Ngā Pātai o te Rawakore: Six Questions for Tracing the Whakapapa of Poverty

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Whakapapa of Colonisation Series — Restoration

Abstract

This paper proposes six reflective questions for tracing the whakapapa of poverty in Māori lives: what did poverty teach you to *do*, to *hide*, to *carry*, to *become*, to *want*, and what would you *not give back* even if you could? The questions emerged from kaupapa Māori autoethnographic writing on a childhood of poverty in Aotearoa, within the wider Whakapapa of Colonisation series. Read through Te Poutama Ora (TPO), a nine-dimensional kaupapa Māori wellness framework, they form a sequence that moves from behaviour, through shame and transmission, into identity, desire and reclamation. The paper sets out how the questions were developed, what each surfaced, and how they function within TPO's healing architecture. It offers two named findings. The first is the *wound in abundance*: the poverty response persists, and often intensifies, once material need is met, because abundance removes the external reason for the behaviour while the internal reason remains. The second is the *Stain of Impoverished Living*: compulsive, protective behaviours organised around the fear of poverty's return, which take a different form in each person according to the specific deprivation or labour they carried. The paper distinguishes the wound, which can be named and metabolised, from the stain, which is what remains on the surface once the wound has closed. It argues that poverty, in a colonised context, functions as a teacher whose curriculum is transmitted through whakapapa, and that healing requires naming the teacher rather than shaming the student. It closes with guidance for use in practice, attention to safety, and a proposed approach to evaluation.

Keywords: whakapapa; poverty; colonisation; historical trauma; whakamā; wound in abundance; Stain of Impoverished Living; kaupapa Māori; autoethnography; Te Poutama Ora

1. Introduction

In a religious studies class, students were asked to consider rich and poor: how the divide grows, what it means, what should be done. For the author, the conversation would not hold. The language of the divide treated poverty as a condition to be observed from outside, a problem for policy, like weather in another country. It did not reach the poverty that had been lived from inside: the poverty that had shaped the hands, the face, the wanting, and that had been passed down before anyone in the room had a word for it.

That refusal became the starting point for this work. Rather than ask what poverty *is*, the writing began to ask what poverty *taught*. The shift is small in wording and large in consequence. It moves poverty from a statistic into a whakapapa: something with ancestors and descendants, with a line of transmission that can be traced and, once traced, loosened. It also moves the person from the position of the failed student to that of someone who learned, accurately and well, what the conditions required.

This paper sets out the six questions that emerged from that writing. It describes how they were developed, reports what each surfaced, and positions them within Te Poutama Ora (TPO) and the Whakapapa of Colonisation series. Its contribution is methodological and clinical. Methodologically, it offers a reflective sequence that treats lived poverty as a source of knowledge rather than a deficit to be measured. Clinically, it offers a tool that practitioners can use with whānau who carry poverty's lessons, and two named findings that the sequence brought into view and that are not well described elsewhere.

The paper is the eleventh in the Whakapapa of Colonisation series. Its companion, *Ngā Pātai o te Tāmitanga: Six Questions of Colonisation* (I'Anson, 2026g), asks the same questions of colonisation directly, and argues that poverty is one lesson within colonisation's wider curriculum. The two are designed to be read together.

2. Positioning the work

2.1 Poverty as colonial inheritance

Māori poverty did not arise by accident. Land alienation, the destruction of the tribal economic base and the urban migration that followed are well documented (Walker, 1990; Belich, 1996). Within two decades of the mid-twentieth century, most Māori had

moved from rural communities connected to their marae into cities, often dispersed deliberately one family to a street, away from the networks of mutual support that had sustained them (I'Anson, 2026a). Reid, Taylor-Moore and Varona (2014) argue that present-day Māori health disparities are best understood through a social-structural model in which colonial dispossession produces ongoing material and psychological harm.

This paper starts from that position. The poverty it describes is not treated as a personal or whānau failing but as the downstream effect of a dispossession that was historical, deliberate and continuing. It is, in the language of the series, displacement arriving late: land taken generations before a table is ever set, and resources rerouted long before a child is born to want what the rerouting cost her (I'Anson, 2026e).

2.2 Historical trauma and transmission

Historical trauma theory describes the cumulative emotional and psychological wounding carried across generations from massive group trauma (Brave Heart, 2003). Pihama et al. (2014) position historical trauma within Aotearoa, arguing that it must be read through Māori understandings of whakapapa and through the specific mechanisms of colonisation here. Epigenetic research adds a biological account of how stress responses can be carried into the next generation, altering how the body meets the world without changing the genetic code itself (Yehuda & Lehrner, 2018).

The Whakapapa of Colonisation series names one clinical expression of this transmission as Colonisation PTSD and maps its patterns across the nine dimensions of TPO in Te Whakapapa o ngā Mate, the intergenerational dysfunction matrix (I'Anson, 2026a). Within Taha Pūtea, that matrix lists poverty cycles, scarcity as an emotional rather than only material reality, and financial shame and silence among the patterns that pass through whānau. The six questions extend this work in one direction. They ask not only *what* was transmitted, but *how* poverty itself acted as one of the carriers, and what it taught along the way.

2.3 Scarcity and habitus

Two further bodies of work help explain why poverty's lessons outlast poverty. Mullainathan and Shafir (2013) show that scarcity captures attention and narrows thinking. Behaviour shaped by lack persists in ways that look irrational from outside but

are coherent from within. Bourdieu's (1977) concept of *habitus* describes durable dispositions formed by conditions and carried into new conditions, where they can misfit. A person raised in scarcity carries its dispositions into abundance, and the dispositions do not update simply because the circumstances have.

Both accounts support the argument of this paper: that poverty teaches, and that what it teaches lives in the body after the conditions change. Neither, however, accounts for inheritance. Scarcity theory describes the effect of a person's own lack; habitus describes dispositions formed in a person's own upbringing. The whakapapa lens adds a further claim: that the lessons are also handed down, so that a person may carry a scarcity they did not themselves live.

2.4 Whakamā

Whakamā is often translated as shame or embarrassment, but the translation is inadequate. Metge (1986) describes whakamā as a complex state of withdrawal in which a person contracts in the presence of a perceived loss of standing. In traditional social life it was a temporary and appropriate response to particular situations. The Whakapapa of Colonisation series argues that colonisation installed a different quality of whakamā: one that drives people into invisibility, turns inward as self-blame and passes down through whānau (I'Anson, 2026a). In the poverty questions, whakamā is the mechanism by which a structural wound becomes a private failing.

2.5 Māori models of wellbeing and Te Poutama Ora

Durie's (1998) Te Whare Tapa Whā established that Māori wellbeing is multidimensional: tinana, hinengaro, wairua and whānau. TPO builds on that lineage with nine dimensions, structured as five core dimensions (Whakapapa, Tinana, Tuakiri, Wairua, Hinengaro), three bridge dimensions (Matihiko, Pūtea, Kai) and an apex (Auaha), with Tuakiri at the centre as the Poutokomanawa. Several strands of TPO work bear directly on the six questions. The wants and needs work argue that clarity about genuine need is an act of sovereignty (I'Anson, 2026b). *The Whakapapa of Desire* traces the origins of want and distinguishes *ngaru* desire, urgent and externally generated, from *moana* desire, quiet and persistent (I'Anson, 2026c). Taha Pūtea names economic colonisation and argues that financial trauma is real trauma (I'Anson, 2026d). The six questions are designed to be read through this architecture, so that each answer becomes a doorway into a dimension rather than an isolated disclosure.

3. Methodology

3.1 Kaupapa Māori and autoethnography

The work is grounded in kaupapa Māori research, which centres Māori ways of knowing and holds the researcher accountable to whānau and whakapapa (Smith, 2021). Within that, it uses autoethnography: the researcher's own lived experience, written reflexively and set against wider cultural and structural patterns (Ellis et al., 2011). In kaupapa Māori terms, the researcher's position as both researcher and subject is not a weakness to be controlled for but a condition of legitimate knowledge production. The knowledge in this paper is not knowledge about Māori poverty from outside. It is knowledge from within, shaped by one whakapapa, one childhood and the resolution of that childhood over decades.

3.2 Stages of development

The material was developed in five stages.

Testimony. The work began with three kōrero (literary narratives) and an essay, *Whakapapa of Poverty / Ngā Kōrero o te Rawakore*, written from the author's childhood.

Surfacing the questions. On rereading, the essay was found to be organised by questions it never stated. Its sections were already answering *what did poverty teach me to do*, *to hide*, *to carry*, *to become*, and closing on *what would I not give back*. These questions were named and made the visible structure of the piece. A sixth, *to want*, emerged later, through writing on the whakapapa of objects, and was placed fifth so that the sequence still closes on reclamation.

Naming the pattern. Short naming sentences were added to lift each personal specific into its colonial pattern without displacing the testimony. A school subject becomes a measurement tool; a hidden lunch becomes whakamā.

Composite rewriting. To protect whānau, sibling material was rewritten as composite stories. Children are referred to as kōtiro and tama, and the adults they became as wāhine and tāne. Threads gathered from more than one life are folded into each figure, so that what is named stays true without exposing any one household to the naming (I'Anson, 2026e). The same device protects the companion work *Te Whitu Matenga Wairua*.

Translation into practice. The questions were then rendered in three forms: this academic paper, a first-person blog, and a TPO reflective tool for kaiārahi and whaiora. The three forms carry the same knowledge in the registers suited to each audience, consistent with the kaupapa Māori commitment that knowledge should be returned to the people it is about.

3.3 Analytic approach

Analysis proceeded by tracing lineage. For each question, the answer was followed backward to its origin in a specific absence, labour or instruction in childhood, and forward to its expression in adult life. Two principles guided this. The first is *specificity*. A pattern was only named once it could be traced to a particular deprivation rather than to poverty in general; the specificity is the evidence. The second is *structural location*. Each pattern was then read against the colonial mechanisms already documented in the series, so that the specific person could be placed within its historical cause.

3.4 Reflexivity and ethics

Writing about one's own whānau carries obligations that writing about strangers does not. The composite device protects identity, but it does not remove the responsibility to represent people with care. The material was written to honour the caregivers within it as people working from what they themselves were given, consistent with the series' foundational reframe: *you can only give what you were given; you pass on what you know*. Where the testimony touches on harm, it is held at the level of pattern, not incident. The tools that grew from this work carry the same principle: the person is the authority on their own whakapapa, and the kaiārahi holds the questions, not the answers.

3.5 Trustworthiness

The test of a composite account is not whether its figures are real in the biographical sense, but whether they are true: whether the patterns they reveal are recognisable to people who have lived them (I'Anson, 2026h). Early sharing of the questions in blog form, and in conversation with whānau and practitioners, suggests that recognition is common. That recognition is offered here as an initial form of validity, not as evidence of generality, which further work must establish.

4. Findings: the six questions

4.1 What did poverty teach you to do?

The first answers were practical and embodied: cooking from nothing, sewing, mending, making things last, stretching a meal so that everyone got some. This is the hands' knowledge, and much of it is genuine skill.

Alongside this came the experience of being measured. The means test, and school subjects such as cooking, sewing and typing, were presented as opportunities and as assessments of merit. Looking back, they functioned as a sorting. Māori children were measured, and the measure pointed them toward domestic and clerical labour. The finding is that *colonial measurement tools disguised as merit assessments taught children what they were for*. The lesson was not only a skill but a place in the order of things.

A further lesson sat under the others: the work did not stop. Children were responsible young for siblings and households, and the experience of stopping was associated with consequence. This lesson reappears in Section 5.2 as the most widely shared form of the Stain of Impoverished Living.

The doorways for this question are Taha Tinana and Taha Kai, the body's knowledge, and Taha Pūtea, where labour and worth first become entangled.

4.2 What did poverty teach you to hide?

This question surfaced whakamā. Not shyness, but a learned concealment: of the home and the part of town it was in, of the lunch that was always absent, of the shoes glued and the seams stitched by hand to hold them together, of the house to which friends could not be invited, of the plastic over the windows. Being "on a diet" when there was no lunch was one way to hide.

Because the wound was never named as structural, it was experienced as personal. Nobody said *this was done to your whānau*. So it felt like something wrong with the person. The finding is that *whakamā operates as an unnamed colonial wound that turns into a personal failing, and that this conversion is itself part of the mechanism*. Concealment keeps the structural cause out of view and leaves the person carrying it alone. It also keeps it out of view of the next generation, who inherit the shame without the story.

The concealment ran in both directions. The child hid the poverty, and the history that would have explained the poverty was hidden from the child. Nobody taught that Māori land had been taken by statute, so the author grew up believing, as many whānau did, that being poor was how Māori were meant to be, and that Pākehā prosperity was the model of success. Learning otherwise as an adult did not only bring grief; it revealed a belief that had been carried out as truth. The first lesson was taught out loud. The second was taught through silence. The companion paper takes up this second lesson and the kaiārahi support it requires (I'Anson, 2026g).

The doorway for this question is Taha Hinengaro and whakamā as a colonial mechanism, connecting to the series' work on taming the taniwha of whakamā.

4.3 What did poverty teach you to carry?

The answers here moved across generations and across siblings. Parents carried what had been done to them and passed on what they knew. Older children carried younger ones. The author's first pay from a school holiday job went on high school uniforms, expected and given without resentment, while she herself stayed in hand-me-downs (I'Anson, 2026e). It did not feel like a choice. It was what you did.

The finding is that *poverty disrupts transmission lines within whānau*. What could not be given was not given, and what was given included the fear. *You can only give what you were given.* Two further lessons travel with this one. Labour goes outward before it goes inward: contribution becomes the price of belonging. And responsibility arrives before capacity: children learn to carry what is beyond their age.

The doorway for this question is Taha Whakapapa, and the intergenerational transmission that the Whakapapa of a Wound and Whakapapa of Colonisation series trace in detail.

4.4 What did poverty teach you to become?

This question surfaced the self-shaped to survive. For the author, the journey out of poverty began with education, and school became a place of achievement and safety. That journey led into four decades of white-collar work. Moving into that world required becoming fluent in a culture that had excluded one's whānau, while drifting from the world that had held them.

The finding is *the double exile of assimilation*: not fully received in the new world, no longer fully at home in the old. The series develops this as the "Brown Pākehā" experience, in which the colonial severing of cultural identity and the later erosion of identity in institutional life are one continuous wound (I'Anson, 2026f). Poverty is one of the routes into that exile. The child who learned to become someone who could get through often had to leave part of themselves behind to do it.

The doorway for this question is Taha Tuakiri, the central Pou of TPO.

4.5 What did poverty teach you to want?

This question emerged last and opened the widest. It was approached through the whakapapa of objects, tracing each category of accumulation in the adult house back to a specific absence in a specific childhood (I'Anson, 2026e).

Crockery traced back to a melamine picnic set, a loved Christmas gift that became the everyday plates because there was nothing else, and to jam jars washed and lined up on the shelf to drink from. Kitchen equipment is traced back to cakes baked in biscuit tins and vegetables roasted in dishes never built for the purpose. Clothing traced back to hand-me-downs. Stationery traced back to fifth-form schoolbooks turned inside out so their blank backs could be used the following year. Blankets traced back to cold: beds shared because there were not enough, and holes in walls and windows that let the cold in. Tools that never sat right in the hand traced back to being handed what there was and told to make it work.

Two patterns appeared across all of these: *buying two of everything* and *being unable to discard what no longer serves*. Each is coherent. One set could break, be given away or be needed by someone else; two sets meant safety. Throwing away was once a luxury and still feels like one.

The finding is that *wanting, too, has a whakapapa, and that its origin is lacking*. The adult's accumulation is in conversation with the child's absence. The china cabinet is a reply to the picnic set; the stationery cupboard is a reply to the reversed schoolbook. In the words of the Restoration writing: *the picnic set is gone. The china cabinet is full. The conversation between them is still going* (I'Anson, 2026e).

The doorways for this question are Taha Pūtea and Taha Kai, where desire and consumption meet money and nourishment, and the whakapapa of desire, which distinguishes want that comes from authentic need from want installed by conditions.

4.6 What would you not give back, even if you could?

The final question turns toward reclamation. Its answers were ingenuity, an intolerance of waste, and knowing what *enough* actually means. The child who reversed her schoolbooks to find more space inside the same materials was doing something extraordinary. The capacity to work with what is there and find it sufficient is a real gift, even when its shadow is the inability to let go.

Beyond these lay something harder to name: the cave. A world that existed within, around and despite the poverty, held by whānau, by faith and by the inner life of a child. The finding is that *poverty did not only take*. Something was learned there that could not have been learned any other way, and colonisation, though it shaped the conditions, could not erase it.

The doorway for this question is Taha Auaha, the apex of TPO, where what has been held is released and renewed.

5. Discussion

5.1 The wound in abundance

A common assumption is that the harm of poverty ends when material need is met. The fifth question shows otherwise. The poverty response persists into abundance and can intensify there, because abundance removes the external reason for the behaviour while the internal reason remains. The cupboard is full, and the body still buys two. This paper names that persistence *the wound in abundance*: the poverty mindset inside the plenty.

The findings are consistent with scarcity research (Mullainathan & Shafir, 2013) and with habitus (Bourdieu, 1977). It adds three things to them. First, it adds a whakapapa dimension: the wound is inherited as well as acquired. Second, it reframes accumulation as *correspondence*. The adult's fullness is not simply excess; it is the adult answering, across decades, a question the child was asking in the only language available: *am I worth providing for?* Third, it locates the healing move. It is not to empty the house, which would address the surface rather than the conversation, but to be able

to trace each held thing back to the absence it answers, so that the next addition can be made consciously.

The wound in abundance also changes how financial wellness should be understood. Most financial wellbeing work is written for people under strain. The wound in abundance describes people who now have enough and still cannot feel it. Their distress is not visible as hardship, and it is often read as comfort, taste or careful frugality.

5.2 The Stain of Impoverished Living

Traced across the composite stories, the poverty response took a distinct form in each person, and each form mapped to the particular deprivation or labour they had carried (I'Anson, 2026e).

What was carried in childhood	What persists in adulthood
A home where comfort was never on the list	Keeping a house full past any reasonable use
Cold	Keeping more blankets than are needed
Care that did not reach them	Keeping facial and body products unopened
Being handed what there was, and told to make it work	Keeping tools and objects that no longer serve
Forced labour braided with love	Compulsive lawn mowing
The consequence of stopping	Working past the point of health

The last pattern was shared across the whānau. This paper names these patterns the *Stain of Impoverished Living*, sometimes described in the writing as the OCD of poverty: compulsive, protective behaviours organised around a single axis, which is not the poverty itself, now gone, but the fear of its return. The term is used as a metaphor, not a diagnosis. It resonates with cognitive-behavioural accounts of hoarding that emphasise beliefs about possessions and responsibility for them (Frost & Hartl, 1996), while locating the origin of those beliefs in colonial deprivation rather than individual pathology.

Three features of the stain deserve emphasis.

A stain is not a wound. A wound is an event that leaves damage, and it can be named, healed and metabolised. A stain is what remains on the surface once the wound has closed and the healing has done what it could. It does not bleed, but it organises behaviour from below awareness long after the wound that produced it has been addressed. This distinction matters clinically. A person may have done substantial healing work and still carry the stain, and the persistence of the stain is not evidence that the healing failed.

The fear was rational. The fear of poverty's return was formed in a household where the cold did come back, the shortage did come back, and stopping did carry a consequence. It was an accurate response to a real and recurring threat. The difficulty is only that it takes its calibration from the past rather than the present.

The stain is specific, and the specificity is the diagnostic. Most stains trace to what was denied. The most widely shared stain, working past the point of health, traces instead to what was threatened. The body that learned that stopping was dangerous learned it at the level of the nervous system, below the reach of reason. For the kaiārahi, this suggests a simple sequence: *find the specific deprivation, and you find the specific stain; find the stain, and you find the fear driving it* (I'Anson, 2026e).

The healing move, as with the wound in abundance, is not to stop the behaviour. The cupboard can stay full, and the lawn can still be mowed with love. It is to know what the behaviour is underneath, so that it changes in character: from a compulsion that cannot be questioned to one that can be seen, named and held differently. The working stain requires the most attention, because it lives in the body. The body must be taught what the mind already knows: that stopping is safe now, and that rest is allowed because a human being needs it, not because it has been earned.

5.3 The six questions as a TPO sequence

Read together, the questions form a clinical arc, from behaviour, through shame and transmission, into identity, desire and reclamation.

Question	Movement	TPO doorway	Related framework work
To do	Behaviour	Tinana, Kai, Pūtea	Measurement as sorting; the consequence of stopping

Question	Movement	TPO doorway	Related framework work
To hide	Shame	Hinengaro	Whakamā as colonial mechanism
To carry	Transmission	Whakapapa	*You can only give what you were given*; Whakapapa of a Wound
To become	Identity	Tuakiri	The double exile; the three exiles
To want	Desire	Pūtea, Kai	Whakapapa of Desire; the wound in abundance; the Stain of Impoverished Living
Not give back	Reclamation	Auaha	The return; Te Tuku

The sequence moves toward Tuakiri at the centre and then toward Auaha at the apex. Within TPO's healing architecture, it functions as a recognition tool. It corresponds to Te Tūāhuatanga, the first phase of the four-phase healing model, and to Step 1, Te Ohorere, the awakening. Its purpose is to locate the wound before the loosening work of Te Ngāhau Kiri (Dimensional Autophagy) begins, where what has been recognised can be broken down, metabolised and released (I'Anson, 2026h).

5.4 Poverty as teacher, colonisation as classroom

The questions treat poverty as a teacher. The wider series makes clear who built the classroom. Poverty in a Māori whānau is rarely only poverty. It is the material face of a colonial process that also reached language, land, healing practice and identity. The companion paper extends the same questions to colonisation directly (I'Anson, 2026g). The poverty set remains a valuable way in, because many whānau recognise poverty in their own lives before they recognise colonisation in it, and the poverty questions can lead to the wider ones. Part of what kept the classroom out of view was silence. The history of land loss by statute was not taught, so poverty was read as nature rather than as outcome (I'Anson, 2026g).

5.5 Reclamation without romance

The sixth question carries a risk. Asking what one would not give back could be heard as romanticising poverty, or as suggesting that deprivation was worth it. It is not intended that way. The question does not honour the poverty. It honours what the person and their whānau made within, around and despite it. The companion

colonisation set turns this question differently, asking what colonisation *could not take*, precisely because colonisation is not owed gratitude (I'Anson, 2026g). In the poverty set, the question can stand, because what is reclaimed belongs to the person, not to the conditions.

The question also opens forward. *What of this do you want to pass on?* connects reclamation to Te Tuku, the forward declaration: the choice of what the next generation receives (I'Anson, 2026a). Ingenuity, the intolerance of waste and the knowledge of what enough can be passed on without the fear that once came with them.

6. Use in practice

6.1 Within Te Poutama Ora

The questions are offered as a reflective tool within TPO, alongside the TPO reflective tool version of this paper. They can be used at Step 1, within the seven-day awareness work of Te Ara Iwa, or as part of the recognition phase of Te Ngāhau Kiri. Because they reach several dimensions, a person may enter through whichever question feels most pressing and follow it to its doorway.

6.2 Pace and form

The questions are designed to be taken slowly, one per sitting. They go deeper as they go on, and the early questions, particularly *to hide* and *to carry*, should be given room before the later ones are approached. Answers may come through spoken kōrero, writing, drawing, or sitting with an object; some answers come through the hands before they come through words. The Maramataka can guide timing, with the waning and dark phases suited to reflective and release work.

6.3 Settings and disclosure

The questions can be used in self-directed reflection, in group settings and in facilitated one-to-one work. The tiered disclosure model developed for the Te Ngāhau Kiri workbooks applies: a person decides how much of their answer is shared, and with whom. In group settings particularly, the kaiārahi should make clear that answers can be held privately.

6.4 Safety

These questions can open grief, anger and old shame. Every sitting ends with the sixth question, even briefly, so that the person leaves holding what they would not give back

rather than only what was taken. Grounding before leaving matters: wai, breath, a hand on something solid, and karakia where it is right for the person. If distress stays high, the kaiārahi should slow down, pause the questions and bring in further support. Some answers belong to a counsellor or clinician, not only in a group. The questions are reflective prompts, not an assessment or a diagnostic instrument. Where the questions open onto hidden history, what was never taught about how the poverty came to be, the second layer described in the companion paper should be offered with a kaiārahi alongside rather than worked alone (I'Anson, 2026g).

6.5 Practitioners first

Practitioners are encouraged to work through the questions themselves before using them with others. Many people who work alongside whānau carrying poverty have carried it themselves, and the questions will reach them too.

7. Limitations and further research

The findings come from one whakapapa and its composite stories. They are offered as a pattern to be tested, not a general claim about Māori experience of poverty. Poverty was experienced differently across iwi, regions, generations and genders, and the questions will need testing against that diversity. The questions have not yet been trialled formally in practice.

Further work could take several forms. A practice-based evaluation could gather accounts from whānau and kaiārahi using the questions, examining which questions open most readily, which are hardest, and what people describe as having changed. A recognition study could share the questions with whānau from other iwi and generations to see whether the wound in abundance and the Stain of Impoverished Living is recognised beyond the whakapapa from which they emerged. Any such work should be co-designed with the communities involved and held to kaupapa Māori principles.

Several questions also remain open within the framework itself. What does healing the wound in abundance look like for someone who now has enough? How is collective obligation, such as giving to whānau, hui and tangi, held without either guilt or depletion? And what does wealth mean within TPO, once worth is no longer measured by the bank balance? These are taken up in the Taha Pūtea update (I'Anson, 2026d) and remain to be developed.

8. Conclusion

Poverty, in a colonised context, is a teacher. Its curriculum is written into the hands, the face, the inheritance, the self and the wanting. It is passed on through whakapapa long after the conditions that set it have changed, and it can intensify in the very abundance that was supposed to end it. What remains on the surface after the wound has closed is a stain: specific, legible once it is known, and organised around a fear that does not yet know the threat has gone.

The six questions offer a way to read that curriculum back, to see it as taught rather than chosen, and to recover what was learned there that is worth keeping and passing on. The cupboard can stay full. The lawn can still be mowed with love. What changes is that the person knows why.

The teacher also had a silent partner. The history that would have shown poverty as outcome rather than nature was withheld, so the student carried the shame without the story.

Healing begins when we name the teacher and stop shaming the student.

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