly, Ruwhiu & Wolfgramm, (2006), claimed

*“...the spiritual realm is always present, integrated into everything, the source of both pain and suffering and healing and wellbeing...it is concerned with mana, whenua, tapu and noa, tikanga and kawa and experienced as a lived phenomenon”* (p, 63-65).

Wairua can be considered intermeshed and intertwined with all things, both tangible and intangible. Discussing cultural practices provides an opportunity to identify how wairua may be experienced.

### *Pōwhiri*

Throughout pōwhiri, as a welcome and encounter event (see McCallum, 2011), directed by certain ritual processes, wairua is ever present and more readily seen. For example, pōwhiri includes specific acts including karanga, karakia and whaikōrero, each process being imbued with tapu. Pōwhiri is a practice used in many settings [both western and Māori]. Wilson, (2017) suggests pōwhiri is a cultural ritual consisting of a number of elements, many of which, have been explained by scholars over the years.

McCallum, (2011) also suggests,

*“At a crucial level [the pōwhiri] recognises the meeting of two groups, tapu to tapu, and requires a ritual process of moving the two tapu states together and removing this tapu state without violating the tapu state of either of the groups during the process”* (p, 93).

### *Karanga*

Karanga is a ritualistic, customary “*call of welcome*” or summons, delivered and experienced during pōwhiri (Forster, Palmer and Barrett, 2016, p, 324). Karanga also has a specific purpose related to wairua, where it opens the gateway between the living and dead of both groups.

In this process, wairua can be considered two-fold. For example, as the call of the kaikaranga begins, wairua is brought into the situation from the very beginning. However, on an individual level, the kaikaranga can also experience and feel wairua. Edwards (2002), wrote

that, when she does the call, an overwhelming feeling comes over her and the words simply emerge, an experience which she attributes to wairua:

*“...they [the words] are not practiced they just flow...you can feel the wairua of the situation”* (p, 26).

### *Matakite and Mate Māori*

Matakite has been described as second sight or prophecy (Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2014). Marsden (2003, p, 50) described matakite

*“as enlightenment and allows humanity to exercise mana in perfect wisdom and freedom”*.

Love (2004) argued the cause of mate Māori (Māori sickness) is spiritual and can affect the physical, emotional, and spiritual domains of life. She claimed that

*“mate Māori may be caused through an offence against the spiritual realm...”* (p, 16).

During pre-colonial times in Aotearoa, Māori concepts, such as matakite, mākutū and mate Māori were widely and openly practiced (Newman, 2009). However, through some processes of colonisation and assimilation some Māori practices have been minimised and Māori sicknesses are now less recognised as tangible processes or causes of illness (Ihimaera, 2004). In essence, Māori ways of being and knowing gave way to non-Māori methods and knowledge.

### *Wairua in research*

As described earlier, there are tensions in what we bring to the academy and what we write about and discuss in non-Māori fora. Understanding how we write about and express wairua in both general and research literature is fundamentally about reclaiming what is important to us as Māori. As Māori researchers we no longer agree (explicitly or implicitly) to leave

wairua at the door of the academy (Ratima, 2008). It is apparent that wairua is not static and outside of feelings, emotions and actions but is something we work at and with, shaping and being shaped by us at every turn as we struggle to make sense of our lives:

*“... (it) leads to greater self-knowing (and is) ...achieved through our everyday connectedness with the infinite”* (Nikora et al., 2010, p, 6).

It seems evident that wairua is key in many of our research endeavours but that, without some explicit centring, meaning and depth could be lost. There are many challenges:

*“When so many aspects of contemporary life demand our attention, the identity work vital to being Māori often fades away. Calls to be Māori may be seen as an inconvenience rather than an invitation to experience, learn and evolve as culturally responsive spiritual beings. We pass by the chance to connect with creation and to remain relevant with and to ourselves”* (Nikora et al., 2010, p, 5).

Wairua is understood as an important part of experience and how we understand the world, *“for many Māori, spirituality lies at the heart of Kaupapa Māori”* (Ratima, 2008, p, 2).

However, there is discomfort in giving voice to wairua in practice and within the academy, *“a position that sits uncomfortably with Māori, who see spirit everywhere and in everything”* (Nikora et al., 2010, p, 5).

While components or individual elements of wairua are quite prominent in research literature and well described, wairua as a strong analytical focus is rare. In some research materials it seems the findings around wairua or the relationship wairua has to the analysis is very vague and, in other research literature, it has been omitted. For example, in Melbourne (2011), the findings of his doctoral thesis are related to religion with very little focus on wairua despite the title of this study containing ‘wairua’. It is interesting that Melbourne has entwined marae, tikanga and the meaning of wairua together so that one cannot be without the other.

The research by Lockhart et al. (2019) on Māori spirituality and the environment, is one of the few studies that focuses specifically on Māori spirituality throughout each phase of the research. They examine the holistic nature of Māori culture and the connections that spirituality creates within all things. They also argue that mauri and whakapapa are the building blocks of a Māori worldview and identity, and that Māori spirituality is inextricably linked to the environment because of the common ancestry Māori share with all aspects of the environment.

## Conclusions

The review offers insight into how wairua is discussed in scholarly literature. It demonstrates some of the roles and purposes wairua serves within te ao Māori and centres wairua as fundamental to Māori beliefs and experiences. The literature is broad and argues wairua is all encompassing and highlights the shared understanding that there is no separation between physical and spiritual dimensions for Māori.

Within the constructs of culture, wairua is intertwined with Māori knowledge and concepts; because of this, much of the literature covers multiple related concepts as a way of understanding the role and purpose of wairua. The literature describes how understandings of wairua have changed and how it has been misinterpreted, suppressed or denigrated overtime. Māori concepts around these topics have been the focus of a reasonable body of literature and have been unpacked by non-Māori scholars over many years. Non-Māori scholars attempt to define concepts such as wairua through a western lens, creating ‘outsider’ interpretations, representations and language. They have impacted on Māori belief systems and added to a possible reluctance on the part of Māori to share mātauranga.

The literature affirms the importance of wairua and covers concepts related to or considered components of wairua. Although providing many directions for an exploration of wairua,

explicitly addressing wairua in research and in particular in analysis, remains emergent in the literature.

## Chapter 4 Research methodology and methods

*Whakataukī*

*Mā mua ka kite a muri*

*Mā muri ka ora a mua*

*Those who lead give sight to those who follow*

*Those who follow give life to those who lead*

This chapter outlines the methodology that informed each phase of the research and the methods used to collect and analyse the data generated by the study.

### Methodology

The methodology of a research project offers underlying principles that guide the project and there are many descriptions of processes that are required to produce a coherent and stable rationale and approach to a research study (Denzin, Lincoln, Smith, 2008). Currently there is an enormous amount of literature that defines or describes what methodology is, how it is implemented throughout a research project and the array of different approaches that are available.

Given the topic of my project it was both necessary and appropriate to work with a Māori methodology. Kaupapa Māori is a theory and approach places te ao Māori at the centre and forefront of a research project (Smith, 1999). Royal (2012, p, 30) claims,

*“kaupapa Māori is used popularly by Māori in a fairly broad way to refer to any particular plan of action created by Māori, expressing Māori aspirations and certain Māori values and principles. There might be a range of purposes for the action taking. However, it is generally held that the design of the proposed action*

*is created by Māori, reflecting Māori aspirations, ideals, values, and perspectives”*

Moewaka Barnes (2000) argues that the emergence of kaupapa Māori research has encouraged new ways of thinking about research processes and practices that actually work for Māori people and communities. Kaupapa Māori is an approach with the general purpose of creating or gathering knowledge (Borell, Rewiri, Moewaka Barnes and McCreanor (2020) of interest, importance, and value to Māori. As a methodology, Royal (2012) claims,

*“kaupapa Māori provides the sequences of knowledge-creating actions, and practices of knowledge inquiry which give expression to transformative ideals”,*  
(p, 31).

Smith (1999) emphasises the foregrounding of Māori interests, concerns, and inspirations within research development as a counter to the harmful and damaging effects of colonisation. Smith (1992) describes kaupapa Māori as the philosophy and practice of being and acting Māori. Kaupapa Māori research recognises Māori values, customs, and protocols as valued aspects of the research process which is committed to a critical analysis of the existing unequal power relations within our society (Cram, Pipi & Paipa, 2018; Smith 2014) and indeed the eventual transformation of entrenched colonisation.

Royal (2012) goes on to say,

*“The goal of kaupapa Māori methodologies is the creation of knowledge, which enables the envisaged transformation and liberation to take place. A good deal of kaupapa Māori theory is focused upon, and inspired by, the contemporary experience of Māori people. This includes experiences of colonisation, urbanisation, and deculturation. Kaupapa Māori is concerned with overcoming*

*negative statistics and factors of Māori educational underachievement, poor health status and more, through research and theory making” (p, 31).*

In general, the essence of kaupapa Māori initiatives is the desire of Māori to be Māori (Pihama, Cram and Walker, 2002) and it is a process of by Māori for Māori (Borell, Rewiri, Moewaka Barnes and McCreanor, 2020).

While there are diverse approaches and practices associated with kaupapa Māori, Moewaka Barnes (2000) emphasises three generally agreed principles:

- It is by Māori for Māori.
- Māori worldviews are the normative frame.
- Research is for the benefit of Māori.

Māori ways of knowing and operating are central to the research enterprise (Smith 1999; Walker et al. 2006). Building on these understandings, the current study employed a range of qualitative and audio-visual methods developed within a kaupapa Māori methodological framework.

## The research

### *Research overview*

This project sits within a major research programme “Wairua, Affect and National Days” (The National Days project) funded by the Marsden Fund of the Royal Society. The overall objective of the wider project was to explore the affective politics evoked as people relate, engage and grapple with observance and charged acts of remembrance around national days in Aotearoa/New Zealand. Waitangi Day and Anzac Day are national holidays, the former commemorating the signing of te Tiriti o Waitangi (widely regarded as a founding document for the country) in 1840 (see <https://teara.govt.nz/en/photograph/2577/waitangi-day>) and the

latter observing the losses and harms experienced by New Zealanders participating in international conflicts (<https://teara.govt.nz/en/1966/anzac-day>).

The National Days database consists of key informant and focus group interviews, media and web items and haerenga kitea (a video, go-along data collection process). The team used purposive sampling to recruit and conduct haerenga kitea resulting in a total of 34 records (18 for Waitangi and 16 for Anzac) from 2013–2015. The study consisted of Māori and non-Māori (a range of ethnicities) participants from throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, aged from 16 to over 70 years of age. In most cases, Māori team members gathered data from Māori and non-Māori team members gathered data from non-Māori; there were some mixed group participants.

I collected and focused on the Māori data to investigate the importance of wairua and offer insight into Māori experiences, practices, and social relations. In 2017, the team developed A Wairua Approach (AWA), which aimed to place wairua at the centre of research (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017). It was anticipated that AWA would provide a way of exploring how Māori perceive and make sense of their experiences and place in the world, including connections to physical and spiritual dimensions.

## Methods

### *Recruitment*

Recruitment was by means of whānaungatanga networking through which, by word-of-mouth I was able to make contact with people who might agree to contribute. The use of this ‘third party’ approach meant that I only contacted people who might be willing to participate and avoided any possibility of pressurising strangers to join the study, while protecting me from fraught or embarrassing refusals. For the focus groups, each of my initial contact persons

agreed to approach others to join the group, meaning I noticed some sense of community in the sessions, as each contact had tapped their own networks.

### *Kanohi ki te kanohi interviews*

With participant permission, six individual kanohi ki te kanohi interviews were recorded on a small audio device. Bullock (2016) claims in-depth interviewing is a method that uses diverse tools and techniques of data gathering. She goes on to say that,

*“Interviewing can be used alone or with other methods and it suits various research designs,”* (p, 330).

For this study I used an open-ended discussion style with a flexible interview guide to ensure that I covered the broad topics required. These topics included but were not limited to:

- Describing beliefs, feelings and emotions about Anzac Day and Waitangi Day.
- Perceptions and beliefs about wairua.
- Wairua in relation to Anzac Day and Waitangi Day.

I followed rather than led the interview process, turning to the guide when a participant’s kōrero slowed up or became too tangential to the topic. No time-limit was imposed on the interview and each interview went for as long as participants wanted to talk. Overall, the duration of each interview ranged from one hour to approximately two. These provided a rich resource of knowledge, talk and experiences that were informative in their own right and helped prepare me for the next stage of the study.

### *Focus group discussions*

Four focus group interviews were completed in three rohe across Aotearoa in diverse urban and provincial settings. As a data collection method, focus groups were selected because they encourage multiple viewpoints and with good facilitation or moderation, allow interactive

discussions about a specific topic to take place, (Hennink, 2013). Seal, et al. (1998) claim the dynamic interactions in the focus group setting provide insight beyond the content theme.

Within these group interviews, participants were presented with opportunities to hear and consider other responses to discussions. Focus groups were held in Wairoa (2), one in Wellington and one in Tauranga Moana. Although a maximum of 10 participants for each group discussion were targeted, five people participated in two of the four group discussions and six people in the Tauranga Moana focus group. One Wairoa focus group also had six participants. With permission, each group was recorded as above.

### *Haerenga kitea data collection*

Haerenga Kitea method was devised by Helen Moewaka Barnes specifically for this project (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017). Haerenga kitea builds on ‘go along’ interviewing and Photovoice techniques. Photovoice is (Jensen et al., 2006)

*“a way of including often marginalised or disempowered voices into social analysis for social change and positive social development”* (Jensen et al., 2006, p, 7).

Participant recruitment for the haerenga kitea was conducted to provide rural and urban settings and a spread of ages and genders; a total of 16 participant records were captured. Participants were all of Māori descent with some attending events on Waitangi Day or Anzac Day and some choosing not to participate in any event on the day. The video followed their engagement, so that spontaneous comments in reaction to unfolding events on the day or observations and queries from the interview guide at specific points would be available for later analysis and interpretation. The stimulus provided by the event and the fact that the data came with its own choreography, visual and auditory accompaniment made these records particularly valuable.

### *Participant information*

In total, interview data recorded from 22 Māori participants was analysed, of whom, eight were male and 14 were female. Ages ranged between 20 to 70 years old. Table 1. below shows gender, age range and iwi affiliation of interview participants. Selected haerenga kitea were analysed for this thesis and specific details of these are provided in the relevant chapters.

Table 1: Whānau gender, age and iwi.

<b>Gender</b>	<b>Number</b>	<b>Iwi</b>
<b>Male</b>	8	Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Porou, Te Āitanga a Mahaki, Ngā Puhi
<b>Female</b>	14	Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Porou, Te Āitanga a Mahaki, Te Arawa
<b>Age range (years)</b>	<b>Number</b>	
<b>19-29</b>	2	Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāti Porou, Whakatōhea, Ngāti Ranginui
<b>30-39</b>	4	Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Porou,
<b>40-49</b>	4	Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Ranginui
<b>50-59</b>	7	Ngāti Kahungunu, Ngāi Te Rangi, Ngāti Porou, Te Āitanga a Mahaki, Te Arawa, Ngā Puhi
<b>60-70</b>	5	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>22</b>	

While I have noted iwi connections for participants, iwi was not included in the analysis or a component of the report as no data/information comparisons by iwi were conducted.

## *Data Analysis*

I transcribed interviews verbatim, enabling me to become immersed in the data and look for themes. Thematic (Braun and Clarke, 2006), discursive (Wetherell and Potter, 1988), affective analyses (Wetherell, 2013) and wairua analyses were used within the Kaupapa Māori framework to explore the data. Transcripts were explored to highlight both the commonalities and the particularities of participant contributions. From these analyses, several key topics emerged as potentially valuable general and specific insights into ways in which wairua was understood and experienced.

Clarke and Braun (2018) suggest thematic analysis was intended to be a fully qualitative process or technique which can be underpinned by a distinctly qualitative research philosophy that emphasises subjectivity as a resource, rather than a problem to be managed.

Clarke and Braun (2014), state,

*“...TA is not simply a method for data description and reduction, focused on participants’ experiences and subjective meanings. TA can be used to describe and summarise – and there is nothing inherently wrong with this, if appropriate to the research aims. But more importantly, rich analysis typically moves from simple summation-based description into interpretation; telling a story about the ‘so what’ of the data. And TA can be used in ‘critical’ qualitative approaches, informed by poststructuralist, social constructionist, and discursive theory, which are never (just) descriptive” (p, 109).*

A thematic analysis was particularly important when analysing focus group information and interview data. This was because an enormous amount of data was generated through these processes.

Haerenga kitea were viewed and logged, meaning each item was viewed multiple times and notes were made of content, both audio and visual, along with time notations to enable quick retrieval. Viewing involved paying attention to facial expressions, body language, and other cues. Specific details about analysis are provided in each chapter.

### *Ethics*

Working with the highly sensitive field of wairua and affect, the project required application to the Massey University Human Ethics Committee (MUHEC). The research team drew on their experience to identify, analyse, and mitigate potential sources of unease or harm attached to participation in the study. These included emotions that could be evoked by participation in the commemoration days, reflections on material losses from colonisation, war, or the more general passing of the generations.

Critical issues were recruitment of participants, consent and storage of the data sought from participants. In keeping with Massey protocols, before any data collection, each participant received information (written and/or verbal) and was provided with an explanation of the research, their role in it and their rights in respect of the data they provided, before signing a written consent form or agreeing to participate.

### *Informed consent*

Participants were offered an information sheet (see appendix 1) that provided details about the research project and a consent form to sign. At the start of each interview, focus group or haerenga kitea, time was set aside for explaining the research and answering any questions before asking participants to give consent. This was to ensure participants understood why the research was being undertaken, how data would be used and to discuss confidentiality and how and in what ways visual materials would be used. Visual records were returned to

participants and their content and use discussed and agreed to. Consent forms were stored securely.

While the individual data collection methods allowed for the return of transcripts to participants for checking and approval, this was not possible with the focus group data. In this instance I explained that, because the kōrero of the recording was interwoven among the participants, there was no meaningful right of removal of data as applied in the case of individual transcripts. For this reason, consent did not entail participants reviewing the data, or the right of editing or removing text from the transcript and all participants accepted this.

In all individual data records, pseudonyms were assigned to participants providing a degree of anonymity. In the case of the haerenga kitea video recordings, anonymity could not be preserved since the visual record made identification of participants possible, but I provided pseudonyms unless participants specifically requested to waive this form of masking.

## **Link 1 Introducing the findings**

*Whakataukī*

*Ka whāngaia, ka tipu, ka puāwai*

*Nurture it and it will grow, then blossom*

The following section presents findings by exploring data based on a subset of data from the overall project. Other papers and presentations draw more broadly on both the Māori and non-Māori data, as well as media items. As well as the outputs generated by this thesis, publications include Wetherell et al (2020), McCreanor et al (2018) and McConville et al (2020). The section is made up of three chapters that present conceptual development, analytical work and findings.

The first chapter in this section, Chapter 5, presents findings from kanohi ki te kanohi key informant interviews about wairua. This is followed by Chapter 6, which describes the development of A Wairua Approach (AWA) as a way of centring and explicitly addressing wairua in research. Here, AWA is applied to data excerpts from the haerenga kitea corpus as an initial exploration of its applicability. This is pursued in more depth in Chapter 7, where AWA is applied to two further haerenga kitea, exploring how the approach works in two apparently contrasting examples.

The key informant interviews were conducted in 2015 and 2016 and analysed in 2016. A draft of the paper was written in 2016 and this informed the development of A Wairua Approach described in Chapter 6. The paper was put aside while Chapters 2, 4 and 7 were written.

To ensure I had a clear understanding of people's views about wairua and how they spoke about it, I talked to a range of diverse people from different walks of life. This initial task was

about opening the door to what was possible because, at that time, my views about wairua were narrow and related directly to religion and spirituality. The depth of knowledge that some people had about wairua was an eye opener, and I learned about participants' beliefs, values, and culture, and how they considered all these things about them included wairua. The analysis of this information fed into updates of the literature search and review. While there was no simple description of wairua in the interview data, they demonstrated how broad and encompassing the topic was and how it provided a connection between the tangible and intangible elements of being. As wairua was so encompassing and varied according to individual perceptions and experiences, understanding this material was not an easy path to navigate. In hindsight an enormous amount of learning came from this facet of my study.

In August 2020, I was asked to be a keynote speaker at an online conference for Te Rau Puawai, the academic support programme for mental health workforce personnel. It was an indigenous conference that looked at spirituality and wairua as a key tenet to wellbeing. I presented on the learnings I took from this initial phase of data collection and key elements of wairua I found scattered throughout the literature. The majority of the 90 attendees were Māori academics or Māori who worked in a field that uses forms of wairua as a type of intervention. Although several questions were asked of me, the majority related to religion and spirituality and how these were effectively used when providing health related interventions. The learning I took from this conference was the depth of interest that people had about wairua and how many people have overcome the stigma and whakama that has long been attached to it, in order to support the wellbeing of others.

Throughout this process I learned to explore my beliefs about wairua and, over the years that followed the drafting of this paper and writing other chapters in the thesis, my thinking changed and broadened significantly. The resultant key informant paper was completed in

2021 and submitted to *AlterNative: An International Journal of Indigenous Peoples* in September of that year. The paper is currently under review.

Gunn, T., Moewaka Barnes, H. and McCreanor T. Wairua in the everyday: Māori speak about meaning and experience.

## **Chapter 5 Wairua in the everyday: Māori speak about meaning and experience**

### **Abstract**

Wairua (narrowly translated as spirituality) is central to being Māori, but there is little research that explicitly explores wairua. In western framings it has been largely relegated to the category of the uncanny and seen as shamanistic. Many Māori scholars write about the various concepts intertwined with wairua and interest in wairua in research is growing. However, to date, there is little discussion, guidance or examples of how to approach wairua in research. This is coupled with reservations about what we share with the western academy. Here we canvas the literature and then present interview data from Māori participants who discussed what wairua means to them. This provides a backdrop to the development of key domains that point to a wairua approach to research that explicitly centres wairua in efforts to explore deeper meanings for Māori in kaupapa Māori research.

### **Introduction**

Indigenous ‘spirituality’ has been the subject of denigration as Christianity has been imposed on many indigenous peoples as one mechanism of colonisation (Clifton, 2000; Moewaka Barnes, 2000; Ihimaera, 2004). Notions of rational science further marginalise spirituality as a phenomenon able to be addressed and explained in research through social processes and meanings. In Aotearoa New Zealand, wairua, a term encompassing spirituality and more has been suppressed in multiple ways, including legislation (Tohunga Suppression 1907, Act). Although central to being Māori, articulating and exploring wairua is now fraught with tensions. In the western academy we are, at the very least, cautious about whether or how we bring wairua to our work and to the scrutiny of Māori and non-Māori alike. However, if we do not grapple with these tensions, we remain silent and risk bringing deep meanings to the fore in our research. In this paper we provide a brief overview of wairua and the ways in

which Māori spirituality has been treated. This is followed by discussion on how some Māori scholars are working to reclaim wairua within academic pursuits. We argue that this is an important but emergent endeavour and that there are considerable efforts needed to embrace wairua more explicitly in research. As one step on this pathway we present findings from key informants in order to understand the everyday meanings and experiences that might attach to wairua.

## Colonisation and wairua

Prior to colonisation Māori spiritual practices were widely accepted; Māori culture and autonomy were intact and largely uninfluenced by ‘outsiders’ (Lian, 1987). Robinson (2005, p, 10) stated a tohunga was a specialist in ancient Māori lore, traditions, religion and rituals. Valentine (2009, p, 30), claimed:

*‘Traditional Māori values related to Māori health and wellbeing was very much dependent upon beliefs, practices and behaviours related to wairua. Health and wellbeing for pre-European Māori was primarily the domain of the tohunga who was a spiritually sanctioned individual skilled in Māori health care models based primarily on traditional Māori techniques.’*

European colonisation brought significant disruptions to Māori society, systems and structures with more visible effects including the loss of land and language, the proliferation of Christianity and significant impacts on wellbeing (Ihimaera, 2004; Reid, Varona, Smith & Fisher, 2016; Sadler, 2007).

Walker (cited in Ihimaera, 2004) described the influence Christianity had on Māori belief systems and claimed the “conversion to Christianity seriously affected the tapu of tribal chiefs” (p, 28). This in turn “reduced their ability to influence their people to hold to their own spiritual beliefs”, (Walker cited in Ihimaera, 2004, p, 28). Durie, (1994) claimed that

Māori were encouraged [by the missionaries] to embrace Christianity which was used to break the customs of their pre-conversion lives. Moreover, Clifton (2000, p, 22) stated that, through colonial processes, wairua has been denigrated and seen as primitive in comparison to Christian superiority:

*“Māori find themselves ridiculed as superstitious in a way that a Pākehā talking about religion never is”*

Christianity supported the negative connotations of superstition, backwardness and charlatanism (Maaka and Fleras 2005) the title of tohunga attracted. By the 1900s colonisation had seen the separation and categorisation of practical and spiritual skills resulting in the “primary role of the tohunga becoming confined to that of a healer” Maaka and Fleras (2005, p, 123); however, tohunga prophets persisted. Despite narrowing roles tohunga were seen as a threat to ‘progress’ – to western medical practices and to European power.

The introduction of the Tohunga Suppression Act, (the Act) 1907, which sought to outlaw tohunga practices and break their power, successfully contributed to changing the environments where those practices could be openly discussed or enacted. In addition, the Act supplanted te reo meanings by using English words to describe Māori traditional practices as “witchcraft, superstition and supernatural power”, (Voyce, 1989, p, 99). Voyce references multiple descriptions of tohunga practices as witchcraft, using terms such as shaman, sorcerer and magical techniques, reinforcing the dominant western view that wairua is a supernatural phenomenon. Today there are increasing efforts to remember and reassert the value and place of wairua as central to Māori. One of the ways this occurs is through literature that describes multiple related practices and asserts tikanga Māori as a guide.

## Meanings of wairua

Wilson and Baker (2012) write that the meaning of wairua is so broad and multi-faceted, providing one description that encapsulates a meaning relevant to all people 'is no easy feat'. Challenges include how Māori explain and understand wairua among ourselves, as well as whether and how we articulate meanings to a non-Māori audience.

In some literature, wairua and spirituality are used interchangeably. Using non-Māori terms or words to describe Māori concepts creates a raft of issues. These include interpretation and meaning and the sense that concepts in one culture can be understood using the language of others or dismissed as not valid using the standards and understandings of the dominant culture. As Mead (1993) writes,

*“The majority culture is rarely involved in the day-to-day activities of Māori...and that’s fine so long as not seeing does not translate into not believing...”*

In western discussions of spirituality, Sheldrake (2013) links it to religion and claims spirituality is associated with the deepest values and sense of meaning by which people seek to live. Benson et al., (2003) viewed spirituality as a dimension for exploring what motivates people, and what goals they are striving to achieve. They also suggested spirituality may be an independent dimension of personality. Eckersley (2007) saw spirituality as connection to the world and a cultural representation of religion, arguing it is

*“...deeply intuitive but not always a consciously expressed sense of connectedness to the world...”* (Eckersley, 2007, p, 54).

Best (1922) describes it as the soul or spirit that goes on existing after death, a similar meaning to Christian notions of spirit. However, when looking for commonalities between spirituality, wairua and religion, Ihimaera (2004) argues the need to clarify the difference

“because Māori strong in their culture do not necessarily connect wairua (spirituality) with religion”, (p, 28).

Within Māori worldviews, wairua connects all things, the tangible to the intangible, the living to the dead and it is not viewed as a separate dimension of human existence. It is woven through beliefs and values and, is an intrinsic part of the whole being (Marsden, 1992; 2003). While wairua can be understood and readily seen within many practices, it remains a topic that is not openly discussed in most everyday situations and the forums in which Māori share their understandings of it are cautiously selected.

Although there is no right or wrong answer when describing wairua, no definition is exhaustive or sufficient (Robinson, 2005). Further, Kingi (2002, p, 286), stated

*“notions or understandings would almost always vary according to a person’s own religious beliefs, environment, peer attachments, upbringing, notions of personal contentment, or self-constructed views on how the non-physical domains of life are considered”*. In essence, wairua means different things to different people,

*“...it is personal and considers aspects of wellness which are often nondescript and intangible”* (Kingi, 2002, p, 288).

Valentine (2009, p, 52) explains how, when she explored wairua “a wealth of knowledge and understandings unfolded”.

*“There are many different dimensions of wairua ... wairua of the people, wairua of the land, wairua of the spoken word, wairua of the child, wairua of different generations; wairua of our ancestors, the wairua that directs and inspires a person to engage.”* (Valentine, 2009, p, 60).

Wairua is about who we are and how we behave as Māori as well as our place in the world. Taitimu (2007) describes wairua as an internal component of a person that influences their behaviours, beliefs, emotions and thoughts. Valentine (2009) explains that, “*woven into the seams of discourse, is the notion that wairua is inherently built into the framework of Māori existence*”, (p, 52). Arguing its centrality to Māori worldviews, Ahuriri-Driscoll (2014) writes of wairua as “*the source of existent being and life*”, (p, 34).

Wairua sits within Māori philosophies, beliefs, values and practices and, when these are discussed, wairua is either an implicit or explicit part of these conversations. Ahuriri-Driscoll (2014, p, 34) identified several writings by Māori researchers and said,

*“...[they] have formulated conceptualisations of wairua based on investigations into its structure, dimensions and functions. Key characteristics noted include its intangibility but ability to be perceived, sensed and felt...”*

These conceptualisations are apparent in creation and whakapapa narratives, which abound in the literature and in discussions of concepts, protocols and practices central to being Māori. Wairua is either inherent in, or the narratives and concepts are framed as related to wairua. Many writers discuss multiple related concepts, such as tapu, noa mana and mauri (for example Barlow, 1991; Edwards, 2002; Ihimaera, 2004; Love, 2004). Mead (1993) points to elements of Māori existence and practices where wairua can be recognised; these include, but are not limited to, marae, tangihanga, wharenui, dawn ceremonies, welcome protocols, speeches and haka.

Considerable literature explores wairua through these domains, providing ways of exploring wairua and explicating meaning. For example, karanga is a customary “*call of welcome*” or summons delivered by a woman of status, (Forster, Palmer and Barrett, 2015, p, 324) during pōwhiri. As Marsden (1992) argues,

*“An analysis of the concepts which underlie this formal welcome reveals the basic themes and approach of the Māori to questions of ultimate reality and the relationships among God, man and the universe” (p, 118).*

Karanga has a specific purpose related to wairua as it opens the gateway between the living and dead of visitors and hosts. It welcomes people, acknowledges the dead and the reasons why people have come together (Barlow, 1991; Hibbs, 2006). On a more individual level, the kaikaranga can also experience and feel wairua. Edwards (2002) wrote when she calls, an overwhelming feeling comes over her and the words flow. At this point, wairua is a guide and is felt:

*“...they [the words] are not practiced they just flow...you can feel the wairua of the situation”, (p, 56).*

## Wairua and the academy

Despite the pervasiveness and centrality of wairua, with the exception of only a handful (e.g., Ahuriri-Driscoll, 2014; Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017; Nikora et al 2010; Valentine, 2009), there is limited discussion and little research within the academy that places wairua at the centre of analysis in research.

Valentine (2009, p, 12), in pointing to an increase in literature relating to health and spirituality, argued that “western health professions have historically struggled with the notion that spirituality could be studied empirically”. Mika, (2015) explains, in understanding a phenomenon such as wairua, it is difficult because western societies expect to look at, investigate or analyse it like an object. This reduces wairua to a manageable and separate entity that has no relationships beyond itself. While this may be seen as a practical necessity within western academic approaches it is one of the reasons Māori are wary of taking wairua inside the academy (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017).

Despite this, a small and growing body of Māori scholarship argues the importance of wairua and for its consideration. This includes moves to include wairua, in various forms or manifestations, in western systems and initiatives, for example in health and education.

There are a few examples in the research literature, where wairua is explicitly explored in data collection and analysis. This includes Ahuriri-Driscoll (2014) who held workshops with healers involving aspects of ‘spiritual inquiry’. Healers explicitly discussed wairua and what emerged was strongly guided by wairua. Kingi (2002) developed the Hua Oranga Māori mental health outcome tool. His thesis includes a section that explores definitions of wairua as the spiritual dimension of health, drawing on analysis of notions of wairua and discussions with people working in mental health services. Others discuss the importance of wairua largely through concepts such as mana, for example, rather than ‘meanings’ of wairua (for example see Nikora et al., 2010).

In relation to our study involving interviews with Māori participants and focussing on meanings and experiences in relation to wairua, Valentine’s (2009) study is key. She explored meanings of wairua in response to the psychology field as limited and not engaging with wairua. Her research is particularly salient because she interviewed key informants focussing on broad meanings of wairua. Valentine conducted interviews with university lecturers, Māori mental health workers Māori ministers, iwi representatives and healers. In contrast to our study, they may be more likely to have explicitly thought about wairua within their professional and personal lives. She arrived at key themes grouped under direct descriptions, personal experiences, personal beliefs and Māori worldviews, providing wide ranging explorations of wairua as fundamental to existence and having no boundaries. Wairua is relational, experienced and felt and provides growth, balance and connection. It is inextricably linked with Māori worldviews and concepts including mauri, whakawhiti

whakaaro (communication), whakapapa, whenua, tapu and mana. Valentine (2009, p, 15) concludes,

*“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”.*

These qualitative findings formed the basis for the development of a self-report tool – *Kia Ngawari ke te Awatea Orientation to Wairua measure* -investigating the relationship between an orientation to wairua and health and wellbeing.

### Centering wairua in research

Through our experiences in research and based on the centrality of wairua, clearly acknowledged in the literature, we arrived at the question of how we might analyse data in relation to wairua. We argue that we need to develop more explicit ways of focusing on wairua within research as an approach that could provide deeper insights and meaning. To support this, we developed A Wairua Approach/AWA (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017).

The following sections describe the methods and findings that emerged from interview discussions on wairua as part of a larger study on wairua, affect and national days. The material presented here was an important step in the development of AWA, as it provided insights into everyday experiences and meanings of wairua.

### The research

This study sits within a major research programme “Wairua, Affect and National Days” (National Days project) funded by the Marsden Fund of the Royal Society. The overall objective of the wider project was to explore the affective politics evoked as people relate,

engage and grapple with cultural observance and charged acts of remembrance in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Methodologically this paper precedes and provides a background to the development of A Wairua Approach (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017), which applied eight domains to the analysis of data to explore wairua as a central and salient concept within research. It also builds on the emergent research and literature, particularly Valentine's (2009) study discussed earlier. For this paper, the first author interviewed participants who were more 'lay' people. The idea was to explore what wairua meant to them, whether they had thought much about wairua and how it played out in their lives; for example, how they learnt about and experienced wairua.

## Methods

The National Days database consists of key informant and focus group interviews, media and web items and haerenga kitea (a form of go along visual recording). The team used purposive sampling to recruit and conduct haerenga kitea resulting in a total of 34 records (18 for Waitangi and 16 for Anzac) from 2013–2015. The study consisted of Māori and non-Māori (a range of ethnicities) participants from throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, aged from 16 to over 70 years of age. Interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim and haerenga kitea were viewed and logged (noting both audio and visual content). In most cases, Māori team members gathered data from Māori and non-Māori team members gathered data from non-Māori; there were some mixed group participants. Ethical approval was obtained from Massey University Human Ethics Committee with participant consent sought after discussion of the project and methods and prior to data collection commencing. Interviewees were offered copies of transcripts to edit or delete information and haerenga kitea participants were given copies of their go-along after checking if any deletions were required.

For the purpose of this paper, we analyse selected excerpts from interview data recorded from 22 Māori participants, of which, eight were male and 14 were female. Ages ranged between 20 to 70 years old. Interviews were undertaken in Wellington, Wairoa and Gisborne and took place either in 2014 or 2015. Individual interviews with 10 participants were completed.

Although each participant was given the option of a bringing a whānau member or someone with them, at each interview only the interviewer (first author) and the participant were present. A total of two focus group discussions were also completed. One group had five participants and the other six; both males and females took part in these discussions.

Pseudonyms replace the code given to each person and group discussion. Participant codes were renamed as native birds for females, native trees for males and group discussions were renamed putiputi (flower) and miro (native tree).

As such, pseudonyms are as follows:

#### Females

- Tui - female individual
- Kererū - female individual
- Kōkako - female individual

#### Males

- Rākau – male individual
- Tōtara - male individual
- Pohutukawa - male individual
- Kawakawa - male individual
- Tarata - male individual

## Group Discussions

- Rōpū Putiputi female group discussion
- Rōpū Miro male group discussion

Participants were asked to describe what they believed wairua was and what functions it served in their lives. The purpose was not to arrive at a definition but to see how participants understood wairua and the factors that influenced these understandings.

We present excerpts then examine them in-depth, looking thematically and discursively at the data to explore wairua, based on participant experiences and meanings. In doing this, the patterns or major themes that emerged assisted in identifying how wairua is understood and perceived as an everyday experience.

## Learning about wairua

For many participants learning about wairua happened at a very young age. Members of one group said that, as children, wairua was discussed openly. For others, it was accepted but not articulated. In some of these conversations, religious faith and Christian influences were evident.

*“...meaning of wairua was never explained and although I can remember asking what wairua means and the meaning was explained on my parent’s religious beliefs...”* (rākau).

Another participant said that they had never thought or had been asked to think about wairua. However, on reflection, they recalled some conversations with grandparents. They felt that, in their church setting, wairua manifested as the ‘fantastical’, was assumed and unquestioned, rather than explicitly discussed.

*“I suppose growing up I can remember my grandparents talking about wairua but they never explained what wairua was to us (me and my brothers and sisters) I think we had to assume the meaning of many things (Tui). It’s funny now as I think about it...so many of the things that our church founder did were fantastical but my whānau never questioned the truth of those events...I think it was because lots of people were told the same stories over and over again...none of the church followers questioned those events...” (rākau).*

Some shared stories, one speaking about his father, grandfather and great grandfather, who was a tohunga.

*“...my koroua could not touch food because he was too tapu and kai would bring him out of his state of tapu. A young child was usually used to feed the koroua...Children were believed to have lots of pure energy (mauri) and were used to replenish the koroua so they were kept very close to him...so he would “zap” their energy when he needed it! He said his father and his father’s sister were the children that fed the koroua and sometimes he would take him and his sister with him to situations - makutu etc...in these situations my dad could not see but he could sense that something was not quite right around him. On the other hand, my aunty she could see, hear, feel and sense everything that was going on around her...she saw the whole thing. His father said that he always felt tired and needing to eat and sleep a lot after those sessions...” (Tōtara).*

## Articulating wairua

While all participants acknowledged wairua exists, some found it difficult to express or explain what they thought wairua was. This could be related to the articulation of wairua as a feeling and something that ‘just is’. As one person responded:

*“...wairua is difficult to explain...you just know it exists and you just feel things, for me, I like to think wairua is inherent...that is in you. You just feel things, I don't even know how to describe it actually” (Tui).*

This participant went on to assert that wairua is not the same for everybody but can change between people and between experiences and environments.

*“...wairua should be described in a way which outlines that everybody is different... I think wairua changes in circumstances, events and what's happening around you. I would have thought that it wouldn't, but I think it does”, (Tui).*

In the concluding remark that ‘it wouldn't (change), but I think it does’, the speaker demonstrates the ways participants explored their thoughts as they talked about what wairua meant to them. In this case, as she talks, she expresses some surprise at articulating the idea that wairua changes.

### Wairua is part of everything and everyone

Wairua was seen as part of everyone and everything. It was described as broad and all around us, connecting people to each other and to the world, both tangible and intangible.

*“...there is no one meaning for wairua because it means different things to different people. I think it is all encompassing - It's a part of everything we do, how we feel, it's a part of what and who we are. Everyone has one and is the part of us” (rākau)*

Although acknowledged as every day and inherent in all, some participants spoke of more unknown or ‘uncanny’ aspects of wairua. These discussions usually involved notions of ghosts, ‘second sight’ or spiritual gifts and was the aspect that participants seemed least

comfortable talking about; the topic was not pressed. Although acknowledging all people had ‘spiritual abilities’ one participant thought that this varied:

*there are some people that are more spiritual than others such as Jesus, the Dalai Lama or Buddha...some people have been gifted spiritual abilities, like seeing ghosts or healing...for some people they don't get a choice you are just given those gifts...”, (Kererū).*

She went on to describe how this can be nurtured and grow.

*“...and that the more you understand about the spirit and/or soul the more enlightened you become, the more self-aware...the more generous you are the more your spirituality grows...”, (Kererū).*

## Wairua and emotions

As well as wairua being described as something felt, participants spoke about how wairua reflected an individual and their emotions:

*“...your wairua emanates who you are...it reflects a person's emotions; your core beliefs and how they view the world; how you feel...while you're alive you can't separate the physical from the spiritual...” (Kererū).*

*“you could have somebody who has a ‘shitty’ wairua if you like. (Kōkako).*

Continuing in this vein, others ascribed emotional characteristics to wairua, one participant describing wairua through her connections, memories and feelings.

*“For me when I go home [although I have not lived there for a very longtime] I have a great sense of belonging to that place, it is full of memories and the changes to that place creates sadness...what I remember home to be like - to what it looks like now makes me enormously sad. I get a great sense of pride when I*

*hear someone from my iwi is doing well in something in anything...the flip side is that you feel a sense of shame when someone from your iwi does something wrong/bad...that's what wairua means" (rōpū putiputi).*

## Wairua and being Māori

Wairua was seen as embedded in being Māori and expressed and demonstrated through Māori practices.

*"...for me and because I'm Māori, wairua is in everything we do...wairua relates to everything..." (Pohutukawa).*

*"...wairua is inherent in our culture...wairua is about all my whānau meeting at the marae [which links to me being Māori] and it's the way we share our kai together", (Kōkako).*

For this participant her understanding of wairua was woven throughout seen her understandings of her culture and key practices; for example, 'sharing kai' and her whānau being together. Other participants described multiple ways wairua was embedded in all aspects of Māori culture and linked to belonging and accountability.

*"...wairua encompasses a lot of things such as values, tikanga, kawa and upbringing...I guess that's where wairua comes from..." (Kōkako).*

*"...it [wairua] lies within the language it lies within the culture of the people and within the rituals that they do to make themselves feel better...it makes their spirit belong to where they come from....for me my spirituality links me to home town because I have a sense of belonging and sense of ownership and sense of responsibility to the town... wairua lies within and is about love, interconnectedness and whānaungatanga" (Kawakawa).*

In the second excerpt, the participant sees wairua practices as making the ‘spirit belong to where they come from’. He then elides wairua and spirituality as enhancing his sense of belonging and connection to place. Identity, belonging and connection to something bigger than self was echoed by several participants.

*“...identity is important to who you are and how you connect to your whānau...and how you as Māori connect to something bigger than yourself...”*  
(rōpū miro).

*“...for us as Māori we belong to something bigger than ourselves which means we have links to our turangawaewae, to our awa, to a hapu and an iwi”*,  
(Kawakawa).

## Wairua and religion

Links between religion and wairua were evident in discussions on the meanings of wairua and when participants discussed their beliefs in relation to wairua. For some, wairua sat within a religious belief system, influencing their understanding and sense-making.

*“... [‘Ihoa’] he is the giver of all things...(wairua) is given to you at birth and returns to where it came from when you pass over”*, (rōpū putiputi).

*“...wairua links back to the Bible where it says...heaven and earth may pass away but my words will never disappear away they will be there for ever and ever...”*  
(Kawakawa).

Another outlined differences between what is spiritual and what is not. He explained that Ture-wairua is to do with Ihoa (God) and Ture-tangata deals with the laws of man.

*“For the laws of man - he said that on the 25<sup>th</sup> January every year we all congregate at the Rātana Pa<sup>2</sup> to celebrate the birthday of our church founder T.W. Rātana this is a Ture-tangata day – why is it a Ture-tangata day because that is the day Rātana was born. However, the spiritual day (Ture-wairua) for Morehu is the 8<sup>th</sup> November because this is the day the wairuatapu came in search of us (the Māori people),” (Kawakawa).*

One person said that when people talk about wairua they are talking about a person’s inner self or the spirit, similar to the Christian notion of soul.

*“...I think a person’s wairua refers to a soul the part of a person that lives on after death” (Kererū).*

## Wairua and national days

Participants were also asked about Anzac and Waitangi Days. Here we provide excerpts that illustrate ways they linked emotions to wairua in these discussions.

*“...during a tangi the wairua is pōuri...you can feel the sadness and for Anzac Day the wairua is also one of mourning. I say it is day about mourning because that day is about sacrifice and death...”, (Tarata).*

The participant calls on the Māori tangi process to ascribe sadness to wairua, which then reinforces his idea of what Anzac Day means to him. He goes on to compare the emotions of Anzac Day to Waitangi Day, pointing to similarities and differences. Again, the importance of place comes through in his discussion.

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<sup>2</sup> Rātana is a Christian based religious faith movement. The Rātana Pa is a community in the North island of New Zealand near Whanganui which was developed around the Rātana church. It is a site of pilgrimage for the Māori followers of the Rātana faith.

*“While you could say Waitangi Day involves the same emotions, I have been to Tii Marae during the event and it is a celebration for all people who attend...the mana of Waitangi is basically the coming together of the two peoples and the signing of the Treaty. That is the wairua that goes with this. That is why I think it is really strong. It’s a different kind of feel to other places in the country because that is where it was born...the mana of Waitangi Day comes from a really strong connection between what has gone in the past and the celebration of that particular day today...” (Tarata).*

Others also assigned feelings and emotions to wairua; for example, in one participant’s account of her experiences as a child attending Anzac celebrations, she speaks of wairua as having more than one emotional expression:

*“...it was different to what we see today when we attend Anzac celebrations. As a child there were more returned service men who attended and the wairua was both sad and happy. Sad because of the soldiers left behind and happy because some people made it home” (Kōkako).*

## Conclusions

Participants in this paper identified multiple components of wairua, which together, hold some meaning intended to explain wairua as understood and experienced by individuals. The centrality of wairua to being Māori was affirmed, as well as its all-encompassing nature. Tensions, similar to those in the literature, were expressed in relation to defining and articulating wairua. Wairua was spoken about as feeling and as something in themselves and connecting them to other people, places and times, both tangible and intangible. It was different for each person and dynamic and changing according to circumstances. The participants saw wairua as inherent in their culture, enabling connections to all that surrounds

them. It was seen and expressed in thoughts and practices, including the concepts, values and protocols discussed earlier. As such, it was central to Māori identity and belonging and embedded in whakapapa. For some wairua was linked to religion. The ‘uncanny’ was mentioned but this was clearly not seen as the only meaning of wairua.

Although wairua as a concept has vast, multifaceted meanings and is open to numerous personal interpretations, this does not mean it cannot provide a valuable way of understanding Māori experiences. To not attempt to approach wairua in research may mean loss, invisibility and silence around deep understandings of significance to hauora Māori.

The literature and participant responses present challenges and possibilities. Along with our own experiences, we suggest several overlapping domains that provided a starting point for the development of A Wairua Approach (AWA) to research. We acknowledge these are not exhaustive and are just one possibility. In further research we applied these domains to data to explore analytical possibilities guided by these domains (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017).

Moewaka Barnes et al., (2017) state, these domains are:

- Tupuna (ancestors), people who have gone before
- Future generations, having obligations to generations to come
- Connection to place, people, events and issues; sense of belonging
- Connection to self, a sense of wholeness
- Connection to something wider than oneself
- Tikanga whakaaro (Barlow, 1991), connection to, and understanding of, Māori ways of doing things and the obligations, relationships and accountabilities this entails
- Practising wairua; processes involved in rituals and events
- The so-called supernatural or uncanny.

We offer this as a contribution and resistance to the denigration of wairua as primitive and shamanistic. Against the backdrop of western struggles to address spirituality in research, Māori scholars are increasingly reimagining and asserting what it means to place wairua at the centre of our scholarship. Literature addresses wairua in multiple ways. Although clearly acknowledged as central and important to Māori identity, there are challenges and tensions for Māori scholars. Approaching wairua explicitly in research meets with little to guide us within the academy and much to deter us. Every day we make decisions, both conscious and unconscious in relation to what we bring to the academy.

## **Link 2 Introducing A Wairua Approach (AWA)**

As part of the *Wairua, Affect and National Days* project our team, Margie Wetherell, Tim McCreanor, Helen Moewaka Barnes, Angela Moewaka Barnes and I, had multiple discussions. The project had initially addressed affect – the feelings and related practices involved in commemorating national days. However, our Māori team members, myself and Angela and Helen Moewaka Barnes and Emerald Muriwai knew that we needed our own way of exploring the data. Talking about affective practice provided an impetus for developing a way of centring wairua as key to Māori experiences of national days.

These discussions, together with the literature review and the key informant kōrero provided a strong basis for the development of an approach that explicitly centred wairua in research. My primary supervisor, Helen Moewaka Barnes led the writing of this chapter as an invited paper to Continuum. She initially presented ideas around wairua and te tai ao in 2016 as a keynote speaker at Kimihia Rangahau, a Te Tai Tokerau research symposium in Whangarei. Following the presentation at Kimihia Rangahau, Helen was invited to the Research Methods Festival at the University in Bath (2016) as part of an indigenous stream, presenting on wairua and research. An invitation to submit a paper to Continuum followed.

In November 2016, as a team, we ran a wānanga at the Māori Association of Social Scientists conference in Wellington. At first, we could see that some people were uncertain what our intentions were and how centring wairua could add to our research practice. After some questions, which seemed to centre on issues related to explicitly talking about wairua, participants became engaged and a very insightful discussion and application to data followed.

International audiences were interested and received the presentation and paper well; they were less likely to express concerns, presumably because they were outsiders and respected

this position we had taken. There were some challenges from a range of people. A key challenge from Māori was, did writing and explicitly talking about wairua detract from its mana or make it noa. We responded that we recognised many levels and layers to wairua and deep learnings. We were not attempting to cover these, but to encourage ourselves to ‘out’ wairua – to overcome our whakamā and fear of criticism and acknowledge that we were all experts in our own wairua and lived this every day. As such, leaving wairua out of research could mean leaving something central to us as Māori out of our understandings.

Following minor revisions, the paper was published in March 2017. The following chapter details the development of A Wairua Approach and then applies it two selected data excerpts to explore its usefulness in practice.

Reference:

Moewaka Barnes, H., Gunn, T., Moewaka Barnes, A., Muriwai, E., Wetherell, M., McCreanor, T. (2017). Feeling and spirit: developing an indigenous wairua approach to research. *Qualitative Research*, Vol. 17(3) 313–325 published online 27 March.  
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## **Chapter 6 Feeling and Spirit: Developing an indigenous wairua approach to research**

### **Abstract**

Wairua, a Māori (indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand) concept, somewhat restrictively translated as spirit or spirituality, resonates with many indigenous peoples globally. While spirit is recognised as an important human dimension, the denigration of non-western spiritual understandings means that indigenous peoples often choose to remain silent. Transferring these concerns to research approaches, we edit our voices, with a view to what we think will count as knowledge and what we choose to share with academic audiences. This article discusses the challenges we face when we enter into conversations about wairua and how this might be approached in research. With reference to emerging social science innovations in affect and emotion, the article draws on audio visual recordings of people's experiences of significant national days in Aotearoa New Zealand. Issues of analysis and representation are explored, along with the potential of these methods to explicate feelings, emotions and spirit.

### **Introduction**

As indigenous researchers we are constantly aware of ourselves as 'other' within colonised spaces. For many, academic existence is given over to explaining indigenous ways of being and understanding the world and arguing for and defending the right to exercise this in practice. In Aotearoa New Zealand Kaupapa Māori Theory provides a platform for indigenous research; asserting Māori worldviews and approaches as paramount and outlining features such as Māori leadership, pursuing Māori aspirations and seeking transformation (Moewaka Barnes, et al., 2009). A growing number of studies are conducted by Māori based on our epistemologies and methodologies and informed by Māori cosmology. In back

grounding the research they may, for example, describe the beginning of life, how our world was shaped and the continuing concepts and relationships that explain our place in the universe. Wairua, somewhat restrictively translated as spirit or spirituality, appears in these accounts as an intrinsic part of a Māori psyche.

Wairua is understood as an important part of experience and how we understand the world; although “For many Māori, spirituality lies at the heart of Kaupapa Māori” (Ratima, 2008, p, 2), there is discomfort in giving voice to wairua in practice and within the academy. Unease at this silence sits alongside a sense of caution in what we decide to share and where. While spirit is recognised as an important human dimension (Hill and Smith; 2010; Hussain, 2011), the academy struggles with questions about inclusion and exclusion, with defining or leaving unspecified (Elkins, Hedstrom, Hughes et al., 1988), usually resulting in mentioning but not placing spirit at the centre of research. In the face of the denigration of non-western spirituality as primitive, shamanistic and heathen, indigenous peoples often choose to remain silent. Transferring these concerns to research approaches, we edit our voices with a view to what we think outsiders will count as knowledge and what we choose to articulate; whether this amounts to suppression of already marginalised values, an act of protection or both is a central concern.

This article discusses some of the challenges faced in the development of a wairua approach to research as part of our National Days, Wairua and Affect project (National Days project). With reference to emerging social science innovations in affect and emotion, the paper draws on audio visual recordings of Waitangi Day, a national holiday marking the first signings by Māori leaders and the Crown of Te Tiriti o Waitangi/Treaty of Waitangi. Issues of analysis and representation are examined, along with the potential of these methods to explicate feelings, emotions and spirit.

## Seeking wairua

Learned elder, Reverend Māori Marsden argues that objectivity does not concern him, rather he sets out to view attitudes from within Māori culture, examining first what this means to him then asking if this view is held by Māori more generally. This provides guidance for our search for spirit.

*“The route to Maoritanga through abstract interpretation is a dead end. The way can only lie through a passionate, subjective approach. That is more likely to lead to a goal,”* (Marsden, 1992, p, 117)

Māori have ‘held out’, maintaining the primacy of wairua in various ways and arguing for its inclusion within the academy (e.g. Moewaka Barnes, 2009; Ratima, 2008). Although sometimes seen as only applying to ‘ritualistic’ moments rather than life in general, most Māori literature points to everyday, not just ‘supernatural’, ritualistic or organised, expressions of wairua. While often present in research literature describing Māori worldviews and providing a backdrop or grounding for studies, wairua is not employed as an explicit approach in analysis and interpretation. As the first author wrote almost a decade ago:

*“Despite the argument put forward by indigenous scholar Reverend Marsden that metaphysics, including spiritual matters, and the theory of knowledge could not be discussed separately, I am aware that there is much we, as indigenous academics do not express in writing. There are ways of seeing that we leave out of proposals and research reports, but nevertheless acknowledge and talk about among ourselves. ... I became increasingly aware of the difficulties of expressing spirituality as a part of indigenous worldviews, including its place in science and research... These things are a part of our knowing, but they are not a part of the mainstream, legitimated ways of knowing...in western eyes, I would be seen as less of a scientist if I suggested that the*

*place of spirituality may be broader and largely indefinable; as a result, these less tangible aspects are dealt with only lightly”, (Moewaka Barnes, 2009, p, 7-8).*

Elsewhere other indigenous peoples also questioned spirit in research, Aluli-Meyer, (2006, p, 263) arguing that we need to find ways of “seeing through engagement with mind, body, and spirit” in order to “develop a different consciousness.” This approach would move us “From fragmentation to wholeness.” (Aluli-Meyer, 2006, p, 264). Aluli-Meyer (2006) suggests using triangulation, organising and extending our research by using three points: body, spirit and mind. Body is what you see; it is descriptive rather than interpretive. Mind, encompassing subjectivity and thought:

*“...explains, contextualises, or challenges. It gives us the green light to engage in creative exploration needed to unburden ourselves from the shrivelled promise objectivity has offered the world”, (Aluli-Meyer, 2006, p, 272)*

All occur simultaneously and spirit connects all three. People speak through being who they are, and, when self-reflection and mindfulness are employed, this will lead us to “seek inevitably what most scholars refuse to admit exists: spirit.” (Aluli-Meyer, 2006, p, 273)

Aluli-Meyer argues that in using all three points we might change the culture of research.

An ideal opportunity to explicitly address spirit came about when a team of us (Māori and non-Māori), including Margie Wetherell were discussing ideas for a proposal to the Marsden Fund of the Royal Society. With Margie being at the forefront of new thinking around affect (Wetherell, 2012), affective practices, emotions and feelings were a key part of our discussions. We were interested in how wairua and ‘Northern theory’ around affect and emotion might interrelate. As a Māori research group, we could not envisage a research project that looked at emotions and feeling without looking at wairua.

Beginning in 2013, the project is the first to apply Kaupapa Māori, wairua and affect theory approaches, using multiple qualitative techniques. The focus is on national days, particularly Waitangi and ANZAC Days, both marked by a public holiday. Acts of commemoration and celebration are intertwined with identity and social cohesion and may be felt very differently by individuals and groups of people. Our guiding questions are:

- How do Māori and non-Māori represent and respond to these observances?
- When, where and how do race/culture/ethnicity emerge in expressions of nation?
- How do these translate into affective mobilisations such as anger, protest, denial, shame, pride, grief, fear, belonging, increased understanding and respect?
- What are the embodied and located understandings of these expressions?
- What are the pathways and affective politics through which such emotional repertoires contribute to social justice/regressive relations in Aotearoa?

### Wairua and affect

In exploring how to employ wairua as part of the methodological frame, we needed to see what could steer us. We were aware that a wairua approach could never be, nor should it be neat or simple, but it might move us to exciting understandings. Affect provided some resonating pathways and ideas that assisted us in our thinking and in recognising the fluid and interwoven nature of the approach needed:

*“Affective practice focuses on the emotional as it appears in social life and shifting, flexible and often over-determined figurations rather than simple lines of causation, character types and neat emotion categories”*, (Wetherell, 2012, p, 4).

A focus on affective practice examines the ways in which people are moved and how they make sense of this embodied involvement in social life, paying attention to their

formulations, rather than categorising in terms of a limited palette of ‘basic emotions’. Attention to wairua, similarly, explores how Māori (including Māori researchers) make meaning beyond the usual routes recognised in settler societies; the intimations and resonances, sometimes subtle and fleeting, sometimes repressed, and sometimes strong and vivid. Aligning with affect, our intention too was to move beyond the standard categories of emotion and develop ways we could explicitly address wairua in the analysis of our research. We hoped this would lead to an expansion of our research horizons.

*“To know we are more than simply body and thought is to acknowledge how these ideas expand into wider realms of knowing and being.” (Aluli-Meyer, 2006, p, 274)*

Here then were some pathways to follow, some grooves already worn that we could use to guide our steps. Approaches to affect and wairua had potential convergences; however, there were also divergences and a growing knowledge that wairua could challenge the turn to affect to consider and include spirit. We also knew we faced challenges in developing a wairua approach: denigration of wairua; the nature of wairua; decisions around what we make visible and; potential risks of taking a wairua approach.

### Challenges of a wairua approach

Valuing: The first consideration was the place of wairua. As discussed earlier addressing spirit in research and giving voice to it in the academy is unusual given the tension with the materialist and objectivist approaches that dominate. In addition, through colonial processes, wairua has been denigrated, seen as primitive in comparison to Christian superiority:

*“Māori find themselves ridiculed as superstitious in a way that a Pākehā<sup>3</sup> talking about religion never is”, (Clifton, 2000, p, 22).*

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<sup>3</sup> Settler of European origin

We recognised this context within which we were working; in essence, this was a motivating factor and the project was a way of challenging these notions. We knew however, that developing a wairua approach needed, for these and other reasons to be a step-by-step process, as we built our case.

**Defining:** As discussed earlier, while often present in research literature, wairua is not employed as an explicit approach in analysis and interpretation, nor is it defined. We were aware that defining wairua was problematic; was it a reductionist exercise, an attempt to define the undefinable? On the other hand, if we didn't explicitly look at meaning we would remain silent and risk conforming to western notions that wairua was not scholarly, was uncanny and not part of a research approach. It would remain part of the research context as a largely descriptive aside. We proceeded on the basis that we could not provide a definition but, in order to develop a practical research approach, we needed to understand and articulate some of what might be involved in wairua based on multiple resources as well as focused on the participants themselves.

**Making visible:** In tandem with avoiding definitions, we needed to consider other aspects of what we put into the research domain. Reservations exist in relation to expressing wairua, one idea being "...to speak of these things publicly is to make them common." (Clifton, 2000, p. 22) On the other hand a number of us were uncomfortable with silence and saw expressing spirit within our work as being about claiming rights and asserting the importance of wairua. One concern was academic writing: what we would 'offer up' to journals; what would be acceptable and; would requirements of such spaces overshadow what we wanted to express. There was also caution in relation to our 'right' to articulate wairua in this way; was it our place and should we attempt this. As Aluli-Meyer (2006, p, 274), acknowledges, these forays take some courage:

*"Spirit...is all about seeing what is significant and having the courage to discuss it."*

Decolonising: Amid concerns about the commodification of wairua, (Clifton, 2000), we questioned whether developing a wairua approach was an act of decolonisation or whether it could become a tool used for appropriation. In asserting our rights to make our worldviews visible and articulating this in research would we potentially expose wairua, leaving it open to appropriation by those who could not understand it, but nevertheless felt they would have a basis for claims of understanding and interpretation. We considered whether others might think it had become definable and touchable and therefore open to reductionist approaches that they would then ‘own’. We couldn’t resolve this but needed to reflect and acknowledge these possibilities; our approach was an ongoing puzzle and an offering, open to discussion and challenge and entered into with caution.

### Developing a wairua approach

Our initial step was, as suggested by Marsden (1992), an analysis of what wairua meant to us followed by consideration of what the meanings might be for other Māori. Here, however, we were not looking to see if meanings were the same for others but were seeking a broad range of understandings; in particular how wairua was written and spoken about. After discussions among the team, we conducted a literature review and key informant interviews. We brought our findings back to the team and discussed them with others, including Māori researchers and elders. This process enabled us to delineate some aspects of what might be important in this endeavour. We then used data from our National Days project to see how we might apply wairua in research.

We found overlaps in the way that wairua and affect were written and spoken about; for example, participants in the National Days project ascribed feelings to wairua, such as a ‘sad wairua’ being used to describe an event. Wairua was seen as being within people as well as

all around us. A number of key and relatively consistent spheres emerged. Wairua was associated with:

- Tupuna (ancestors), people who have gone before, particularly one's own relations; honouring, feeling connected to them, their actions, intentions and legacies
- Future generations, seeing oneself as having obligations to children, grandchildren and generations to come
- Connection to place, people, events and issues; knowledge and sense of belonging
- Connection to self; a sense of wholeness
- Connection to something wider than oneself; for example, connection to tupuna, atua/gods/spirits
- Tikanga whakaaro: Barlow (1991) uses this as the title of his book along with the English explanatory *Key concepts in Māori culture*. Here we use it as a connection to, and understanding of, Māori ways of doing things and the obligations, relationships and accountabilities this entails
- Practising wairua; the processes involved in rituals and events using particular customs and protocols
- The so-called supernatural or uncanny; although rarely written about in the literature and one aspect key informants were reluctant to talk about, this is one of the spheres people may more commonly associate with wairua, but it is only one aspect (Moewaka Barnes, 2016)

Although presented here as separate bullet points, these spheres are fluid and overlapping; for example, the first two locate us within generations and time, which in turn are located within place. This is also not an exhaustive list. Here we attempt to engage with some of the richness of wairua without reducing, being superficial, defining or neatly packaging within borders. At the same time, we want to explore concrete ways of expressing wairua in research analysis

while always leaving the possibility of something unexplainable beyond the approach. At this stage we have chosen to steer clear of the uncanny, being a sensitive area where we would need to tread with even greater care.

These are beginning points only, a way of approaching our data to explore whether we might see these associations and if it is practical to look at our data in this way; what can it tell us and will this be useful? Using these spheres as guides we began to look at the data generated by our National Days project. The following section describes the database that we then draw on to provide two examples of what the application of a wairua approach might tell us.

## Methods

The National Days project database consists of key informant and focus group interviews, media and web items and *haerenga kitea* (go along visual records), referred to in this article as haerenga. We developed the haerenga drawing on 'go along' interviewing and Photovoice techniques (Jensen et al., 2006; Oliver, Witten, Kearns et al., 2011). Researchers used purposive sampling to recruit and conduct haerenga with a total of 34 records (18 for Waitangi and 16 for Anzac, from 2013-2015 although this may change as we confirm back with participants). Participants were a range of Māori and non-Māori; some attended events on Waitangi Day or Anzac Day and some chose not to participate in these events.

Although we obtained ethics approval from our university human ethics committee, we endeavoured to reach beyond this. As well as discussing the material with participants and giving them copies, with the opportunity to delete material and discuss use, we are also editing some haerenga in order to provide a resource for participating communities. This in particular applies to Māori participants who invited Māori research team members to record local events, seeing this as an opportunity to tell their stories and have a record of the day, as well as wanting to support the researcher.

Participants had an individually assigned or invited researcher for the day or part of the day (although three haerenga involving Māori took place over 2 days), who recorded activities and impressions, gathered verbal data and recorded still and video footage. With all participants we were careful to follow their directions and minimise our intrusion on their experiences. The researchers captured moments as directed by participants, recorded participants immersed in the events, particularly moments or activities that appeared to be of significance, or simply sat and talked with the participant. We found data gathering differed depending on the nature of the activities; many Anzac events for example, being solemn, rather scripted occasions while Waitangi Day provided intermittent activities and moments that allowed discussion to take place.

Analysis involved viewing data multiple times and logging the footage (labelling and describing visual and audio content). After more general viewings, excerpts were selected that appeared to provide instances of the spheres described above. We looked at discourse, expressions, gestures and the nature of activities or events and also paid attention to our own inner subjectivity; what we felt. We wanted to be able to understand what might be more generally accepted as ‘spiritual moments’, but it was critical to us to explore wairua in the everyday; not just the tikanga whakaaro and events and rituals, but how wairua might be seen in more mundane moments.

In this article we focus on excerpts from two Waitangi Day haerenga; one recorded at Waitangi and one at Mangungu. On Waitangi Day, the 6th February events occur throughout the country, but a particular site is Waitangi itself in the north of the North Island, where the first Te Tiriti signings occurred in 1840.

After the signings at Waitangi in 1840, Te Tiriti was taken to other sites. On the 12th of February the largest group of signings took place at the Mangungu Mission, some 60 km from Waitangi.

The Waitangi site includes the Waitangi National Trust Treaty Grounds (upper grounds) and Te Tii Marae. In the upper grounds there are food, craft and other stalls as well as performance stages. Te Tii Marae, a gathering place across the bridge from the grounds, is run by a committee and involves local organisers. There is a meeting house and tents erected where numerous discussions on issues of concern, such as decolonisation, constitutional transformation, the environment and trade agreements occur. People can camp on this land and stalls are also set up, but to a lesser extent than on the upper grounds.

Te Tiriti is often represented as the ‘birth of the nation’, or our ‘founding document’; however, Māori and European understandings differed and conflicts quickly arose (Orange 2012). This is evident in the ways we respond to and mark Waitangi Day in the present day.

### Applying a wairua approach to analysis

We begin with an excerpt from Mangungu where the day centred on an organised event involving a ritual of encounter – pōwhiri – where visitors are called on to the site, participate in speeches, each followed by a song or chant, and other interactions, culminating in sharing food offered in hospitality by the home people. Among attendees were local people, visitors from further places and local school children who participated in welcoming the visitors and performed a piece about the history and meanings of the signings at Mangungu. Marsden (1992, p, 118) argues that:

*“An analysis of the concepts which underlie this formal welcome reveals the basic themes and approach of the Maori to questions of ultimate reality and the relationships among God, man and the universe.”*

One video excerpt shows the visitors being called on to the site by a kai karanga, a woman whose voice is the first to be heard. As the visitors begin their slow walk up the hill to the waiting hosts and tent, a woman from the visiting side responds and the children perform a

haka pōwhiri, *Toia Mai*. This is a form of chant referring to hauling the canoe to its resting place.

In the speeches that ensue, the word wairua is mentioned several times, referring to the significance of the day and the events that took place there in the past.

*“It’s coming from the heart and it’s also coming from the wairua of our ancestors”*

Here the speaker describes the welcome and the events of the day in ways that link to the history of the event and the ever-present nature of the wairua of ancestors.

In this excerpt we can observe spiritual signification through expressions of tikanga whakaaro and discursive deployment of the word wairua. If the observer has deeper knowledge there is more to see; connections occurring between people, to ancestors, to place and to the meaning of the day; for example, the calls of the women weave a spiritual rope that pulls the visitors’ canoe on to the marae (NZ Folksong, 2003), the haka pōwhiri supports and assists this process, signifying a pathway for spirits to enter and leave the world (Barlow, 1991). Wairua does not need to be mentioned for this to be recognised.

As an excerpt where we may readily recognise wairua, this example could be seen as ‘easy pickings’ and only a part of what we set out to achieve. We had also wanted to explore wairua in the everyday; not just the tikanga whakaaro and events and rituals, but how wairua might be seen in more mundane moments.

To do this we move to our second case and a more challenging exercise using excerpts from a haerenga at Waitangi with a local resident who had not attended for any specific purpose. We follow her as she moves through the various places and spaces of the Treaty grounds and Te Tii marae on Waitangi Day. On leaving the upper national trust grounds and headed home, she reflected:

*“...it feels kind of like there isn’t really any point to being here in some way, a purpose or a centre or something significant to be here for, it’s kind of wandering around and there’s shops to go to and things to look at and kai (food) to eat...”*

On her way she passed Te Tii Marae and went into the tent where people spoke, including a young woman descended from a well-known leader in Māori land rights and a group of young Māori performed action songs. She stayed for a while then reflected again on her day:

*“I’m so glad we came here...I came and connected with what for me feels like the heart and the wairua of Waitangi and the Treaty and Waitangi Day for me we were just about to leave without that, I felt sort of frustrated...to hear talk of the Treaty and what it meant originally and what it means now... and then the kapa haka... amazing, it was so beautiful ... it was such a fitting accompaniment to the words...for me it felt like [puts her hand to her heart] I can go now feeling satisfied.”*

In the first excerpt, although she does not articulate specifically what she might hope to experience, she expresses a sense of disappointment at not finding a reason for being there, which she reflects on later as “frustration”. In the second, her demeanour has changed, as she connects with the heart and wairua of the place, Te Tiriti and the day. Using the spheres described earlier, we gain a sense of her connection: to past, present and future, place and meaning. In the full version of this excerpt she made particular comment about hearing the young woman speak. This, along with her description of the kapa haka as ‘beautiful’, indicates her appreciation of the importance of younger generations and the continuity of whakapapa (broadly meaning genealogical relationships). Together these give her a sense of completeness so that, putting her hand to her heart, she explains she can now go, satisfied.

These examples could be seen as at opposite ends of the wairua ‘spectrum’ but, if rituals such as pōwhiri are about trying to capture the ideas and values of spirit (Aluli-Meyer, 2006), then

through the desire to find meaning and connection, our participant in the second example expresses something akin to this. Past, present and future are to the fore in both examples and give meaning to the events. Both demonstrate a connection between heart and wairua, being discursively linked in both. This illustrates how wairua is linked to feelings and emotions and, when in balance, has an integrity that is heartfelt.

## Discussion

We set out to see if we could find entry points to exploring the working of wairua in a range of settings, including the everyday as a key practice through which Māori engaged in commemoration. We hoped that, if we looked at wairua as fluid and intertwined with social practices of meaning making, rather than as solely a pre-eminent force we might find an approach that gave greater voice to Māori worldviews and make the invisible (in part at least) visible.

Here we will not grapple with the question of who can or should use this approach and under what circumstances; although these are clearly discussions that need to be had. There is one point we would like to raise here - by putting a passionate inward subjective approach at the forefront we signal who might do this work and what they might discover. The Māori research team members were, in varying ways, insiders so our position stems from this. We seek to discover what we and other Māori understand in relation to wairua and what this means to our experiences. Non-Māori, as outsiders, might discover what they perceive wairua to mean to Māori; these positions are quite different.

We are not however, attempting to present the wairua approach outlined here as the Māori way, the right way or the only way; there are many ways, and nothing is as simple as it sounds. Reference to affective-discursive approaches has been useful and motivating in both developing our approach and in our analyses; for example, in understanding that ‘work’ is

involved. Wairua is not static and outside of feelings, emotions and actions but is something we work at and with, shaping and being shaped by us at every turn as we struggle to make sense of our lives.

We believe our initial attempts have been able to explicate meaning, indicating transformative potential theoretically and practically. We hope further work will enable us to, in a small way, redress the denigration of wairua. We also hope to move the conversation beyond abstraction. Here we are able to ‘see’ wairua through the haerenga kitea data as both articulated and lived embodied experiences. We are beginning to formulate routine affective practices that make sense to Māori. In our study this brings a deeper understanding to what the commemoration days mean to Māori participants and provides insights into the intensity of experience. Giving voice to more than the dominant notions of the aggrieved and angry Māori, a wairua approach places Māori in the centre of a world where past, present and future generations are at the forefront of affect; where wairua is felt as the ability to honour and connect to others, not simply a feeling on the day, but an imperative within a colonial agenda of forgetting. This is in stark contrast to the remembering we are collectively as a nation bound to actively generate on and around Anzac Day.

## Conclusions

Embarking on a study of emotion and feelings and delving into the turn to affect to investigate meanings and implications of national days in Aotearoa New Zealand meant there was an imperative to include wairua. In undertaking this journey, we wanted to move beyond wairua as an acknowledgment, consideration or domain in research and explore it as an approach. We did not seek to provide some sort of rational synthesis that categorised or explained away the importance of wairua, but we wanted to see if we could begin to place wairua at the centre of experience, where useful or relevant. In doing this we have attempted

to articulate our logic and processes for taking a wairua approach. We also declare and give permission for an inner journey, far removed from objectivity.

Conversations suggest that our wairua approach may have resonance with other indigenous peoples. We also need to cross borders and challenge western research to not just acknowledge the importance of wairua or spirit to indigenous peoples but to also look to their own possibilities for an approach to spirit. We urge all researchers to engage with their own understandings of spirituality as a first step in their wairua approach. Bravery may be needed, but we encourage all people to see themselves as experts in their experiences of wairua. This includes the need for researchers to acknowledge others' expertise by engaging in dialogue, including interpretive discussions with participants, rather than imposing their understandings from a distance. The "connection between the 'seen' and 'unseen'" has "often been 'left at the door' so we might participate in the academy." (Ratima 2008, p, 2) A wairua approach challenges all researchers to bring the gift of spirit into the heart of the academy.

### **Link 3 Exploring wairua further**

The previous chapter looked at the development of ‘A Wairua Approach’ (AWA). As part of this, AWA was applied to data to test its application. In the following chapter, I apply AWA to two haerenga kitea excerpts to further investigate its use and to explore what the approach tells us about responses to Anzac Day from participants who came from two seemingly different positions. In the first data example explored in the chapter, wairua is clearly visible and explicitly articulated. The second example used AWA domains to follow the shifting emotions that were part of the inner journey of the participant. Her thoughts, feeling and expressions evoke what is happening for her within a wairua framing.

While this paper uses haerenga kitea methods with two people, I travelled to Wairoa then Gisborne around Anzac Day in 2016, talking to a range of Māori. It was an interesting and joyful experience talking to all these Māori; they were funny and we laughed often in this process. Many talked about wairua and the connectedness it provides to their whānau. There were many concepts and practices peppered throughout our discussion and how something simple like preparing and sharing food was about aroha, manaakitanga and building and maintaining relationships.

Collecting this kōrero was a process that offered many learnings and each one of these whānau demonstrated passion about issues relating directly or indirectly to them or their whānau, in-terms of national commemoration days.

By applying AWA to the analysis of haerenga kitea, we hoped that we would provide greater insights into the deeply felt emotions and meaning making of our two participants. It was challenging, but AWA provided a way of analysing emotions in response to Anzac Day. Talking to these two people was a very moving and rewarding experience for me, in

particular having them share their beliefs about wairua and the connections it creates to tupuna and to the Māori who fought in World War Two.

Helen and I had considerable kōrero about what we saw in the data and initially I completed a thematic analysis on the data. While it began as a simple and straightforward thematic analysis, our discussions brought together different views on what wairua looks like in participants' kōrero, resulting in a more detailed exploration. In applying AWA, I paid attention to kōrero, gesture, tone and expression with the purpose of identifying and uncovering the depth under the kōrero and how wairua might be able to extend what we understand of participant experiences.

At the end, we felt AWA provided an opportunity to explore deeper meanings and connections, including connections to tupuna and to capture deeper meanings for participants.

The chapter was written as a paper at end of 2017. After my study suspension ended, I picked it up again in 2020 and completed it for submission to *AlterNative* in early 2021. In August 2021 minor revisions were undertaken and the revised paper submitted.

#### Reference

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## Chapter 7 Wairua in Memories and Responses to Anzac Day

*Whakataukī*

*Kāore te kumara e kōrero mō tōna. Ake reka.*

*The kumara does not boast of how sweet it is.*

### Abstract

Although research acknowledges wairua as a key component of Māori understandings, experience and practice, few studies include wairua as an explicit analytical theme or domain. Building on the development of A Wairua Approach (AWA) to research, we explore the experiences of two participants on Anzac Day.

Applying AWA to the analysis of video recordings, we explored the meanings and connections related to whakapapa and the mana of the 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion. The promises made and broken and what participants saw as tikanga in their responses to Anzac Day and the meanings it held for them. Through expression of emotions, the participants not only recalled past events, but actively engaged in making connections between present and past grief and injustices. Although national days may unite people, they are not necessarily ‘felt’ in the same ways in different contexts. For these participants, being Māori shaped their experiences and the forms that connection took.

### Introduction

Research literature acknowledges wairua (spirituality) as a key component of Māori understandings, experience and practice, with Durie (1998) articulating it as a key element in his Te Whare Tapa Whā model of health. Restrictively translated as spirituality, wairua is central to being Māori (Ihimaera, 2004). Despite this, little research includes wairua as a central concept or an explicit analytical theme or domain (see Cheung, 2008; Henare, 2001;

Ruwhiu & Wolfgramm, 2006). Some literature describes values, practices and stories of creation to demonstrate the pivotal role wairua plays in Māori life. Although this explains how wairua is central to Māori concepts and practices, there are significant gaps in how wairua can add to interpretation, analysis and meaning making in research. We argue that exploring wairua in talk and actions can provide ways of understanding wairua as an ordinary, everyday aspect of being. Moreover, this process can extend our knowledge and further our understandings of Māori experiences, including social interactions. Here we look at the seemingly divergent experiences of two Māori men as they respond to Anzac Day commemoration.

Specific dates that mark battles or wars are set aside as occasions that evoke pride in a nation, in being a New Zealander, Australian, American, and so on. They are days when we publicly honour men and women who served; particularly those who made ‘the ultimate sacrifice’. Citizens attend public events where feelings of grief and loss are expressed and where dissenting voices are met with anger and rebuke. However, there are diverse groups within nations, including nations within nations, for whom such commemorations hold different meanings, as individuals and collectives. Understandings and responses are shaped by identity, culture and by experiences and expressions of nation. Wilson and Stapleton (2005, p, 633), in examining focus group data from working class urban Northern Ireland, describe how commemorations can ‘function simultaneously as points of solidarity and division’, involving contested memories and opposing rights to commemoration.

The experiences of indigenous peoples are grounded in the trauma of colonisation (Walters et al., 2011). Dominant discourses and choreographies turn a blind eye to the treatment of indigenous nations and peoples, including the exclusion of the wars fought to impose colonial rule. Here we examine the engagements of two Māori (indigenous people of New Zealand) males in Anzac Day (Australian and New Zealand Army Corps). The day is a public holiday

and multiple events are held as part of armed services commemorations. Robinson (2010) claimed Anzac Day is for the commemoration of all who had served in the armed forces, and is an opportunity to remember the dead.

Developed in 2017, A Wairua Approach (AWA) aims to place wairua at the centre of research (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017). AWA provides a way of exploring how Māori perceive and make sense of their experiences and place in the world, including connections to both physical and spiritual dimensions. Drawing on audio visual data from a project investigating participant engagement with key national days in Aotearoa New Zealand, this paper explores actions and talk that enact the wairua of their context. We argue that, as an everyday part of life, centring wairua provides important insights into Māori experiences, practices and social relations.

## Wairua in literature

Early accounts of wairua provided by non-Māori observers in the nineteenth and early twentieth century often reflect interpretations based on their beliefs and values (see Best, 1922; Voyce, 1989). The terms wairua and spirituality are frequently used interchangeably.

Although many Māori adopted Christianity and Māori scholars have brought wairua to theological discussions (for example Marsden, 1992; Tate, n.d.), wairua is not confined to spirituality or religion (Ihimaera, 2004). While the term spirituality is sometimes used interchangeably with wairua, it does not capture the full meaning of wairua. Wairua is commonly understood as encompassing a connection to all things that Māori deem important in their lives, including the environment, tupuna (ancestor), whānau (family), hapū (sub tribe) and iwi (tribe) (Ruwhiu & Wolfgramm, 2006). Wairua is also inextricably associated with multiple overlapping concepts such as mana (prestige, status) and tapu (sacred) and practices such as whakapapa (genealogy), waiata (song, sing), karakia (worship, pray), karanga (call)

and tangihanga (mourning, funeral). These matters are well covered by Māori scholars (see Barlow, 1991; Edwards, 2009; Mead, 1993).

### *Wairua and Māori worldviews*

Deeply embedded within Māori worldviews, beliefs about significant life concepts play a key role in how Māori make sense of the world that surrounds them (Ruwhiu & Wolfgramm, 2006). Ahuriri-Driscoll (2014) described spirituality as something beyond the phenomenal world, arguing that this otherworldliness is one reason for wairua and spirituality remaining largely outside positivist scientific inquiry. Spiritual wellbeing has alignments with what is commonly understood as ‘wairua’ however, wairua also pervades the physical realm. While this may be well understood by many, western views often relegate wairua to the realm of the uncanny or superstition, positioning it as pre-eminent or apart.

Durie (1985, p.483) argues that, ‘without a spiritual awareness, an individual is considered to be lacking in wellbeing’ and more prone to disability and misfortune. This sense of vulnerability is echoed by Valentine (2009, p.26) who stated, ‘*many Māori believe high levels of negative health statistics are directly linked to the loss of Māori spiritual beliefs and practices*’. Despite these arguments, little research explores pathways and connections between wairua, social order, health and other daily features of life. Literature commonly focuses on more visible expressions of wairua through cultural concepts and practices (see Barlow, 1991; Mead, 1993; Nikora et al., 2010), rather than mundane experiences and expressions. For these reasons, wairua can be seen as apart from daily life and set to the side of data analysis and interpretation.

For many Māori there are many ‘circumstances’ and/or practices where wairua is seen as connecting physical and spiritual worlds. While culture is argued as the seat of beliefs and value systems that shapes ‘perceptions of reality’ (Marsden, 2003, p.56); key concepts and

values underpin ideas, customs, social behaviour and social order of particular peoples.

Closely connected with wairua, tapu lies within the heart of these and is intrinsic to Māori worldviews (Gilmore, Schafer, and Halcrow, 2013). It comprises, everything that is considered “*law, custom, etiquette, prejudice and superstition...*” (Sachdev, 1989, p.962).

Tapu is considered a ‘supernatural condition’ that involves a contractual relationship with the atua by which it is established and as a result, persons or objects become imbued with mana (Barlow, 1991).

Like wairua, tapu is frequently translated in limited ways as sacred or holy, but it is more than this. One of the strongest forces in Māori life (Yoon, 1978), tapu encompasses a range of meanings that touch many aspects of life. Sachdev (1989, p.962) describes how western religion-imposed meanings that limited tapu as a concept and practice.

*“Simply tapu translates as 'forbidden' and that missionaries proceeded to translate the biblical concept of 'holy' or 'sacred' into the Maori tapu. Neither of these translations, however, accurately reflects the range of meanings that the concept encompasses, and the many aspects of life it touches”.*

Love (2004, p.12) describes the relational nature of tapu as, “*...a complex institution having two major facets: a major cohesive force in Māori life because every person was regarded as being tapu or sacred; and each life was a sacred gift which linked a person to the ancestor*”.

In practice, Fletcher (2007) suggests a good deal of Māori ritual seems to focus on tapu-removal practices, which makes it possible for participants, objects, or spaces imbued with tapu, to return to ordinary life after sacred activities.

Below is a brief overview of three key concepts and practices that literature frequently relates to wairua. Although there are many other connected concepts, we selected whakapapa, mana and tikanga (method, formality) as they foreground our findings.

## *Whakapapa*

Whakapapa is understood as geographical, ancestral and kinship relationships, but the concept has greater depth and connects Māori across time and space. Winiata, (2002) describes whakapapa as a method of understanding and the foundation of a Māori worldview. As well as describing relationships to people living and passed, whakapapa can provide connections between the tangible and intangible in physical and spiritual worlds. Denzin, Lincoln and Smith (2008, p.9) suggest that whakapapa, “...turns the universe into a moral space where all things great and small are interconnected, including science and research.”

Whakapapa is a ‘fundamental attribute and gift of birth’ (Mead, 2003, pp.42-43). When recited, connections are reaffirmed and honoured, contributing to their continuity. Edwards (2009, p.30) argues the need to understand connections with animate and inanimate entities and ‘the importance for the maintenance, enhancement and advancement of these enduring relationships for wellbeing...’.

## *Mana*

Māori concepts such as mauri (essence) tapu, noa (just), wairua and mana have been of western scholarly interest since the first Europeans encountered Pacific people (Noyes, 2018). While there has been much academic writing exploring, defining, describing and discussing mana (Noyes, 2018), the explanations provided by non-Māori seem to us, at times, to be lacking in richness and meaning.

Mana may appear to non-Māori writers to be easier to understand. For example, Patterson (2000) claims the meaning of mana is more straightforward than whakapapa, mauri or tapu. In essence, Marshall (2011, p.71) described mana as, “...an indigenous ontology based upon notions of reciprocity, kinship, and love between gods, human beings, and the land”.

Barlow (1991, p.61) claims mana is sourced from within the spiritual realm and suggests ‘it is the enduring, indestructible power of the gods. It is the sacred fire that is without beginning and without end.’ Similarly, Marsden (2003, p.138) explained “*mana as spiritual authority and power rather than a purely psychic and natural force of ihi (essential force)*”.

Mana can, however, influence many physical aspects of life, including human behaviour and/or emotions. Tomlinson and Tengan (2016, p.5) describe mana as manifesting as a physical force,

*“...mana...a power or influence, not physical, and in a way, supernatural... it shows itself in physical force, or in any kind of power or excellence which a man (sic) possesses...mana is not fixed in anything, and can be conveyed in almost anything...but spirits, whether disembodied souls or supernatural beings, have it, and can impart it; and it essentially belongs to personal beings to originate it...”*

Likewise, Patterson (2000) posits it is related or interconnected to all things, both animate and inanimate, but requires understandings of relationships between the past, the present and the relations held among groups of objects or people. Webber (2008) goes further and explains that mana is a component of culture that can be understood as having four subtypes; “*mana atua, (supernormal qualities in both inanimate and animate); mana tupuna, (descent from ancestors); mana whenua (authority or ownership over land), and mana tangata (derived through sheer personality, leadership or achievement)*” (pp. 285-290).

Patterson (2000, p.233) grapples with the tangible and intangible understandings of mana, stating,

*“If we think of mana as a thing or a substance, then it is a mystery how it can come into being at all. Hence, perhaps, the appeal of mysterious beings – atua or*

*gods – to account for its presence. But if we see mana not as a substance but as a feature of a type of relationship or fellowship, then the mystery disappears...”*

Taking the relational and social aspects of mana into worldly interactions, George (2018, p.386) suggests a way of making sense of mana, *“when mana is studied in terms that are identified with features of waking consciousness, such as normal social categories and relationships, concepts and beliefs, then what is observed is also regarded as being part of the ‘real’ world”*.

### *Tikanga*

Broadly tikanga provide and guide protocols, formalities and ritualistic processes. Tikanga are ways of doing what is right in a given context while being cognisant of Māori values, beliefs, traditions and customs that inculcate and embrace everything (Pere & Barnes, 2009; Pere, 1991).

Tikanga is applied to research as a broader and deeper way of operating ethically (Moewaka Barnes, Borell, Edwards, & McCreanor, 2009). Gilgen (1991, p.51) refers to the paramount importance of researchers ‘building a working relationship’ with participants. Pere (2006) argues trust is the basis of these relationships and trust is centred in tikanga.

Links and spiritual connections are continuously reaffirmed through many tikanga practices (Cheung, 2008). Mihi (greeting) and pepeha (introduction), the greetings and narratives that identify and place Māori within time, place and space, reference wairua and are commonly practised in everyday situations. Within these everyday interactions Māori continuously refer to spiritual links that connect the past with the present and people with places, ancestors and each other.

While wairua is central, protocols and formalities whereby tikanga is enacted may vary from whānau to whānau, hapu to hapu or iwi to iwi; for example Nikora et al., (2010) describe

differences in tangihanga processes. Furthermore, the name of an event may change but the protocols and formalities of each largely remain constant across events and circumstances. This is evident by the ritualistic processes and practices of pōwhiri (welcome) including similar elements, such as karakia, mihi (to greet, pay tribute, thank), whaikōrero (speech), waiata and koha (gift, present) (McClintock, 2010; Nikora et al., 2010). While each has a specific purpose, there are broader functions that all contribute to. As Durie (2001, p.84) explains, “*while a karakia may have a very specific and narrow application... the wider purpose is to create a sense of unity – at one with the ancestors, at one with the environment and at one with the spiritual powers*”.

As described above, wairua is integral to and interconnected with key Māori concepts. We argue that wairua is therefore evident in, and important to, everyday life, rather than something pre-eminent or apart.

Our study explored wairua within key national days in Aotearoa New Zealand. We provide a brief background to one of these days - Anzac Day - followed by our approach to wairua and research, which is then applied to an analysis of data from two Anzac Day participants.

## Anzac Day

Anzac Day is a national holiday and commemoration day observed on the 25<sup>th</sup> April each year in Aotearoa and Australia, although other countries including Turkey and Britain also hold events. On this day, hundreds of thousands of people gather at dawn ceremonies and participate in services and other events, including parades.

Originally held to honour members of the Australian and New Zealand Army Corp who served in the Gallipoli Campaign in World War One (1914-1918), Anzac Day is now a broader event, well known to most New Zealanders. Robinson (2010, p.85), documenting changing meanings and attendance, describes how the day came to commemorate “*the dead*

*and returned of all wars, with at least one writer arguing that Anzac Day would not endure if the focus was exclusively on Gallipoli”.*

## Te Ope Tuatahi: The first contingent

In WWI, over two thousand Māori participated in the Great War as part of the Māori Contingent and the New Zealand Pioneer Battalion (Walker, 2012). O’Connor (1967) suggests, while Māori could volunteer for the Expeditionary Force it was not intended to send a separate Native Contingent. According to Pugsley (1995, p.9), the New Zealand Pioneer Battalion was a mix of both Māori and Pākehā (English, foreign, European, non-Māori) who provided the labour force of the New Zealand Division, *“laying railways and building bridges and trenches in the battle zone”*. Pugsley goes on to say *“the term pioneers has sometimes been taken to mean second-class soldiers”*. However they were perceived, O’Connor (1967) documents they were an essential part of the New Zealand Division fighting efforts.

The first Māori Battalion in WWI was called the Native Expeditionary Force, although this soon changed and they became known as the first Māori Contingent (Fletcher, 2014). They were *‘...the first native race to offer service abroad with the exception of the men of India who were already soldiers’* (Cowan, 2011, p.25). This illustrates a particular racialised use of ‘native’, designating non-white members of the Commonwealth.

Walker (2012, p.1) describes how

*‘over two thousand Māori participated in the great war and when the Maori Contingent sailed for war in early February 1915, they did so as men of Tumatauenga (god of war and humans). On their caps and tunic collars the men wore their bronze unit badge: a taiaha (wooden thrusting spear) and tewhatewha (long-handled weapon with an axe-shaped blade) crossed through a crown and encircled by the words ‘Te*

*Hokowhitu a Tu' (Māori Battalion). The motto has many layers of meaning, but roughly translates as 'the fighting sons of Tumatauenga'.*

The contingent consisted of officers and other ranks drawn from surplus of New Zealand Mounted Rifles Brigade. Māori were junior officers or rank and file, under senior ranking Pākehā (O'Connor, 1967). Intended as defence troops, they were at Gallipoli where they suffered heavy casualties. They reformed as the Pioneer Battalion in a supporting role; however, they continued to suffer losses, particularly in France. In 1917, reinforcements saw their numbers increasing and they became the New Zealand (Māori) Pioneer Battalion with the original badge restored.

In the Second World War (WWII) Māori again served throughout the various forces. In 1939, the formation of an all-Māori unit, the 28<sup>th</sup> (Māori) Battalion was a significant event. Today their fame continues through books, film, song and other means (see Fletcher, 2014; Moon, 2010; Soutar, 2014)

### The 28th (Māori) Battalion formation

In the months leading up to Britain's September 1939 declaration of war against Germany, Sir Apirana Ngata and other prominent Māori Ministers of Parliament advocated for an all Māori military unit following the precedent of the Māori Pioneer Battalion of the First World War (Cody, 1956).

Intended as a frontline infantry unit, it took until October for the New Zealand Government to agree to recruit Māori for explicit service as combatant troops (28th Māori Battalion, no date-b). While the ranks consisted of Māori with 'tribal' leaders, the New Zealand Government appointed Pākehā officers to key positions within the battalion under the overall leadership of Pākehā WWI veteran George Dittmer (see Moon, 2010; O'Connor, 1967).

Moon (2010, p.26) writes, "*With all the enormous goodwill shown by Māori...for*

*involvement in the common cause, this demand was simply unpalatable...hui were held to make known their displeasure at the official snub of Māori equality with Pākehā’.*

The protest resulted in two Māori men recruited as officers, but later in the war, several Māori officers commanded the battalion.

Whānau, whakapapa and Māori values not only influenced the decision to enlist, but also had an impact during battle. Multiple members of one whānau went to war, with some enlisting below the official age and without the consent of parents (Wilson, 2008).

#### *Motivations, hopes and aspirations*

Gardiner (2009) states that some iwi Māori were quick to proclaim their support, willingly offering another generation of young Māori to fight in a European war. Moon (2010) claims the reasons or motives for men enlisting varied considerably. The ideals of self-sacrifice, personal service and readiness for war would likely be important to most New Zealanders of this period (28th Māori Battalion, no date-a), however some writers (for example Moon, 2010; O’Connor, 2012) describe, among other motivations, the desire for shared adventure, travel and escape from the routines of life.

Reasons of pride for many Māori soldiers include ‘maintaining the mana or status of the family, the hapu and the iwi’ rather than patriotic duty (Gardiner, 2009, p.29) and the opportunity to make their mana felt in the way that their forefathers had in the First World War and other wars (Moon, 2010) are also given as particularly important motivators for Māori. As Soutar (2014, p.29) describes, “...because they were of a society that expected its men, as responsible citizens, to do their duty – not in anticipation of some reward, but because, in 1840, their tupuna had signed up to it...”

However, there is also evidence of some promised or hoped for dividend in recognition of the contribution and roles that Māori made. O’Connor (2012, p.20) cites one enlistee’s

understanding of this, “*Sir Apirana Ngata told us we may lose many of our future leaders by going to war, but we would gain the respect of our Pākehā brothers*”.

In his 1943 booklet, *The Price of Citizenship*, Ngata invokes military service as a claim to citizenship and recognition (Sheffield & Riseman, 2019, p, 89).

*“Has he [the Maori soldier] proved a claim to be an asset to his country? If so, he asks to be dealt with as such. An asset discovered in the crucible of war should have a value in the coming peace. The men of the New Zealand Division have seen it below the brown skins of their Maori comrades. Have the civilians of New Zealand, men and women, fully realised the implication of the joint participation of Pakeha and Maori in the last and greatest demonstration of the highest citizenship?”*

Echoing this, Wilson (2008) describes the high price paid by Māori and, “*the lack of recognition, responsibility and participation in governance felt by Māori leaders in peacetime. As one leader argues ‘took full part in a war but haven't yet been able to take full part in peace,*” (p, 92)

As a source of intergenerational pride, Soutar (2014, p, 7) writes that the 28<sup>th</sup> (Māori) Battalion gained and today maintains, “*...reputation as brave fearless men of immense courage and created within ranks an enduring sense of pride...they are the stuff of legend yet the achievements of yesteryear remain just as relevant and valid for Māori today.*’

Soutar (2014, p, 375) describes not only pride but also grief as presently felt emotions, claiming the 28<sup>th</sup> (Māori)...

*“have passed to their next generations a priceless heritage and an undying legacy. At one level this embodies the immense sacrifice symbolised in the posthumous*

*Victoria Cross won by Moana Ngarimu; at another, the wrenching emotions endured in moments of utter loneliness and suffering by a grieving widow or mother”.*

The battalion are also, arguably, a powerful example of Māori faith in unrealised, or only partly realised, societal justice and promise. This commentary provides some contextual understanding of Anzac Day and the place of the 28<sup>th</sup> (Māori) Battalion and its predecessors, as a backdrop to approaching wairua and felt responses.

### Developing a wairua approach to research

Although seen as an important time to reflect on certain histories, Anzac Day commemorations are not solely about the past. Here we do not go into the various contentions surrounding what is acceptable in remembering and reflecting as individuals, groups and nation, but focus on the Anzac Day experiences of two participants in our study. Our key interest is in Māori meaning making and its implications for societal relationships, given the ongoing presence of the 28<sup>th</sup> (Māori) Battalion in Māori life.

This study sits within a major research programme “Affect, Wairua and National Days” (National Days project) funded by the Marsden Fund of the Royal Society. The overall objective of the wider project was to explore the affective politics evoked as people relate, engage and grapple with cultural observance and charged acts of remembrance in Aotearoa New Zealand. Methodologically this paper follows from and extends AWA, which was developed within the National Days project to centre wairua in research (Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017).

The research team developed AWA, drawing on literature and face to face interviews. We developed and applied eight domains to the analysis of data to explore wairua as a central and salient concept within research. The aim was to provide a practical way of interpreting and giving voice to the rich concept of wairua, without reducing or defining it.

The domains are fluid, overlapping and include (but are not limited to):

- *Tupuna (ancestors), people who have gone before, particularly one's own relations; honouring, feeling connected to them, their actions, intentions and legacies*
- *Future generations, seeing oneself as having obligations to children, grandchildren and generations to come*
- *Connection to place, people, events and issues; knowledge and sense of belonging*
- *Connection to self; a sense of wholeness*
- *Connection to something wider than oneself; for example, connection to tupuna, atua/gods/spirits*
- *Tikanga whakaaro: Barlow (1991) uses this as the title of his book along with the English subtitle Key concepts in Māori culture. Here we use it as a connection to, and understanding of, Māori ways of doing things and the obligations, relationships and accountabilities this entails*
- *Practising wairua; the processes involved in rituals and events using particular customs and protocols*
- *The so-called supernatural or uncanny; although rarely written about in the literature and one aspect key informants were reluctant to talk about, this is one of the spheres people may more commonly associate with wairua, but it is only one aspect (Moewaka Barnes, 2016).*

In this paper we develop and refine the approach by further applying it to data collected as part of the National Days project.

## Methods

The National Days database consists of key informant and focus group interviews, media and web items and haerenga kitea (a form of go along visual recording). The team used purposive

sampling to recruit and conduct haerenga kitea resulting in a total of 34 records (18 for Waitangi and 16 for Anzac) from 2013–2015. The study consisted of Māori and non-Māori (a range of ethnicities) participants from throughout Aotearoa New Zealand, aged from 16 to over 70 years of age. Interviews and focus group discussions were transcribed verbatim and haerenga kitea were viewed and logged. This involved going through the footage and noting visual and audio content against time codes so that specific passages could be readily located for more in-depth analysis.

In most cases, Māori team members gathered data from Māori and non-Māori team members gathered data from non-Māori; there were some mixed group participants. Ethical approval was obtained from Massey University Human Ethics Committee with participant consent sought after discussion of the project and methods and prior to data collection commencing. Interviewees were offered copies of transcripts to edit or delete information and haerenga kitea participants were given copies of their go-along after checking if any deletions were required.

Here we analyse selected excerpts from data recorded from two older Māori male participants (around 60 and 70 years of age) in terms of the domains mentioned above; both haerenga kitea took around one and a half hours. The first took place in 2014 when the researcher videoed a participant attending an Anzac Day parade in a city suburb. The second was recorded in a rural town on Anzac Day 2015. As well as logged notes about audio and visual elements, the excerpts were viewed multiple times, paying attention to facial expressions, body language, and other cues.

The two participants, on the face of it, engage quite differently with Anzac Day. One attends a community event and marches while the other stays at home, initially describing the day as a holiday. We present excerpts then examine them in-depth, looking discursively and visually at the data to explore wairua and how it plays out in participant experiences and meanings.

## Results

### *Taita RSA ANZAC Parade 2014 – excerpt one*

This excerpt is drawn from the haerenga kitea, conducted around a parade organised and hosted by the Taita (a suburb in Wellington) Returned Servicemen Association (RSA). Taita is a small suburb 20 minutes north-east of Wellington CBD. This community has a small shopping centre and the local RSA sits a little north of this. A large number of community members attend the Taita Anzac Day parade each year.

Anzac Day morning, 25th April 2014, is cold and overcast. A chilly wind blows every now and then, and the threat of rain is ever-present which is not unusual for Wellington at this time of the year. Toni (first author) joins the parade as everyone is gathering. Unlike many other Anzac Day morning services this parade is held at approximately 11am, rather than dawn.

A Māori man (pseudonym “Tawa”) around seventy, dressed in a suit with medals, a tie and shiny black shoes moves to the back of the RSA building as the procession is about to begin. In Aotearoa the Order of Wear enables family members to wear the medals of their deceased on the right side of the chest for national memorial days (Watt, 2016). He has a walking stick to aid him as he prepares to march alongside the returned service men and women. The procession takes place and ends on the forecourt of the RSA building. Karakia conducted in te reo (Māori language) opens the formalities of the event, followed by the local school’s kapa haka (Māori culture) group (consisting of Māori and Pacific students) singing waiata (Māori songs).

The cold wind dies away as the reciting of The Ode of Remembrance is spoken. The Ode is a poem ‘For the Fallen’ published in 1914, and is used in commemorative services (Watt, 2016). The minute of silence begins and quiet falls across all who are

gathered; expressions are sombre, and all heads are bowed. One elderly man in the background has tears rolling down his face; Tawa stands with a neutral expression.

While waiting for the parade to begin, the following dialogue takes place:

*Interviewer: Do you do this every year?*

*Tawa: What march in the Anzac parade? Yes, every year.*

*Interviewer: What war did you service in?*

*Tawa: I did not service in anything*

*Interviewer: Is it for your whānau?*

*Tawa: Yeah – my father*

*Interviewer: Was he in the 28<sup>th</sup> (Māori) battalion?*

*Tawa: Yeah*

Tawa has never been in the armed forces or participated in ‘war’ yet, at the same time each year, he dresses in his suit, tie, shines his shoes, and dons medals and marches in the Taita Anzac parade. While his participation in this event could be for many reasons, he smiles and pushes his chest forward and, although he has a row of medals, singles out the 28<sup>th</sup> (Māori) Battalion’s insignia, pointing to it as he says:

*“...I do this for my father...he served in the 28<sup>th</sup> (Māori) Battalion”*

He stops and he reads from the insignia, “*Te Uri o Rua Tekau ma Waru*”, (*The descendent of the 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion*)

*Anzac Day Wairoa – excerpt two*

The interview for excerpt two took place in Wairoa, a small east coast township just south of Turanganui-a-kiwa (Gisborne). Approximately 4,500 people live in Wairoa and Māori make up the largest proportion.

It is late in the morning of the 25<sup>th</sup> April 2015. The participant is a Māori man (pseudonym 'Rata') around sixty years old, who introduces himself with a smile. The warm sun is streaming through the front window as we sit and talk. He was born and raised in Wairoa; he is a teacher at a primary school and a minister of the Rātana faith. Although he does not celebrate or participate in national commemoration day parades, he says he likes Anzac Day and Waitangi Day and views these as holidays.

We began discussing his beliefs about wairua and possible connections between wairua and Anzac Day. As he talks his expression is animated and he emphasises points with his hand movements. In his responses, Rata does not mention the 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion, but he does focus on their contributions and lack of recognition.

*Interviewer: As it is Anzac Day today do you think that Anzac Day has snippets of wairua because of the mauri of the day?*

*Rata: (he pauses and with a look of concentration replies) yeah it's a sad time because we lost all our people to somebody else's war...it highlighted all the skulduggery done by (Sir Apirana) Ngata and those Labour seats that signed to let our people go over there and fight; even then our people wouldn't listen to it all.*

*The sad thing is that they were promised things when they came back but the only people who got land when they came back was the Pākehā ones and a few Māori who were Captains and Colonels and all that. I think that is absolutely*

*sad. (Tapping the seat arm) They went over there on a promise to die and when they got over they were said to do some of the suicide missions – you know – there was no love or care for those people at all for their lives and what they stand for (he taps the armchair with his finger). The only thing, the ultimate goal for those people was to die for ‘their’ cause and not so much for our own.*

*Apirana Ngata lied (‘lied’ is drawn out and accompanied by a frown) about it that we went to war for our citizenship; ‘heck’ the Treaty of Waitangi says that’s where our citizenship is; we belong to this land (taps the seat and then points ahead); if you go before that to the signing of the confederated tribes of New Zealand when they signed their document, (raises voice and points) they (Pākehā) acknowledge that we are a Māori race – that’s where the spirituality of it all lies. That’s where the Treaty of Waitangi: I’m saying it’s a kikokiko (the physical element of human beings) thing because it allows us to connect back to who we really are (he points and taps the armrest to accentuate his point). The spirituality of it all lies within the words and in the kupu (words).*

## Discussion – Applying A Wairua Approach

The 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion is significant in Māori history, creating a legacy that is a source of great pride among many Māori today. Anzac Day provides an opportunity to remember or commemorate the efforts of all service men and women across Aotearoa; pride and other emotions become focussed and amplified on this day. For Tawa, the first participant, this is the case. Although wairua and emotions were not explicitly discussed with him, they are demonstrated in his actions and responses. Through his vocal and facial expressions (for example, changing tempo; raised voice and frowning) and gestures (frequent tapping;

reaching arms and spreading arms) pride, passion and conviction are evident as he talks. In contrast, Rata makes reference to the day being ‘only a holiday’ suggesting disinterest in the kaupapa. However, his actions and talk indicate felt connections and a strong emotional grounding in his belief that the 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion experienced an injustice.

When wairua is looked for as a feature of experience and meaning in everyday life it can provide greater depth to how we understand experiences. One relatively straightforward observation is that Tawa has considerable pride in his father being a member of the 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion. His immaculate attire signifies respect for his father and other 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion members. The mana of this event appears to hold significant meaning, apparent in the effort given to his personal appearance. He attends every year, wearing his father’s medals; they are a gift, a taonga that will be passed to generations that follow. Thus, Tawa participates in the ritual and establishes his personal tikanga whakaaro. In these ways we see his connection to something wider than himself, his pride in his whakapapa through connections to the Battalion and his father.

While it is not as evident that Rata, the second participant, has a similar motivation to observe the mana of the Battalion, his talk pays respect to 28<sup>th</sup> Māori Battalion. Referring to ‘suicide missions’ he states, ‘there was no love or care for those people at all for their lives and what they stand for’, suggesting their mana was not respected and acknowledged. Although initially presenting the day as a holiday, his responses suggest there may be more active decision making in his non-participation.

Whakapapa, connections to tupuna, events and issues and belonging are also apparent in both experiences. For Tawa, this is evident in joining the parade ‘for my father’ and wearing medals. A sense of connection to something wider than oneself is evident through attending the parade every year - experiencing and participating in the day and its rituals through collective action. Rata appears to deliberately stay away from public events associated with

Anzac Day. Like Tawa, he articulates a strong sense of collective Māori identity. He shares in the pain and injustices by using ‘we’ and ‘our’ and argues that Māori citizenship does not lie in going to war. He talks about the ways tikanga was not upheld, referring to ‘skulduggery’ and broken promises. This goes against Pere’s (2006) emphasis on trust in relation to tikanga and seems to play a significant role in his decision to not participate in commemorations. He specifically mentions spirituality, referring to belonging to the land, the confederated tribes and the Treaty of Waitangi, which ‘connect (us) back to who we really are’.

In these excerpts, deeply felt connections with tupuna add to the participants’ experiences and meaning making around Anzac Day. Connections to place, people, atua, events and issues are couched in a sense of belonging as Māori. Both acknowledge mana and, in Rata’s excerpt, betrayal of that mana, giving voice to how historical trauma is felt (Walters et al., 2011). These domains of wairua move us beyond seeing their experiences as simply involving commemoration (or apparent disinterest), grief and pride in sacrifice, but place the participants in deeply felt relationships with the day and the feelings it brings to the fore.

## Conclusion

The experiences of wairua have been considered a ‘phenomenon’ developed and explained through a Māori worldview. Wairua is considered central to Māori identity and meaning making. It escapes the limitations of time and space and should not be constrained to just culture or ritualistic expressions of culture. However, wairua is rarely employed as a central lens in research, but is often set aside as important, but unexplored.

By explicitly looking for wairua, we have attempted to capture deeper meanings for participants in our studies as they experience national days. In this paper applying A Wairua Approach exposes connections to tupuna, a sense of something wider than the individual and

connections and belonging that provide greater insights into the deeply felt emotions and meaning making of our two participants.

What is interesting is that the connections have many similarities regardless of the participant's view of what the day represents. Although Tawa attended a parade every year and Rata considered the day a holiday, both are passionately engaged. Both express respect and acknowledgement of the mana of 28<sup>th</sup> Battalion, although they are couched and enacted quite differently. Wairua provides a unifying lens that evokes collective memories and pride in being Māori. Feeling these connections through whakapapa and experience is central to both and imbues their experiences of the day and the ways they practice and see tikanga.

Despite differences, A Wairua Approach provided an avenue to investigate and highlight the multiple connections that wairua represents. Exploring each excerpt in-depth, we were able to see multiple domains expressed by our participants. We argue that the approach allows us to see Māori experiences of Anzac Day as having particular pains and forms of commemoration, where tupuna are present and at the fore and not the objects of remembrance. The tensions raised by Rata were shared by others in our study. Through expressions of deeply felt emotions, the participants were not only recalling past events, but were also actively engaged in articulating unbroken connections with present and past trauma, grief and injustices. Although national days may, in some ways, unite people, they are not 'felt' or enacted in the same ways. For these participants, being Māori profoundly shaped their experiences and the forms that connection and remembrance took. Mourning lives lost was set alongside expressions of anger and critiques about the purpose of WWI, injustice and the place of Māori in Aotearoa. Anzac Day is not without tensions for many Māori – we honour our tupuna and feel collective grief, not only for their lives but for ours.

## Chapter 8 Conclusions

*Whakataukī*

*Mā te whiritahi, ka whakatutuki ai nga pumanawa ā tangata*

*Together weaving the realisation of potential!*

This chapter provides an overview of the research as a whole and offers concluding comments. It also offers reflections on my research journey and my thoughts about the limitations of the thesis and where research in the domain of wairua could go in the future.

### Key messages from the study

There are many key messages from this study that have the potential to contribute to understandings about Māori concepts and experiences in general and the importance of acknowledging and including wairua across domains of everyday life.

The purpose of this thesis was to explore wairua and investigate how wairua might provide an analytical approach to understanding emotions and feelings evoked by Waitangi Day and Anzac Day. I wanted to look at opportunities and find pathways to centralise wairua within research. As part of this, understanding how wairua is written about or previously included in research was a necessary process to undertake. This allowed me to identify how it was described and how other authors have discussed and included wairua in their studies. This was the first step in identifying something of what wairua might contain and understanding its importance to Māori.

Earlier descriptions of wairua have influenced how it is understood, interpreted and in which forums it is shared. It could be argued that, over time, research has stretched the narrow views of wairua provided through a non-Māori lens. The inclusion of wairua in contemporary

literature or research makes an interesting contrast, because it is described and given meaning through Māori led reflections, understandings and research.

A key message from this research is how multi-faceted wairua is; it is key to many concepts but is rarely explicitly discussed or included as an analytical lens. Māori led research makes it evident that there is no one meaning for wairua. Based on the findings of this research, and in our wider project we could conclude that each person is an expert on their wairua and what they believe it to be.

This study highlights an ongoing debate about inclusion vs exclusion of wairua in the academy. It takes courage to include wairua in open public forums, and in doing so, the challenges and barriers that have long surrounded the meaning of wairua begin to break down. As Māori scholars, we have an opportunity to undertake research that explores its meaning and the importance wairua has in our lives; discussions non-Māori should not lead or have in isolation from Māori.

## Wairua and colonisation

Prior to colonisation, the purpose and function of wairua within Māori lives was unquestioned and accepted as a ‘normal’ practice. However, overtime and through a number of processes, wairua was denigrated and altered to the point of being relegated to mythology and poetic metaphorical language (see Kingi 2002). This study highlighted that, while participants express clear views of wairua, non-Māori interpretations of our concepts have led to edited voices and cautiously selected forums in which we choose to share our understandings and experiences of wairua. Like many Māori concepts, non-Māori misinterpretations dominate meanings and our colonised voices now place what was once ordinary and accepted into categories provided for us by the coloniser, creating whakamā, an underlying shame of practicing or discussing what was accepted as an everyday experience.

Since Māori make up less than 20 percent of the total population of Aotearoa, majority framings may consider that wairua is unimportant or that its inclusion is unnecessary across our systems, regardless of the potential it has to positively change outcomes for whānau Māori. However, the Māori population proportion is growing steadily and quality in care and education are fundamental rights afforded to the total population of Aotearoa and not just to non-Māori. Regardless of our proportion of society, Te Tiriti o Waitangi and the promise of citizenship that Sir Apirana Ngata made to our forebears in WWII gives us the right to assert our concepts as taonga and to act accordingly.

While this study brings wairua to the forefront of research, providing a practical pathway and method to explore wairua in data, courageous efforts may be required to re-legitimize our voices and centralise, not only in research but also within the frameworks or approaches that lead the way to improved wellbeing for all whānau Māori.

## Exploring wairua

A reasonable body of literature describes Māori worldviews and provides a backdrop or grounding for studies. However, wairua is not widely employed as an explicit approach in analysis and interpretation. Centring wairua has the potential to challenge our understandings of what is significant and valid in research (Aluli-Meyer, 2006; Moewaka Barnes et al., 2017). By unashamedly daring to discuss and examine wairua in research we can reclaim, rediscover, and reimagine what it is to be Māori. The literature and data covered in this study highlights that wairua is not confined only to ritualistic components of culture, but deeply embedded within beliefs, values, and a Māori worldview.

Overall, the literature highlights many facets that have contributed to how wairua is viewed or the role it plays in one's life. Wairua was deemed multidimensional and embedded in all aspects of being. Knowledge narratives, including creation stories along with practices and

concepts were used in the literature to illustrate and understand its function. There are many practices where wairua is described as visible and acknowledged as providing multiple connections across people, time and space.

Authors of academic works are generally considered ‘experts’ on chosen topics, but their knowledge is often obscured by complex or technical language. Equally however, when we constrain and limit the inclusion of our everyday practices, or suppress what we share in the academic realm, this knowledge can go underground and may become seen as unimportant. Exploring everyday manifestations of wairua and illustrating how fundamental wairua is to Māori existence and meaning making may contribute to greater understanding and improve Māori wellbeing. When we leave spirituality at the door, we should contemplate, in the first instance, the disservice we do to ourselves and our communities. If we reclaim wairua in our everyday experiences, we can each be the experts on our particular experiences of wairua.

We can develop our approaches to centre wairua as an ordinary, everyday experience.

Using national commemoration days to identify the role wairua plays within ordinary, everyday situations and the impetus people attach to the meaning of it, gave me the opportunity to investigate specific situations, identifying and aligning elements of wairua to behaviour and how people talk about it without considered effort.

For the participants in this research, wairua was not considered a special feature that related purely to religion or spirituality but was embedded within their worldview and woven through all that surrounded them.

### Centering wairua

I have always been passionate about contributing to improving whānau wellbeing, so, it is never an easy experience to be Māori and read statistics that show a high percentage of your people living in poverty with many dying from treatable diseases and significant numbers of

tamariki leaving school with little or no formal qualification. The most damning of all research findings or statistics is knowing that, in contemporary society, many Māori experience racism and discrimination from an early age and during the most vulnerable times of their lives - when they are unwell (see HQSC, 2019).

So, as a visibly Māori woman who works in sectors that can make a difference, I look for every opportunity to turn the tide in support of much needed system change. I continue to work for the Health Quality and Safety Commission because I believe this organisation has the potential to instigate and lead system changes that could build pathways to improve health inequities that whānau experience across the entire health sector. For example, the Commission claimed that quality care for whānau Māori needs to reflect mātauranga and that understanding quality improvement from within te āo Māori is the right approach to address the challenges and barriers that affect Māori wellbeing.

My work provided me with an opportunity to see the potential of centring wairua in our approaches to wellbeing on a strategic and practical level. One of the deliverables for our team (in the Commission, i.e., Ahuahu Kaunuku) was developing a Te Āo Māori Framework (see appendix 2). The overall intent of the framework is to contribute to improving the quality of care that whānau Māori receive in the health sector. While there were many elements that informed the thinking behind the development, throughout the process, my question was, ‘what is the point of difference between this, and existing Māori frameworks, such as Te Whare Tapa Whā, Te Wheke and Te Pae Mahutonga’. These were operational, on-the-ground, frameworks that outlined the holistic nature of hauora and provided descriptions of each component considered necessary to improve and maintain wellbeing. However, despite the fact that these frameworks have been implemented for a few decades, Māori still experience high levels of disparities in health, economic status, and poorer educational outcomes - so what was missing?

Durie (2001, p, 61), has argued

*“the missing link in health services has been identified by many Māori as taha wairua - that is, a spiritual dimension...and an overemphasis on physical aspects of illness has been associated with corresponding inattention to emotional, cultural, and spiritual factors”.*

While Durie identified this element as a critical gap in health services twenty years ago, significant disparities and inequities still exist. One reason may be that the system failed to recognise and implement his and others’ recommendations in this respect. Although, how to implement this is a challenge.

In the Commission’s work, something was also missing, and our team’s role was to find a point of difference and provide a pathway for non-Māori to address the challenges and barriers which result in disparities for Māori. Through my research I knew and understood that wairua needs to be key in any framework aimed at supporting Māori, because our concepts should be at the forefront of services. I also knew this framework would use Te Tiriti o Waitangi as the foundation to provide the building blocks to address the inequity that exists. Moreover, Te Tiriti states that Māori have a right to Tino Rangatiratanga and, key to this and the retention of our taonga is the right to choose what is significant and treasured.

To achieve this kind of transformation it seemed important that the existing system and those who uphold and support it needed to learn and change. To make the most significant contribution to system change, it was decided the framework would sit across policy development, for all personnel, all services, and all programmes at both national and regional levels. It was also considered that there was an opportunity to use the framework to inform quality improvement and ethical standard reviews in health care.

In the development of the framework, we determined it was not the Commission's role to choose specific Māori concepts to inform service delivery, but to design a pathway that enabled iwi Māori to take a strategic position in the development of policies aimed at whānau Māori. Thus, the framework needed to be broad while including avenues for rangatiratanga. It needed to be strategic and sit at a level that identified elements that would support system changes, which would then filter down into service delivery.

### Wairua and the Commission's Framework

There are four broad elements in this framework, and wairua is one of them; positioned in the centre; allowing culture to inform engagement, strategic direction, and operational practice. Based on the current research, I understood that wairua was not only a part of the 'spiritual' realm but critical to the function of culture and meaning making for whānau Māori. While this was not a new idea, I believe there were two fundamental differences between this and existing Māori frameworks. The first, was that other frameworks were prescriptive, but did not offer enough information to operationalise specific Māori concepts across western systems (such as health). The second is the implementation process; where the framework will be positioned, how it will be socialised across the sector and who needs to sit at the table when strategic direction is required.

Our team considered a range of risks, barriers and challenges to implement the Commission's Te Āo Māori framework, but I am not sure how it will be received or whether or not it is the right pathway to support non-Māori to provide better care to our whānau. However, the pilot implementation process will allow us the opportunity to modify and improve the framework and implementation process, addressing some of my concerns.

As highlighted in Niania et al. (2016), it is possible to use both Māori and non-Māori knowledge and methods as an intervention with positive outcomes for whānau. Their writings

illustrate equitable, power-sharing power relationships between Māori and non-Māori clinicians when considering the best pathway to undertake to deliver care. Collaboration was key in their approaches, resulting in the position that Māori knowledge has validity and there is a place for it in the health care system.

There has already been push back about the Te Ao Māori Framework; not from non-Māori providers, but Māori themselves. This has centred on concerns about giving our mātauranga away for non-Māori to critique and get wrong, once again. This echoes some of the challenges we received in explicitly attempting to address wairua in our research approach. Many Māori have also said that currently, they (non-Māori providers including the DHBs) are already obligated to embed and enact Te Tiriti and include cultural safety across their work, and those Māori are right! However, in response, whānau Māori do not just access kaupapa Māori services, but engage with services from a range of western providers and optimum services for Māori should go beyond cultural safety. As a Māori who works in a Crown agency, I am looking for avenues to support non-Māori to provide better services for whānau, which should be considered paramount.

As a result of my study, I know wairua is key to our wellbeing and, in leading the development of the Te Āo Māori framework, I know wairua can be centred and operationalised to lead and support much needed change across our nation.

## Reflecting on the research

### *Strengths*

As is always the case, there are many strengths and limitations associated with this research. One of the strengths of this study was making wairua ordinary and highlighting its validity in our knowledge and understandings.

This aligns with Durie's (2001) assertion that

*“by removing Māori concepts from the realm of the supernatural, and emphasizing their continuing importance even when a patient did not profess to subscribe to them, western trained health professionals were able to appreciate their significance and respect them” (p, 68).*

This study does exactly that. By moving wairua from being all about the supernatural realm, religion or spirituality and exploring it as a part of experience, I frame it as an everyday experience and something that is not to be feared or edited out of our discussions or research. While I did not realise this at the start or in the middle, I now know this is the outcome of my study – I guess that is what learning is about.

Being centred on the overall project, which explored affect and wairua in relation to national days was both a strength and a limitation. It provided a way of talking about wairua that was not direct and provided events around which to centre my exploration of wairua. As national days elicit a range of responses and emotions, this focus presented broad opportunities.

### *Limitations*

The project focus and/or time constraints presented some limitations to the participants and to the data collected.

One of the key limitations was around the number of people who actively participated in this study. As wairua is such a broad and encompassing topic and the dynamics of wairua change based on each person’s perceptions of their reality, this study could have included more perspectives. While the data collection was extended to include focus group discussion and a range of individual interviews, a number of questions were centred on national commemoration days, and most were completed in or around those events.

Another limitation of this study centres on what material could be used to present how wairua was included in literature. It may have been useful to include other sources (for example

karakia, pūrākau or moteatea) to inform a strength-based approach and demonstrate the power of Māori culture including the contributions of wairua. However, the purpose of this thesis was to look at how wairua is presented within academic research literature, which required a particular focus and limited the inclusion of other material.

### *Challenges - where to from here?*

The challenge of this research is it involves a change in mindset not just for non-Māori but for Māori. Non-Māori literature on wairua as spirituality or interpreted through a non-Māori lens dominates and to remove these along with the denigration of meaning requires a change in the way wairua is viewed. It will take more than just research to change this; wairua has been the ghost in the room too long. It is now time to centralise it in our research projects and openly discuss wairua in the analysis and interpretations of findings, to place it, where appropriate, at the forefront of our understandings so that correcting the injustices, misinterpretations and misunderstandings can begin.

We are all experts in our own wairua. This study explores wairua as central to who we are, seeking to frame wairua as ordinary, so that the whakamā that has long been attached to it, dissipates. The labels and categories are taken away, removing that whakamā, that shame. When wairua is openly expressed or discussed in any forum it opens possibilities for everyone.

I believe further research in this area is required to overcome the restrictions and denigration of wairua that has occurred over numerous lifetimes for Māori. Wairua needs to be the primary focus of studies so that avenues to share and act on that information is investigated and provided to both Māori and non-Māori. Wairua is not linear, but broad and encompassing, weaving together many concepts. It is key to who we are, how we identify and

describe ourselves. Most importantly, it brings together our past and present to feed and lead our future.

There are many elements of this research that can be extended further. For example, broadly, this study investigates wairua as a key component of being Māori, but little research addresses this. While, in more recent times, this is changing, further studies could extend on the idea and include wairua in the findings and analysis of research. This process may break down the barriers and resistance many people have and increase understandings about the importance of wairua across many spheres of human activity. However, while I think this is an essential pathway to grow knowledge and increase readily available information, I believe looking for avenues to operationalise wairua at levels that support improving whānau wellbeing across our country is also required. Furthermore, we could investigate how, through a wairua approach, Māori could sit in a true shared power relationship at strategic levels, within organisations that are designed to provide support for our whānau, demonstrating how this process would contribute to system change.

There are so many possibilities with understanding and discussing wairua in our everyday experiences. Imagine addressing institutionalised racism through something as simple as accepting wairua as a valid experience and providing pathways and information for non-Māori to implement that knowledge across their service delivery. In doing this we may see less disparity and increases in wellbeing for our whānau. This is something every person should strive to achieve.

### My final comments and thoughts

I have always believed that every situation is given to you to learn from. To learn confidence, strength, pain, suffering, happiness, love, and forgiveness, but it is up to you to absorb what was offered from those experiences. I have experienced some significant moments that have

changed my life and how I view the world today; this study was one of those moments, where the learning was phenomenal. I know, through the self-reflection that happened, this was a time to learn not only about the research or topic, but about myself and the strength and determination that can be mustered when needed. The greatest learning I gained from this journey was understanding and accepting the importance of including my culture in every practice, across that broad spectrum of life.

I think an unintended outcome of this journey was knowing just how effective colonisation was for Māori and understanding that research has reinforced that colonised glaze, through which many Māori understand some of our concepts. I have been told change is the most constant thing in this world, but it will take many generations to overcome the effects of colonisation.

As the end to this journey drew near, I sat and pondered. Did I just argue and explain an ordinary component of Māori culture, in the hope that it supports non-Māori learning about the need for wairua to be centralised in research and in all aspects that contribute to improving wellbeing? Maybe! But I truly hope this work makes a significant contribution to at least one person's understanding of the importance of wairua and that its inclusion is necessary to wellbeing.

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### Information Sheet

## National Commemoration Days and Wairua Information Sheet

### **Mihi:**

Tena koutou katoa. Nga mihi nui kia koutou katoa.

My name is **Te Raina Gunn** and I am currently a PhD student at Massey University. My study is part of a larger project investigating Affect, Wairua and National Commemoration days funded by the Marsden foundation of the Royal Society of New Zealand. The larger study looks at ways people experience important national events such as Waitangi day, ANZAC day, Matariki and New Year. I am interested in investigating what Wairua looks like in Waitangi day and ANZAC day.

There are two topics which will be discussed today. The first topic is national days, in particular ANZAC day and Waitangi Day. The second topic is wairua and how we as Māori believe it relates to national commemoration days.

### **Data management**

With your permission the discussion will be videotaped or tape recorded. If you don't agree to using either of these, someone will transcribe the group discussions and I will also take notes. All data collected from these discussions will be stored in a secure facility at the Whariki Research Group based in Auckland.

### **Participant's Rights**

You are under no obligation to participate. However, if you do you have the right to:

- Decline to answer any particular question;

- Ask for the recorder to be turned off at any time during the discussion;
- Withdraw from the study with one month of data collection;
- Ask any questions about the study at any time during participation;
- Provide information on the understanding that your name will not be used unless you give permission, and
- Be given access to a summary of the project findings when it is concluded.

If you have any questions about the project please feel free to contact me or the principal investigator:

***Te Raina Gunn***

Phone: [REDACTED]

Email: [REDACTED]

***Prof Helen Moewaka Barnes:***

Phone: 09 3666136

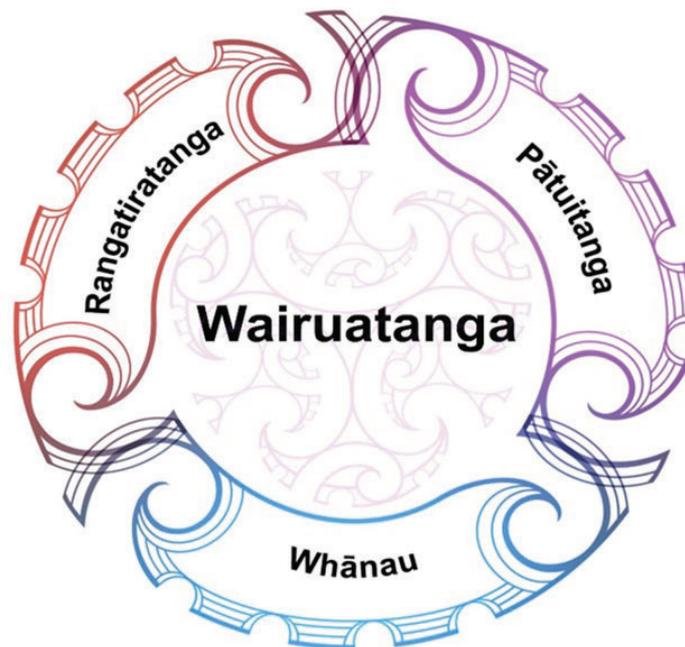
Email: [h.moewakabarnes@massey.ac.nz](mailto:h.moewakabarnes@massey.ac.nz)

If you have any concerns about the conduct of this research, please contact Dr Ralph Bathurst Chair of the Massey University Human Ethics Committee: phone 09 414 0800 ex 9570 email [humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz](mailto:humanethicsnorth@massey.ac.nz). I have included a list of suggested questions for you to review.

*Thank you for participating*



## Health Quality & Safety Commissions Te Ao Māori Framework



### *Te Ao Māori Framework Concepts*

#### **Wairuatanga**

The holistic nature of Māori health, links physical illness to emotional and spiritual wellbeing. Hence wairuatanga is in the middle position of the Framework which makes culture a central focus in the design of services. The Goal of Wairuatanga is to embed tikanga Māori and cultural safety into the health system.

#### **Pātuitanga**

Is about growing and fostering strong partnerships with Māori – this is fundamental to ensuring the right concepts are included in the design and delivery of services

#### **Whānau**

Whānau need and improved health outcomes for whānau are the drivers to why services are created and designed

#### **Rangatiratanga**

Is about the inclusion of Māori leadership in the decision-making processes when services are designed.

### *Te Ao Māori Framework's design*

Each of the outer sections have two Koru representing tapu and noa. The haehae lines bind each section together and they connect and interact with each other. The inside koru of each concept opens into wairuatanga, which allows wairuatanga to flow seamlessly throughout the entire framework. The outside koru opens into Te Ao Mārama. The pitau design on the edge of the outer sections represents new beginnings and is the interconnection between Te Ao Māori and Te Ao Mārama.

More information about the framework can be found:

<https://www.hqsc.govt.nz/resources/resource-library/te-ao-maori-framework/>

Statements of Contribution





