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A Comparison of Indigenous and Western Land Management; Case Studies of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and the East Bay Regional Park District

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A Comparison of Indigenous and Western Land Management

Case Studies of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and the East Bay Regional Park District

Senior Thesis for Environmental Analysis

Pomona College

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INTRODUCTION

Engaging with difference can be an incredibly positive experience. I know that, personally, some of my most enlightening moments have come from listening to those with experiences and perspectives which I don't fully understand. Strangely enough, a lot of times I came in feeling like I already understood the other person's position; it was only through actually hearing what they had to say that I realized how wrong my assumptions could be, and how complicated and rich the reality of things could be. Through this act of listening I not only enriched my understanding of others' experiences, but gained a richer understanding of my own experience as well. This can be true for any experience of difference, from family background, to sexual orientation, race, religion and more. This is the basis for the idea of 'contact theory,' where exposure to alternative outlooks has been well document in helping to break down racial bias and prejudice more generally.¹ We also see the benefits of diversity in education, where the integration of normally separate groups leads to learning benefits for all involved.² A large part of this kind of engagement involves feeling uncomfortable. While sometimes people can be very open to challenging their own beliefs, when it comes to addressing fundamentally different core values it can be natural to feel a bit uneasy. But when we're able to listen to challenges of our understandings, and push through that discomfort, that's where some of the biggest growth can happen. I want to bring this approach to a consideration of perspectives outside of the dominant Western framework, because this is not done often enough. I'm particularly concerned here with the interactions with indigenous ways of knowing, which are so often dismissed and ignored. In

¹ Pettigrew, Thomas F., and Linda R. Tropp. "A meta-analytic test of intergroup contact theory." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 90.5 (2006): 751.

² Keen, Cheryl, and Kelly Hall. "Engaging with difference matters: Longitudinal student outcomes of co-curricular service-learning programs." *The Journal of Higher Education* 80.1 (2009): 59-79.

in this spirit that I created this thesis, working to engage points of difference and connection between indigenous and Western world views through case studies of real practice. I want to focus on issues of indigenous recognition, as well how we can work towards a more just, sustainable future.

Before that conversation can begin however, there are some points which need to be made especially in regards to the Western perspective. In lots of these kinds of engagements, the people involved and views involved often enter on unequal grounds. In looking at race, for example, white people tend to have greater power in conversations with black, Hispanic, or other groups.³ It's important then to recognize and account for these differences in power, and avoid letting the dominant narrative control the conversation. Given that Western frameworks are dominant, and thus hold more power, I think it's necessary to address certain aspects of Western systems; namely, the treatment of indigenous worldviews by the West, and core aspects of Western thought which may be irredeemably harmful. These parts of the Western system are also what I hope to challenge throughout my analysis, and work through by engaging with different perspectives. For many who live in a Western framework, these negative aspects of our society may be unfamiliar, and perhaps uncomfortable. I want to make it clear however that this is not meant as an attack on the people who live within these systems, but rather a discussion and critique of the systems themselves. Hopefully we can all come away better for it.

I'd like to start this discussion then by addressing the relationships of power between Western and indigenous perspectives. Most people probably don't have a deep understanding of this dynamic, and I'd argue that is part of the dynamic itself. Through the standard colonial

³ Van Dijk, Teun A. "Discourse, power and access." *Texts and practices: Readings in critical discourse analysis* (1996): 84-104.

practices of genocide and cultural erasure, Western countries around the world have brutally torn down indigenous peoples and their beliefs. Now they work to put forward narratives which both invalidate and erase indigenous practice in the present day, pushing it farther to the margins. This includes everything from pretending that all indigenous practice is historical, to asserting that indigenous peoples are just naturally fading away, and many more.⁴ Indigenous people are erased and hidden away, which conveniently enough allows most people in the West to go about their lives without ever having to consider the indigenous perspective. Even when it is addressed, there are efforts to invalidate, diminish, and dismiss the indigenous view. As Linda Smith, an indigenous researcher, explains;

When confronted by alternative conceptions of other societies, Western reality became reified as representing something 'better', reflecting 'higher orders' of thinking, and being less prone to the dogma, witchcraft and immediacy of the people and societies which were so 'primitive.' Ideological appeals to such things as literacy, democracy and the development of complex social structures, make this way of thinking appear to be a universal truth and necessary criterion of civilized society.⁵

The West asserts itself as the superior system, presenting in its mind the only truly legitimate way of understanding the world. It's this kind of thinking which led to the idea of 'kill the indian, save the man,' the motto of Indian residential schools which enacted a cultural genocide whose impacts are felt to this day.⁶ And this process is ongoing; Western societies like the US are still structured according to a colonial framework which works against Native people and practice in many ways, including the assertion of property rights as a concept over land while removing

⁴ Calderon, Dolores. "Uncovering settler grammars in curriculum." *Educational Studies* 50.4 (2014): 313-338.

⁵ Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed books, 1999.

⁶ Churchill, Ward. *Kill the Indian, save the man: The genocidal impact of American Indian residential schools*. San Francisco: City Lights, 2004.

and marginalizing Native peoples.⁷ The recent violation of indigenous sovereignty in the case of the Dakota Access Pipeline, along with the brutal militarized response inflicted protesters, serves as a good reminder of our colonial reality.

Beyond this unjust relation with indigenous peoples, the dominant Western view is also troubled more generally by issues of justice and sustainability. Countless groups and individuals have presented critiques of Western systems relating to these issues, from the ideas of deep ecology,⁸ to the system-analysis of sociologists like Wallerstein,⁹ to the ecofeminist critiques of Vandana Shiva,¹⁰ and countless others. Their first major point is that some of the core tenets of Western systems of understanding the world, especially ideas of capitalism and colonialism, are at the heart of many of the crises we face today. In a literature exploring the discussion around global warming, for instance, the issue is framed by many as “system failure” of capitalism, which simply doesn’t have the “sensory organs” needed to understand and protect our climate and environment. The paper does acknowledge that some believe capitalism at least can be saved in some form, but changes needed to make this happen would have to be drastic. Given the central nature of selfishness, individualism, and exploitation within the system, I’m more inclined to agree with those voices within the review who argue that “there exists an un-resolvable conflict between capitalism's drive for growth and ecological sustainability (including climate stability), which can only lead to the collapse of either the capitalist system or our climate.”¹¹

⁷ Glenn, Evelyn Nakano. "Settler Colonialism as Structure A Framework for Comparative Studies of US Race and Gender Formation." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 1.1 (2015): 52-72.

⁸ Naess, Arne, and Satish Kumar. *Deep ecology*. Phil Shepherd Production, 1992.

⁹ Wallerstein, Immanuel. "The end of the world as we know it." *Social Science for the Twenty-First Century* (1999).

¹⁰ Shiva, Vandana. *Staying alive: Women, ecology, and development*. North Atlantic Books, 2016.

¹¹ Storm, Servaas. "Capitalism and climate change: Can the invisible hand adjust the natural thermostat?." *Development and Change* 40.6 (2009): 1011-1038.

And capitalist values are by no means the only part of Western thought needing to be considered, as we have seen with the earlier discussion of colonialism. While it goes unacknowledged, much of Western society is still structured according to colonial values, especially regarding the belief that their own way of life is superior, and that the desires of particular humans should be prioritized above all other human and environmental needs. The end result is that colonialism, which in this regard is closely linked with capitalism, ends up posing “what might be articulated as a “relationship problem” with the land,” in that colonialism seeks to obliterate ethical and reciprocal ways of living with the land and with each other.”¹² Already we see this in action in many ways. The land itself the majority of land on earth has been colonized for human needs: due to habitat loss and countless other issues we are now facing a global mass extinction event;¹³ Soil is being exploited and lost at unsustainable rates;¹⁴ oceans are acidifying;¹⁵ and of course the incalculable threat of climate change which is already causing suffering around the world.¹⁶ This doesn’t even get into the issues of human exploitation and suffering, with the particular persecution of indigenous peoples and views. If we’re going to have any chance to avoid further pain and catastrophe, then we must, as countless have now argued, work to envision and enact fundamentally new ways of relating to the world around us.

Given all these issues, it seems apparent now more than ever that those in the Western system need to challenge their own beliefs, and engage with alternative understanding of the world. Many have already begun engaging with this process, and I hope that my thesis can help

¹² Simpson, Jennifer S., Carl E. James, and Johnny Mack. "Multiculturalism, colonialism, and racialization: Conceptual starting points." *Review of Education, Pedagogy, and Cultural Studies* 33.4 (2011): 285-305.

¹³ Kolbert, Elizabeth. *The sixth extinction: An unnatural history*. A&C Black, 2014.

¹⁴ Brown, L. R., & Wolf, E. C. (1984). Soil Erosion: Quiet Crisis in the World Economy. *Worldwatch Paper* 60.

¹⁵ Doney, Scott C., et al. "Ocean acidification: the other CO2 problem." *Marine Science* 1 (2009).

¹⁶ Pachauri, R. K., and A. Reisinger. "IPCC fourth assessment report." *IPCC, Geneva* (2007): 2007.

further those efforts in some way. I hope to explore these different understandings and value systems in a way that challenges and disrupts the dominant Western system, while respectfully engaging and supporting alternative, indigenous ways of knowing. I believe that through this process of engaging difference, we can break down the negative aspects of society, and begin the long work of building towards something better.

The Research

Case Studies

With all the goals stated above, I have decided for this thesis to engage in two case studies of land management, one being the indigenous Māori practice of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, and the other being the Western practice of the East Bay Regional Park District. While I plan to describe each of these, I'd like to first address why I chose to look at case studies of land management. Up to this point, I've been fairly general in what I hope to accomplish, talking about 'indigenous' and 'Western' thought in broad terms. While this kind of discussion has its place, I think it can often be more useful to keep things grounded for a few reasons. The first is that, while speaking in general terms of both views can be useful, indigenous peoples and the 'West' are by no means homogenous. While indigenous people often share key values, indigeneity itself can't really be universalized. The practice of each group intimately connected with the land that is their home, and so indigenous beliefs can thus be specific to their own context. While this is not so much acknowledged, this specificity can also be found in a Western context. While the general practice of science, for instance, claims to be universal, it can be

better understood as a series of local knowledges.¹⁷ Thus in both the Western and indigenous cases, it can be more true to the diversity of life to speak in terms of specific cases and their contexts rather than speaking in large generalizations. Another reasons for having case studies is that when we don't address what ideas look like in practice, I think we lose a chance to make things like colonialism and indigenous thought feel real to those who don't know it. This is another part of why I've based my thesis on case studies, as they allow for us to see the ways in which beliefs and values actually influence the actions and practice of real people. I think it's also important that these cases involve practices of land management. While the beliefs of these systems can influence all aspects of life and society, I'm not concerned not only with the social relations between them, but also how they relate to the land. This is a lot more straightforward in looking at cases where land is the main focus of management. For these reasons, I have done case studies of two different land management practices, one relating more to indigenous practice, the other fitting more in the Western management context. My analysis looks primarily at the management documents of these two groups, using reports and master plans to analyze their beliefs and practice.

For the first case study we have Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, an indigenous Māori group consisting of several thousand people. They claim ancestry to the Tamiki Isthmus in Auckland, the largest city in Aotearoa, also known as New Zealand. While I'll explain more of their background later on, it is sufficient for now to say that they have recently been able to reclaim areas of land which they are now able to govern and manage how they see fit. This provides a prime case for looking at the values in practice of a specific indigenous group, as Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei is able conduct management in accordance with a Māori worldview. Maybe importantly

¹⁷ Turnbull, David. "Reframing science and other local knowledge traditions." *Futures* 29.6 (1997): 551-562.

however, I write about Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei because of my relationship with their work. This last July of 2016 I was honored to work under Dr. Daniel Hikuroa, who has over time built a strong relationship with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. I was able to help him continue that work, which ultimately took the form of helping lay the groundwork for an assessment of the mauri, or life force, of the land, as well as working on an article which could help to show the depth of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei's management practice. This work is the direct inspiration of my thesis, and the article I worked on with Dr. Hikuroa has become the basis for the case study of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.

On the other side of things, I've chosen the East Bay Regional Park District with its two-million-person constituency as a representative of Western management. My main reasons for choosing this case in particular were fairly simply, the first being that the San Francisco bay area is generally physically similar to Auckland the site of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, and the second being that there was simply a lot of information and documentation regarding their management which was easily accessible. Initially my plan was to look at an area of management similar in size to Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, but ultimately it seemed that looking at regional rather than local management felt like a better reflection of the way things work in the Bay Area, and US generally. It also helps that the East Bay Regional Park District happens to be one of the most highly praised parks systems in the country, which can allow me to assess the best attempts at being 'green' that capitalist and colonial society has to offer, and offer stronger critiques and recommendations for moving forward.

Troubles of research

Before going on to an overview of my thesis generally, I would like to acknowledge some of the limitations and potential harm related to the idea of research. Research as a practice

is often taken for granted as simply being the way knowledge is shaped and created, but in the Western context this act is not necessarily innocent. As Linda Tuhiwai Smith lays out in her book “Decolonizing Methodologies,” there is long and ongoing history of harm in this process. She states that for colonized people “the term ‘research’ is inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism. The word itself, ‘research,’ is probably one of the dirtiest words in the indigenous world’s vocabulary.” Research, science, and all the forms of Western knowledge production, have long been used in support of the dominant system, to create and justify racial hierarchy, invalidate other ways of knowing, and erase all aspects of indigenous peoples. This has involved both exploitative research, as well Western researchers acting as gatekeepers of what knowledge gets to be considered as valid.

One of the ways this control is enacted is through asserting ‘objectivity’ as a standard of research, an outgrowth of empiricism. The idea of this is that to be valid, research must be neutral, and the research separated from the subject of research. This supposedly allows the researcher to be free of bias, and thus more honestly critical in producing information. These ideas and standards have been used to dismiss the views of W.E. Du Bois and other black people, discredit feminist thought, and of course to invalidate indigenous ways of knowing.¹⁸ The basic assumptions of this approach however, that we can act without bias, or that being completely free of bias is something to strive for, don’t hold up. Science, and Western inquiry generally, has a history of separating itself from desire, suffering, and the question of ethics, but this really is an impossible task. As Foucault argued, what has been taken as objective or universal is really just one particular mode of thought with its own assumptions and biases, and its only

¹⁸ Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed books, 1999.

because of the imbalance of power that this perspective can insist that its assumptions are just ‘the way things are’ rather than a collection of biases.¹⁹

Thus, research as an idea needs to be challenged. We must recognize that “knowledge is never neutral or universal, and it always has a particular perspective that serves a particular set of interests.”²⁰ Drawing from feminist theories, when engaging in any work we should constantly reflect on our position, and be critical of our intentions, approach, and actions. Since research is a political project, with very real effects on those it involves, it should very much be concerned with how it effects those groups, and should in large part work to benefit those who are a part of it.²¹ Smith makes these points in her discussion of research in a Māori context, speaking of the Kaupapa Māori approach which centers the idea that research should be done primarily by Māori, using Māori practice, for Māori benefit.²² This can apply to other groups as well, with the main focus being that the research benefits and empowers the groups involved with it. This must be the perspective taken if we want to end the aspects of research that make it a harmful process. The goal of research must be to decolonize, not only by critiquing and dismantling oppressive systems of colonization, but also through the empowerment of alternative worldviews.

It has been my goal in this research to work towards decolonization as best I can. The first part of this process is to recognize my position in relation to the research, and recognize that I as the researcher am not impartial. I am white, and I am still part of the colonial system. I was born in the settler colonial society of the United States, and was raised and educated within the US colonial framework. I have started to break down these colonial narratives in my own mind,

¹⁹ Foucault, Michel. "The subject and power." *Critical inquiry* 8.4 (1982): 777-795.

²⁰ Van Heertum, Richard. "How objective is objectivity? A critique of current trends in educational research." *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 1.2 (2005).

²¹ *Id.*

²² Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed books, 1999.

both indirectly through reading and through actively engaging living indigenous practice in both the US and New Zealand. I recognize however that this is an ongoing process, that is not finished by any means. I hope, however, that I can further this process for myself and others with the work of this thesis.

Part of this process is to acknowledge that my position does in fact raise some complications with my research, especially in relation to Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. I am an outsider to their community, and raised as a member of a colonial society. Because of this, my research can't live up to the ideal of kaupapa Māori, with research being done for the community, by the community itself. To counteract this, I worked to make sure that the basis of my research was approved by the group, and that it would benefit them in some way; in this case working to create a document which can show the extent and success of their practice. While there may still be issues with the approach I have taken, I have attempted where I can to alleviate these problems by involving Dr. Hikuroa and members of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei in the writing process. I worked also to avoid projections or inferences, presenting the words of the group and Māori scholars on their own terms as much as possible. Part of this also involves simply taking for granted the validity of their belief, and legitimacy of their practice. I hope that, in the end, Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei can be satisfied with the result.

My outsider positionality is not so much an issue when it comes to the East Bay Regional Park District. The District, after all, is part of the colonial structure, and the worldview of its members simply isn't systematically marginalized or delegitimized. While I intend to be respectful of those whom the District represents, I don't believe the basic assumptions of this system are in need of much defense. If anything, given its place in the dominant structure, I should be obligated to question and dismantle the colonized framework that the District helps to

maintain. To work towards decolonization, I must challenge and critique the dominant narratives found within the workings of the District. My overall goal then is both to critique the dominant system as found in the District, while promoting the indigenous worldview of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. Ultimately, I intend to take the two approaches of Māori and the East Bay, examined in their own contexts, and find what can be learned from them together.

Overview of the thesis

Having explained the intent and purpose of this thesis, I'll provide a brief overview of how I've structured this analysis. With this introduction, I've introduced the two case studies, the first of the indigenous Māori practice of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, and the second a 'conventional' Western management practice of the East Bay Regional Park District. In the next chapter I will explore the case of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, which I'll begin with a brief, limited overview of a general Māori worldview. This will start with the Māori story of creation, moving into specific terms and concepts relevant to land management. With this basic context established, I'll move onto explaining how many of these ideas manifest themselves in the actual practice of the group as seen through their management.

In the next chapter, I'll explore the case study of the East Bay Regional Park District. Rather than try to lay out the worldview of the District at the beginning, I'll lay out the practice of the District and connect to a broader context of Western values as the need arises. This is both because the Western context is likely fairly well understood by most people already, and because it does not easily lend itself to summary or narration. So I will draw from management documents, and explain at least some of the values which drive the practice of the District.

. With the case studies finished, I'll conclude with a final section bringing together thoughts and ideas from both cases. I will compare the communication, values, and various actions of the two groups, reaffirming the positives found in both, and challenging the negatives of the Western approach. From this analysis and engagement between difference, I hope we can all find inspiration in moving towards a world that is truly safe, just, and sustainable.

CHAPTER 1: Māori Worldview and the practice of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei

The Māori Understanding

In the beginning, there was Te Kore, or the emptiness and the void. There were many qualities and phases of Te Kore, which mark the eons in which the matter of the universe came together in forming the earth and sky. Thus Papatuanuku, the earth mother, and Rangipapa, the sky father, brought themselves into being. In the intensity of their love for one another, they came together in such tight marital embrace that no room was left in the world even for light. Thus came Te Po, the great night, and there were many nights. It was into this night that the children of Rangi and Papa were born through the pairs procreative powers. Primary of these were the six sons, known as Tānemahuta, Tangaroa, Tawhirimatea, Tumatauenga, Haumiatiketike, and Rongomatane. The sons grew tired of living in this world of darkness between the bodies of their parents, and decided that the only option was to separate Ranginui and Papatuanuku. Tāwhirimātea stated his opposition to the idea, but was dismissed by his brothers. Ultimately it was Tānemahuta, god of the forests, who accomplished this task, pushing the two apart with his shoulders against the ground and his legs thrusting upwards. This feat is demonstrated now in the forests of Tane, where trees push up into the air much as Tāne's legs once did. With the sky finally lifted above the earth light could finally come through, and so began Te Ao Marama, the world of light. It is this third state of existence in which we humans now live.

This act of separation however was the first sin of the world, and from this fact arose the first conflict. Taniwhirimatea, the god of winds who had opposed the plan, was angered by his brothers' betrayal of their parents. The wrath of his winds devastated the forests of Tane, and drove each of each his siblings into hiding. Tane, retreating to the forest, gave rise to the species

of animals and plants which inhabit the land. Tangaroa, god of the sea, fled to the ocean where his children diverged into all the life which inhabits the waters today. Haumiatiketike, and Rongomātāne were hidden by their mother Papatuanuku. Haumiatiketike became the god and source of edible fern roots and other wild plants, while Rongomatane became the protector of the kumara and the god of cultivation generally. All were cowed by the wrath of Taniwhirimatea.

But his domination was not complete. When Tāwhirimātea turned his anger onto the last of his brothers, Tumatauenga, he found that Tu could be not subdued. The fight between the two ended in stalemate, neither side able to fully break the other. Tu, the god of war and aggression, was angry with his brothers for not supporting him against Taniwhirimatea. He thus sought utu against them, an act of restoring balance and claiming what is owed. He began to use the children of his brothers as food and common objects, forming spears from Tane's trees to catch and the eat birds of Tane, nets to capture the children of Tangaroa, and more. These actions negated their tapu, or sacredness, and rendered them noa, or plain and usable. This was the start of the dichotomy between sacred and the plain which is integral to the functions of Māori society. The assertion of Tu over his brothers also model the relation of humans with the world around them.

After this conflict had settled, Tāne and his brothers searched the world for ira tangata, or the human principle. In his efforts to procreate with various elements, Tāne brought forth trees, insects, birds, and much other life, but not humans. Finally he took from the clay of the earth mother and formed a vessel into which he breathed his mauri, or life force, and from this act was born Hinehuone, the first human. Together she and Tāne brought forth Hinetiitema, with whom Tane coupled to bring forth the ancestors for all humans alive today. When Hinetiitema realized

Tāne was her father, this second sin of incest led her to leave for the underworld, becoming Hinenuitepō, the goddess of death.

From these origins, the people of the world came into being, with all people having ancestry back to Tāne and through him connection to Rangi and Papa themselves. In this way people are connected by whakapapa, or genealogy, to all aspects of life and the world, as returning downwards from Rangi and Papa one can connect themselves by ancestry to any living thing. In relating to other humans, that ancestry can be traced through Tane down to the demigods, to the sacred homeland of Hawaiki, to the very waka, or ship, upon which one's ancestors sailed to Aotearoa, down through the history of iwi, and hapu, to the personal stories and heritage of one's whanau. In the relation of these stories transmitted through the layering of whakapapa, or genealogy, one roots themselves in history and recognizes their place within the world.

These stories, from the beginning of Te Kore tracing down to the personal histories of families, form the basis of Māori myth and legend. According to the renowned Māori scholar and spiritual leader Reverend Māori Marsden, “myth and legend are an integral part of the corpus of fundamental knowledge held by the philosophers and seers of the Māori ... They were deliberate constructs employed by the ancient seers and sages to encapsulate and condense into easily assimilable forms their view of the world, of ultimate reality and the relationship between the Creator, the universe and man.”²³ Thus through story are the workings of the world explained, and with a basic understanding of these most central of stories it will be easier, I think, to understand the Māori view of the world as a whole.

²³ Marsden, Māori, and T. A. Henare. *Kaitiakitanga: A definitive introduction to the holistic world view of the Māori*. Ministry for the Environment, 1992.

There are challenges in this that should be acknowledged, however, if only to strengthen the validity of these stories. Continuing the discussion of myth quoted earlier, Marsden states that “Modern man has summarily dismissed these so-called myths and legends as the superstitious and quaint imaginings of primitive, pre-literate societies. That assumption could not be further from the truth. Myth and legend in the Māori cultural context are neither fables embodying primitive faith in the supernatural, nor marvelous fireside stories of ancient times.”²⁴ They are, rather, an entirely valid and ingenious way of communicating their world view. As I related in the introduction, I’ve put much thought into how to present the Māori world view, and will work as much as possible to present all voices on their own terms. This includes the work of Marsden, who I’ve quoted, and Ranginui Walker, who I paraphrased in telling the creation story at the start of this chapter,²⁵ as well as Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei themselves.

Māori belief must not be taken as a monolith, singular and static. Stories and histories are different between iwi, hapu, and even whanau, and while their ways of knowing share many relations, they are still distinct. As such I will attempt as best I can to primarily address the ways of knowing and practice of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, and avoid falsely speaking about a homogenous indigenous worldview. But I’m also just not going to be able to give everything the depth of consideration it deserves, nor will I be able to give a comprehensive overview. Much that is important and potentially insightful to a Māori way of knowing may be left out, and what I present here will not do justice to the immense depth of Māori belief and practice. I will endeavor to relay as much of what is relevant as I can, while giving proper space and respect to what I do present. While all concepts within a Māori way of knowing are deeply interconnected,

²⁴ Marsden, Māori, and T. A. Henare. *Kaitiakitanga: A definitive introduction to the holistic world view of the Māori*. Ministry for the Environment, 1992

²⁵ Walker, Ranginui. *Ka whawhai tonu matou*. Penguin Books, 1990.

I believe that splitting explanations into categories by topic may aid in communicating these ideas to one unfamiliar with them.

With this in mind I will focus further on a Māori way of knowing especially as it concerns relations to the land and conceptions of kaitiakitanga, or guardianship. In laying out an overview of these ideas, I will draw heavily from the work of Reverend Māori Marsden, whose writings are well respected and accepted by many Māori peoples. I will then outline how these conceptions manifest in a specific case of land management, drawing primarily from the documents and management plans of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.

Whakapapa

Roughly translated as genealogy, whakapapa is often taken as tracing human connections and ancestral lines. However, it applies as well to the relation and connection everything in the universe. In the stories related above we see that each and every thing originates from one source, and are thus connected in such a way that a whakapapa of relations can be drawn between all things. But even this can be a simplification, as whakapapa as a concept “also refers to an epistemological framework in which perceived patterns and relationships in nature are located.”²⁶ It is a way of organizing things, from the relations of ancestors, to those of plants and animals in what we might call taxonomy, to the ordering and connection of the various material and spiritual aspects of the world, to the structuring of stories and myths. As Marsden remarks, “genealogy [whakapapa] as a tool for transmitting knowledge pervaded Māori culture,” and so connects all things not only in their relations to one another, but in the form in which they are organized and presented.²⁷

²⁶ Marsden, Māori, and T. A. Henare. *Kaitiakitanga: A definitive introduction to the holistic world view of the Māori*. Ministry for the Environment, 1992.

²⁷ *Id.*

The Holistic World View

The idea of whakapapa is also connected with another key concept, namely the holistic world view held by Māori peoples. Whakapapa after all is the organizing principle behind the myths and legends which “form the central system on which their holistic view of the universe is based.”²⁸ These myths document the story of creation, and from these myths there has been built the conceptions of different worlds the recognition of which constitute the holistic world view. The three areas of knowledge, which represent three different worlds, explain the breadth of existence which is understood as a whole. The first basket is Tua-Uri, which translates to “beyond in the world of darkness.” and is considered “the seed bed of creation where all things are gestated, evolve, and are refined to be manifested in the natural world. This is the world where the cosmic processes originated and continue to operate as a complex series of rhythmical patterns of energy to uphold sustain and replenish the energies and life of the natural world.” This world operates beyond the limits of our perception, beyond the ‘natural’ world. The second world is Te Aro-Nui, or the world before us, the relations and workings of which are explained through whakapapa. This includes the recurrence of natural cycles, the relations of various species, and so on. The third world is Te Ao Tua-Atea, which is the world beyond space and time and can be thought of in simple terms as the “eternal world of the spirit,” which is considered to be the “ultimate reality.” Together, the world of forces beyond observation, the natural world of our senses, the world of spirit, and all the connections and interactions within and between these realms, constitute the Māori holistic world view. In it, the entirety of a system is considered in making decisions, from all the interactions between humans, environment, spirit,

²⁸ Marsden, Māori, and T. A. Henare. *Kaitiakitanga: A definitive introduction to the holistic world view of the Māori*. Ministry for the Environment, 1992

and more, as well as the connections with the past and future generations, and the world as a whole. All is taken into account.²⁹

Kaitiakitanga

The idea of kaitiakitanga essentially represents how Māori people relate to the land. The usual English translation of the term is ‘guardianship’ or ‘stewardship’ but as Māori Marsden points out, the meaning can also include “preservation, conservation, fostering, protecting, [and] sheltering”. For Māori, like all indigenous peoples, there was no conception of land ownership as we understand it in the West until the arrival of Europeans, though there was private use of certain personal things such as “garments, weapons, combs” and other small objects. Instead, “all other use of land, waters, forests, fisheries, was a communal and/or tribal right. All natural resources, all life was birthed from Mother earth. Thus the resources of the earth did not belong to man but rather, man belonged to the earth. Man as well as animal, bird, fish, could harvest the bounty of mother earth’s resources but they did not own them.” Being nurtured by the Earth, “Man is an integral part therefore of the natural order and recipient of her bounty. He is her son and therefore, as every son has social obligations to fulfill towards his parents, siblings, and other members of their whanau so has man an obligation to mother earth and her whanau to promote their welfare and good.” Thus Māori relate to the land as relatives, tying back to the whakapapa of relations shown in the initial stories of creation. And it is because of this relation, and because the earth gives us life, that Māori must guard and care for the land to which they are intimately connected.

The process of kaitiakitanga then is how Māori practice their role as caretakers, or guardians. The concerns of kaitiakitanga are not limited simply to the environmental realm, but

²⁹ Marsden, Māori, and T. A. Henare. *Kaitiakitanga: A definitive introduction to the holistic world view of the Māori*. Ministry for the Environment, 1992.

apply as well to the social, cultural, and spiritual. This can be seen in Kawharu's explanation that kaitiakitanga "is about relationships between humans and the environment, humans and their gods and between each other". It can be considered a "socio-environmental ethic," which determines that "each whanau or hapu [extended family or sub-tribe] is kaitiaki for the area over which they hold mana whenua, that is, their ancestral lands and seas."³⁰ This practice begins with the ancient ones such as Tane, who themselves were the kaitiaki, or guardians, of different aspects of the world. In this role they are focused on ensuring "that the mauri or life force of the taonga is healthy and strong," and if the mauri of a taonga has been depleted they "must do all in their power to restore the mauri of the taonga to its original strength", taonga roughly meaning treasures and all valuable things, and mauri in its simplest form meaning life force or binding agent.³¹ Kaitiakitanga then is the practice of ensuring that the mauri or life force is thriving and abundant for all things and interactions upon the land, whether physical, spiritual, cultural, or otherwise. This is done through traditions and first practices known as kaupapa, which will be explained along with mauri.

Mauri

Due to its centrality, both to the practice of kaitiakitanga and Māori belief more generally, mauri as a concept needs further explanation. Since the early genealogy of cosmic creation, the force that is mauri has been found throughout everything and is the source of all vitality. It is considered the foundational force of the world of Tua-Uri, the world beyond our senses. More than simply a life force, mauri is, as Marsden puts it, "that force that interpenetrates all things to bind and knit them together and as the various elements diversify, mauri acts as the

³⁰ Selby, Rachael, Pataka JG Moore, and Malcolm Mulholland, eds. *Māori and the environment: Kaitiaki*. Huia, 2010.

³¹ *Id.*

bonding element creating unity in diversity”. Mauri then is essential to everything from humans, to birds, to trees, and even to the rocks and flowing water, and each and every thing which exists. When mauri is lost or damaged, the “essential bond is weakened, and can potentially result in the separation of the physical and spiritual elements resulting in the death of a living thing or alternatively the loss of a thing’s capacity to support other life.”³² This makes mauri an excellent measurement of what we consider sustainability, as to protect and manage mauri is to protect and manage the vital force of all things. This is why the responsibility of kaitiakitanga is focused on ensuring the mauri of a place is healthy and strong, and it is this same responsibility which drives Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei specifically to serve as kaitiaki and practice kaitiakitanga in their mana whenua, or land and territory.

Kaupapa and tikanga

How kaitiakitanga is upheld will vary by iwi, hapu, and even whanau, but is derived ultimately from kaupapa. Kaupapa can be considered as the first principles and rules by which one is governed. When a Māori group considers a certain project or situation which must be addressed and resolved, they must decide upon the kaupapa which will guide their actions. This will influence not only what actions are taken, but how they are carried out, and the process by which the decisions to take such action were made. The course of action decided upon constitutes the tikanga for the situation, tikanga meaning “method, plan, reason, custom, the right way of doing things.” The kaupapa of the project will help determine the appropriate tikanga, and both kaupapa and tikanga will be decided on through deliberation and consideration of first

³² Marsden, Māori, and T. A. Henare. *Kaitiakitanga: A definitive introduction to the holistic world view of the Māori*. Ministry for the Environment, 1992.

principles and historical precedent. Both are processes, and as such are actively discussed and constructed throughout the course even of a given project.³³

A good example of kaupapa especially can be found in the revitalization of Kaupapa Māori approaches starting in the 80's and 90's, which has occurred across a variety of fields. Kaupapa Māori is no new invention, but has been reclaimed as a method to strengthen Māori process and knowledge as kaupapa is, in its origin, “the conceptualization of Māori knowledge.”³⁴ As Linda Smith elaborates, kaupapa Māori is a process of producing and engaging with knowledge, which is both reflective and critical. A key part of this process is that studies and research are conducted by Māori, are rooted in Māori principle, with all work ultimately being done for the benefit of Māori people.³⁵ There are no solid rules in this practice, as it is recognized by the approach that values and process will vary between peoples from iwi to whanua, and so diversity is also taken into account by conceptions of kaupapa Māori. For our purposes, we will only consider the specific kaupapa of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.

Mātauranga Māori

Mātauranga Māori is not simply the collected body of Māori knowledge and wisdom, but also the knowledge and understanding of all things in the universe, as well as the active process by which knowledge is produced and analyzed. This practice, and the knowledges produced by it, stretch back centuries, and are still active and thriving today, as well as the active and critical process by which knowledge is created, tested, and applied in all aspects of life. While some topics are reserved for those given proper training, the knowledge base and framework are very

³³ Marsden, Māori, and T. A. Henare. *Kaitiakitanga: A definitive introduction to the holistic world view of the Māori*. Ministry for the Environment, 1992

³⁴ Nepe, Tuakana Mate. *Te toi huarewa tipuna: Kaupapa Maori, an educational intervention system*. Diss. ResearchSpace@ Auckland, 1991

³⁵ Smith, Linda Tuhiwai. *Decolonizing methodologies: Research and indigenous peoples*. Zed books, 1999.

much a part of how Māori people engage with the world. The practice is holistic and interconnected, mixing aspects of the spiritual, moral, and scientific that those within the West tend to consider as being separate. It is embedded in all aspects of life, but most importantly for this discussion, is key to reviewing and informing aspects of kaupapa, tikanga, and land management in general.

While the practice has strong traditional roots, it is very much thriving today. And it is not simply some romanticized mystic source of wisdom, but rather an engaged practice which requires a critical and observant mind. While it includes the spiritual, it does not necessarily exclude “scientific” practice. The base conditions for ‘science’ as practice are actually met in many ways by mātauranga practices, as Dr. Hikuroa and others have argued, and mātauranga Māori approaches are entirely capable and often willing incorporate newly developed ‘scientific’ technique.^{36,37} This leads again to the point that, more than just a collection of knowledge, or historical practice, mātauranga Māori has always and will continue to be an adaptable, critical approach to knowledge production and practice.³⁸

The Practice of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei

Background

Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei are a hapu, or subtribe, of the Ngāti Whātua iwi, or tribe, located in and around Tamaki Makaurā, or Auckland. Members of the hapu can trace their whakapapa, or genealogy, back to Tuperiri, and the three hapu of Te Tāōū, Ngāoho and Te Uringutu who

³⁶ Hikuroa, Dan, et al. "Integration of Indigenous Knowledge and Science." *International Journal of Science in Society* 2.2 (2011).

³⁷ Hikuroa, D. "Mātauranga Māori—the ūkaipō of knowledge in New Zealand." *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* (2016): 1-6.

³⁸ Hikuroa, D. "Mātauranga Māori—the ūkaipō of knowledge in New Zealand." *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* (2016): 1-6.

claimed the area from the Waiohua in the 17th century. Their homes are centered around the Ōrākei Marae on the Tamiki isthmus. The group shares a deep connection with the land around Tamiki, and serve as kaitiaki, or guardians, for the land. The ability to fulfill this role has however been severely impacted by the unjust management and seizure of this land by the Crown starting with the beginning of relations between the two in 1840. In recent years however this has begun to be remedied with the return of some small portions of the original land, the most recent being the Pourewa Reserve. Now being able to once again access and manage the land which they relate to, the group is fully and deeply engaged in their role as kaitiakitanga. It was this practice which Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei asked Dr. Hikuroa and I to document, to show the depth and success of their efforts. At their request I have restricted this analysis to their more recent endeavors, particularly the creation of management documents for Ōkahu Bay and the Pourewa Reserve. It is, again, my hope that this may inform others of the depth of kaitiakitanga in practice, and perhaps inspire people in their own efforts towards sustainability.

The research itself was accomplished primarily through the analysis of the group's current efforts around Ōkahu Bay and the Pourewa Reserve, with a focus on management documents related to these two sites. It's necessary to recognize that all of the land which Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei calls home was at one point stolen by the New Zealand government, and only recently were certain areas returned through a national tribunal process intended to repatriate land illegally taken from Māori peoples. Pourewa in particular was only reclaimed by the group in 2012 through the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Claims Settlement Act, under and so the group has been figuring out how best to manage the land. Both have been degraded, and in both cases the group decided that the mauri is in need of restoration. At Ōkahu Bay, the waters were polluted in many ways, and the streams covered with dirt and fields. The community ultimately came up

with several potential restoration projects, and was deciding which would be best to enact. This was done by the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Reserve Board enlisting the help of Morphem Environmental Lmt., who created the Ōkahu Bay Tidal Creek Reinstatement document. The document primarily assessed the restoration options using the Mauri Model, which ultimately rated the projects by how effective they would be in restoring mauri across the site. This was all done in deep consultation with the community, and was greatly helpful in deciding a course of action.

The documents and direction for the Pourewa Reserve are less complete, mainly because the Reserve was only returned to the group's governance in 2012 by the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Claims Settlement Act.³⁹ The land represents around 34 hectares with minimal development, and historic grazing which has led to degradation of the native vegetation. The area is mostly open grass with some trees, minimal native plants and wildlife, and is located on a geologically unstable slope. The site is technically co-managed by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and the Auckland Council through the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Reserve Board, but ultimately Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei is still free to manage how they see fit. The community has been working for several years to lay out their management vision for this place, releasing the Pourewa Creek Recreation Reserve Draft Reserve Management Plan in December of 2015. The Plan is meant to establish the underlying policies and goals, or kaupapa, for the Pourewa Reserve going into the future. While the Plan is still being developed, it's well worth exploring to show the depth of the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei's practice.

Through looking at this range of management documents, I have worked to show the practice of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei in action. Where possible, I have tried to find concrete

³⁹ *Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Claims Settlement Act 2012*

examples which demonstrate the depth and extent of their practice. I've arranged my analysis around key aspects of kaitiakitanga, including kaupapa, the restoration of mauri, holistic consideration, as well as the following list of responsibilities as developed by Dr. Hikuroa in a recent paper;

1. Restoring and maintaining the mana (prestige) of the people, i.e. assuring actualization by helping them to develop their potential. The full mana of the Mori is directly related to their role of kaitiaki;
2. assuring the sustainability and the long term use of their taonga (all the natural resources of their land);
3. protecting the fragile elements of their ecosystems;
4. replenishing and assuring the provisions of sustenance for the future generations;
5. planning and supervising all commercial developments with the tribe;
6. developing educational programs to explain the interrelations between all the elements of their living taonga (e.g., lands, seabed's, foreshores, water, air, geothermal, animals and human beings) and to help people understand how the imbalance or destruction of one element can seriously affect all the others.

Exploring the documents and statements made by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, we listed all evidence under each relevant point.

Observations

Dedication to values

From the outset, it is clear that kaitiakitanga is absolutely valued by the community. One of the stated Objectives of the Pourewa Management Plan is after all to “hold central kaitiakitanga,” while an indicator of the Ōkahu Bay document aims at “providing a living

classroom to enable kaitiakitanga.” From this, as well as through conversation with the community, it is clear that their approach to the land is framed in terms of kaitiakitanga. The tribe also demonstrates kaitiakitanga in practice, through their actions and process. This is seen in many ways, from their dedication to a practice of kaupapa in Pourewa, to a holistic consideration, and most importantly a dedication to uphold the mauri of the land. The restoration of mauri, meaning life or binding force, is at the heart of kaitiakitanga. All efforts towards kaitiakitanga, are also efforts towards upholding mauri. From speaking with members of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei it is quite clear that mauri is of the utmost importance to the group in its endeavors, which is expressed by Charmaine Wiapo when she says that “Our commitment is to restoring the mauri (life force) of the whenua.”

Upholding mauri in practice

Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei has actively worked to assess the state of the mauri in the places they manage, which is paired with explorations of how mauri can best be upheld, strengthened, and restored. This is most clearly seen in the management of Ōkahu Bay, where Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei enlisted the help of Morphum Environmental Limited, an environmental consulting group, to conduct a Mauri Model analysis of several project possibilities.⁴⁰ The Mauri Model, conceived and refined by Kepa Morgan and Dr. Hikuroa among others, is a tool that aims to help assess the mauri for a given place or project. It uses four different categories of well-being, including social, cultural, environmental, and economic, with indicators of mauri generated and approved by the community which fall under each category. Scores are given for each indicator

⁴⁰ Morphum Environmental LTD. *Ōkahu Bay Tidal Creek Reinstatement / Wetland Treatment System Feasibility & Options Investigation*. Auckland: Auckland Council, n.d. PDF

from -2 to +2, where -2 represents a total degradation of mauri and +2 indicates that the mauri is strong and thriving for the given indicator. The scores of each indicator are then weighted by importance to the community, which together determine the scores of each category of well-being. The categories are then also weighted by importance, and a final score calculated for the project or place of concern. The model allows for indicators ranging from quantitative assessment of water quality, to considering whether the history and ancestors of a place are being properly respected. This allows for a truly holistic conception, incorporating ‘scientific,’ cultural, spiritual, and all other values into one complete, harmonious assessment of mauri.

That the use of this model was pursued by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei for Ōkahu Bay indicates their dedication to the values and practice involved. The results of this work for Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei is now actively considering employing the Model Mauri in relation to Pourewa, to which end Dr. Hikuroa and I were asked to create a draft list of indicators that could help in starting conversation. The aim of such efforts is the complete restoration of mauri for the reason that any level of degradation is seen as unacceptable; the mauri should be whole and complete. As one indicator from the Tidal Creek document states, “You can’t have half a mauri!”

Kaupapa and Tikanga

The objectives and policies of the Pourewa Draft Report are equated with kaupapa, an observation confirmed by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei to indicate that the report will serve as a kaupapa for how the Reserve will be managed. This has and will continue to be established in deep consultation with the community, such deliberation being required for the establishment of any kaupapa. In a sense, it This was true also of the Ōkahu Bay document, which was created through a consultation process with the greater community, as described below;

Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei and Morphum facilitated a hui [formal meeting] with hapu representatives and whanau [the people] to determine objectives and priorities for restoration of Ōkahu Bay. This phase occurred prior to development of concept designs to ensure all designs encompassed the true objectives of NWO [Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei].⁴¹

A consultation process is also being followed to develop the Pourewa Reserve management plan, which also requires that any changes to the plan will engage in the same consultation process. Additionally, one of the policies of the Pourewa Draft states that “management and development of Pourewa shall be through on going consultation with the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Reserves Board in liaison with the local community,” for all projects and actions moving forward.⁴² This call for planning out how exactly any given issue shall be approached is essential to the kaupapa of kaitiakitanga, and is indicative of the level of thought, consideration, and deep community involvement that will go into all of the group’s deliberations.

Once it is ensured that a kaupapa will be debated, there must then be the proper consideration and establishment of the methods and customs, or tikanga, which will constitute the kaupapa. Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei has developed upon these issues to a great extent, and has clearly put much consideration into their methods and methodology alike. There is a great deal of concern for the process by which things are accomplished, with the consideration that mauri cannot be restored through processes which themselves degrade the mauri. A good process can add to mauri as much as the result itself. Key examples of this include the call for “pest control and maintenance programs that do not damage the wider environment/ecosystem,” coupled with the explicit rejection of such potentially harmful methods as herbicides and pesticides. We also see this in the call for using locally sourced plants for any planting efforts, as well as proposals to

⁴¹ Morphum Environmental LTD. *Ōkahu Bay Tidal Creek Reinstatement / Wetland Treatment System Feasibility & Options Investigation*. Auckland: Auckland Council, n.d. PDF

⁴² *Pourewa Creek Recreation Reserve Draft Reserve Management Plan*. Auckland: Ngati Whatua Orakei Whai Mai Limited, Dec. 2015. PDF

allow the native habitat of the nearby Kēpa Bush expand naturally rather than attempt to manually restore the area. It is also listed as a key principle for “proposals to be low impact, ‘tread lightly’ on the whenua,” and from my analysis it seems that all methods adopted throughout the report are in line with such goals.⁴³

Ultimately the effectiveness of any method will be determined by its effect on the mauri of the land and people, and it is the restoration of mauri which must be kept central in all consideration when practicing kaitiakitanga. For Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei this seems to be the case, and it is clear that respect for customs and the will of people of today will influence what methodology and tools are of acceptable use.

Holistic Consideration

Kaitiakitanga does not simply encompass the management of what we consider the environment, but also entails the care of the cultural, spiritual, and all other connections and realms of existence. This holistic view is evidenced in the application of the Mauri Model in Ōkahu Bay and the Pourewa reserve, and that takes into account not only environmental aspects of well-being and mauri, but cultural, social, and economic factors as well, with the final value reflecting the synthesis of all areas of concern. This holistic view can also be found in the draft management plan for Pourewa specifically. The main themes of the management plan cover the areas of “Environment,” “Recreation,” “Culture,” and “Economy,” but it is clear that these concerns are not truly separate; for example, within each section there are references to the others. For example, Objective 3 in the environmental category aims to “Encourage opportunities for environmental enhancements which support cultural and social values.” We also see that in

⁴³ *Pourewa Creek Recreation Reserve Draft Reserve Management Plan*. Auckland: Ngati Whatua Orakei Whai Mai Limited, Dec. 2015. PDF

the sections on Economy and Culture there are reference to utilizing environmental restoration as a way of strengthening culture, economy, and the people more generally. Additionally, the push for valuing kaitiakitanga as seen in (list the objective) shows a dedication to holistic world view, as kaitiakitanga cares for the mauri which as noted is the force which connects all things. Thus Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei is clearly concerned with all aspects of the land for which they serve as kaitiaki.

Fulfilling responsibilities

Below are many of the responsibilities faced by the tribe, with evidence from the Ōkahu Bay and Pourewa Reserve documents which displays the group's fulfillment of these kaitiakitanga responsibilities. For each responsibility, I have listed several examples indicate fulfillment, noting the origins of the examples from the Pourewa Creek Recreation Reserve Draft Reserve Management Plan simply as "Pourewa Reserve," and the Ōkahu Bay Tidal Creek Reinstatement document as simply "Ōkahu Bay." This is followed by a short description of the section of the text which the example is found.

1. Restoring and maintaining the mana (prestige) of the people, i.e. assuring actualization by helping them to develop their potential. The full mana of the Māori is directly related to their role of kaitiaki

- a. "Support the urban residential development of Ōrākei, consider social economic well-being"
(Pourewa Reserve, key principles)
- b. "Develop and promote self-sufficiency"
(Pourewa Reserve, key principles)
- c. "Social enterprise; Design offers whanau social enterprise opportunities for work, training, and capacity building of people"
(Ōkahu Bay, Mauri Model indicator)

- d. “Develop opportunity for hosting/welcome, Manaakitanga”
(Pourewa Reserve, key principles)
- e. “Providing a living classroom to enable kaitiakitanga”
(Ōkahu Bay Mauri Model indicator)

2. Assuring the sustainability and the long term use of their taonga (all the natural resources of their land)

- a. “proposals to be low impact, ‘tread lightly’ on the whenua”
(Pourewa Reserve, key principles)
- b. “Continue restoration and ecological enhancement”
(Pourewa Reserve, key principles)
- c. “Improve biodiversity of native flora and fauna”
(Pourewa Reserve, Environmental Objective 2)

3. Protecting the fragile elements of their ecosystems

- a. “Improve water quality”
(Pourewa Reserve, Environmental Objective 1)
- b. Having “Water that is drinkable at the headwaters and clean in the bay, protected from wastewater and other contaminants”
(Ōkahu Bay, Mauri Model indicator)
- c. “Protect existing native specimen trees and native habitat blocks and old remnant vegetation”
(Pourewa Reserve, pg 15)
- d. Ensuring a “Diverse authentic ecosystem falling into place”
(Ōkahu Bay, Mauri Model indicator)
- e. Encouraging “Stream habitat supporting visible diversity from eels to kahawai”
(Ōkahu Bay, Mauri Model indicator)

4. Replenishing and assuring the provisions of sustenance for the future generations

- a. “Encourage opportunities for environmental enhancements which support cultural and social values”

(Pourewa Reserve, Environmental Objective 3)

- b. “Establish ‘heritage planting’ areas e.g. Te Uru Karaka - Te Uru Houhi and pa harakeke”

(Pourewa Reserve, Environmental Objective 3, policy ii)

- c. “Resilience to future operational costs”

(Ōkahu Bay, Mauri Model indicator)

5. Planning and supervising all commercial developments with the tribe;

- a. “increase ... employment opportunities”

(Pourewa Reserve, Economic Objective 2)

- b. “All development proposals shall be assessed against the ‘Shared Vision,’ Objectives and Policies of this Reserve Management Plan”

(Pourewa Reserve, pg 32)

- a. “Management and development of Pourewa shall be through on going consultation with the Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei Reserves Board in liaison with the local community”

(Pourewa Reserve, Cultural Objective 1, policy i)

- b. “All development proposals shall take into consideration Te Aranga Principles”

(Pourewa Reserve, Cultural Objective 2, policy iv)

6. Developing educational programs to explain the interrelations between all the elements of their living taonga (e.g., lands, seabed’s, foreshores, water, air, geothermal, animals and human beings) and to help people understand how the imbalance or destruction of one element can seriously affect all the others

- a. “The Vegetation Strategy ... places importance on re-connecting the community with nature”

(Pourewa Reserve, pg 18)

- b. “Enhance local and visitor understanding of the cultural heritage of the site. Establish a ‘learning environment’ which encourages all visitors to explore and learn about the cultural heritage values of the site and surrounds”

(Pourewa Reserve, Cultural Objective 3)

- c. “Provide a living classroom to enable kaitiakitanga”
(Ōkahu Bay, Mauri Model indicator)
- d. “Increase education ... opportunities”
(Pourewa Reserve, Economic Objective 2)
- e. Having a “physical presence into the future to grow the relationship between people and place”
(Ōkahu Bay, Mauri Model indicator)
- f. “Sharing the past to bring about a healing connection with the bay”
(Ōkahu Bay, Mauri Model indicator)

From these results, we can see that Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei has clearly fulfilled each of the responsibilities of kaitiaki as Dr. Hikuroa has laid out. While this is not comprehensive or definitive, it gives a good sense of the group’s dedication to the concept of kaitiakitanga, and perhaps gives a better idea of what that concept means in practice.

Conclusion

Kaitiakitanga as a system of thought and management has already successfully conceived, integrated, and applied many of the ideas and thoughts which have been recently considered by the environmental movement. The ‘precautionary principle’ for example, which has recently emerged in relation to chemical regulations and the environmental justice movement,⁴⁴ is represented in the goals of enhancing mauri rather than focusing on limits as well as the need to discuss the kaupapa of principles and practice before any new project or action is taken. Additionally, the holistic scope of kaitiakitanga in terms of interactions within the

⁴⁴ O’Riordan, Timothy. *Interpreting the precautionary principle*. Vol. 2. Earthscan, 1994.

environment covers the recent calls for a greater focus on human well-being in relation to enhancing sustainability,⁴⁵ as well as the consideration of our own lives as being parts of the environment which is growing in environmentalist thought. Thus I conclude that kaitiakitanga, in the context of Māori thought more generally, stands as a living example of a complete system of thought and management which takes into account a broad range of the modern environmental movements sustainable principles and is actually itself sustainable in practice. Here we have presented what that system looks like in action through the example of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, which can perhaps help inspire others in the pursuit of sustainable systems across the world.

I have to caution however that the system of kaitiakitanga as outlined here is not translatable to any given context. What Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei has shown here, while demonstrating kaitiakitanga more generally, is specific and localized. Even more generally the concept of kaitiakitanga arises from and is supported by an entirely Māori world view, which will obviously not be present in most parts of the world. However, aspects of kaitiakitanga are already reflected in countless indigenous practices across the world, from recognition of the spiritual, to holistic approach, to the dedication to protect the beauty and vitality of the earth. Seeing a small glimpse of such systems playing out in the practice of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, peoples across the globe may perhaps be inspired to adapt the spirit of this approach in the necessary efforts of building new traditions which can ensure a just, sustainable future.

⁴⁵ Raworth, Kate. "A safe and just space for humanity: can we live within the doughnut." *Oxfam Policy and Practice: Climate Change and Resilience* 8.1 (2012): 1-26.

CHAPTER 2: Western Systems and the East Bay Regional Park District

The East Bay Regional Park District

The East Bay Regional Park District manages sections of land which cover a large expanse around the East Bay of the San Francisco area. The District was created in 1934 by popular vote, those participating being primarily white people who were settlers of the area. The land originally was the territory of several tribes such as the Ohlone peoples, who were brutally murdered and displaced in the course of California's widespread practice of genocide.⁴⁶ On this stolen land settlers began to develop what would eventually become the cities and neighborhoods which today form the counties of Contra and Alameda. There were significant portions of open land left open, and starting with small purchases the District has slowly bought and acquired the 113,000 acres of land which make up the 65 individual parks under the districts control. The District is governed by a board of directors with seven members who are elected every four years, with each member representing a particular region of the district.⁴⁷ A general manager is then selected to oversee operations,⁴⁸ as well as a 21-person citizen advisory board, appointed by the Board of Directors, which provides comments and recommendations on a variety of policy issues.⁴⁹

Management documents

To assess the value and management systems of the District I looked at several of its planning documents. These range from management plans, to contracted reports, to summaries

⁴⁶ Lindsay, Brendan C. *Murder state: California's native American genocide, 1846-1873*. U of Nebraska Press, 2012.

⁴⁷ "Board of Directors." *East Bay Parks*. East Bay Regional Park District, n.d. Web. 09 Dec. 2016.

⁴⁸ "General Manager." *East Bay Parks*. East Bay Regional Park District, n.d. Web. 09 Dec. 2016

⁴⁹ "Park Advisory Committee." *East Bay Parks*. East Bay Regional Park District, n.d. Web. 09 Dec. 2016.

of survey results. I focused primarily on the Master Plan for the whole of the District, but used several supplementary documents as needed. These include a telephone and online survey results document, an endangered species assessment, and an economic analysis of the East Bay's environmental benefits. These are each best addressed as they arise, but since I refer so often to the Master Plan I feel it is worth giving a brief overview of the document before getting into the rest of the analysis.

The Master Plan

The primary document I analyzed was the East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan for 2013, which lays out a unified vision of management values and policy for the whole of the District. After explaining the purpose, history, and goals of the District, it breaks down the system's various responsibilities by chapter. These are then broken down even further by topic, including general policies, specific programs, and the types of resources to be managed. A good example of this is the Natural and Cultural Resources chapter, in which management is segmented by topic with natural resources, at risk species, vegetation, wildfire, terrestrial wildlife, aquatic wildlife, water resources, riparian and wetland resources, geology, and cultural resources each addressed separately. There is no comprehensive, holistic approach to talking about environmental management, or even a synthesis that brings everything together. Guiding values and goals are highlighted throughout the plan, and listed at the end in an effective summary of how the District will be managed.

Structure of management

Management is conducted based on several different forms of planning which vary by topic and scale. At the top you have the Master Plan which outlines policy for the entire District,

as well as other overarching documents with a more specific scope such. Going down from the regional and system plans, you get to individual plans for each park known as Land Use Plans. The parks are each placed in one of five categories consisting of regional parks, preserves, recreation areas, shorelines, or trails, with each unit managed under a different set of rules. Certain areas within the park can then be given different “land use designations” which further define the rules by which the area is governed, including ‘natural units,’ ‘recreation/staging units,’ ‘special protection features,’ and ‘special management features.’ The end result is a system with many distinct parts that are organized in a complex structure.⁵⁰

Values and goals

The Mission Statement laid out in the document defines the essential role of the District as follows;

The East Bay Regional Park District preserves a rich heritage of natural and cultural resources and provides open space, parks, trails, safe and healthful recreation and environmental education. An environmental ethic guides the District in all of its activities.⁵¹

This statement conveys only a general sense of the values that are central to the District’s management. The primary issue is that some of the primary terms used can represent a wide array of concepts and meanings, with understandings of the words varying not just between groups but even on an individual basis. In this context, there is no real indication of what exactly terms like ‘natural,’ ‘cultural,’ or even ‘resources’ mean. Given the many possible definitions and understandings of each of these words, there’s just no way to know what exactly is being

⁵⁰ *East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan 2013*. Oakland: East Bay Regional Park District, July 2013. PDF

⁵¹ *Id.*

said as nothing is tied to any concrete set of values and definitions. This becomes abundantly clear in their statement that “an environmental ethic” guides their actions, which in no way shape or form describes what that environmental ethic might actually be. If ‘environment’ as a concept and system of value was more universally defined and understood, or if it was explained what it means in this case, then the District might be able to successfully relay its core values. As it stands, that simply isn’t the case. Their lack of clarity leaves room for a wide array of possible values to be pursued, leaving it unclear exactly how the District will act in a given situation.

This doesn’t mean that the District has no system of values they adhere to. While it’s not made explicit, the District certainly works within a particular framework of meanings and values. These just have to be inferred through context of the District’s various words and actions. I’ll now try to address what these values might look like, based mostly around the themes of resources, culture, nature, and market values.

Resources

Everything within the plan is considered in terms of resources, whether it’s “natural resources,” “cultural resources,” “recreational resources,” or even “human resources.” The term implies a particular thing which is separate from oneself, and is available to be used however one sees fit. This use will likely be towards the benefit of whoever controls the resources. In this case, we can infer that someone is the people of the East Bay, who in theory control the resources through their representatives in the District. The District then manages the resources, environmental, cultural, or otherwise, for the benefit of the people. This can include developing land for recreation, or even dedicating certain areas for preservation into the future. But by using the term ‘resource’ these actions are framed in the idea of use, implying a purpose or benefit which can come from, in this case, nature. As the plan mostly speaks of preserving land for the

sake of human enjoyment, resources seem to at least implicitly be framed in terms of human benefit.⁵²

Culture

In the Cultural Resource Management section of the plan, culture seems to refer to things generally of ‘cultural’ and historic’ values. The words are used loosely, with no real definitions given for what it means to be of cultural or historic values and no clarification of differences between the two terms. I will not attempt to differentiate between the two then, and will instead focus on the general context of the term culture. Going off this standard, culture here seems to mostly entail artifacts and places that can help relate the history of the region, with the ‘cultural’ value applying especially to sites which are important to Native American groups. The only ongoing cultural use which is recognized is that of grazing for “contemporary cattle ranching” which is facilitated throughout several of the parks in the East Bay District.

It is clear that the District is on some level concerned with relating the history of the places and areas it manages. As the plan states, “the Park District intends to help visitors understand and appreciate the East Bay’s historical and cultural resources” (46). They also plan to “maintain a current map and written inventory of all cultural features and sites found on park land, and will preserve and protect these culture features,” (47) which shows some of the actual efforts which will be pursued along with more general promises to engage in management, conservation, and, potentially, restoration efforts (46). Importantly there is also the promise that the District will “continue to encourage the cultural traditions associated with the land today” (46). But the District is selective in whose culture is recognized.

⁵² *East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan 2013*. Oakland: East Bay Regional Park District, July 2013. PDF

Firstly, the geographic bounds of what is considered cultural to Native Americans is limited. We see this in the claim that “within the Regional Parks are some of the finest remaining Native American sites in the Bay Area,” and later again with the statement that defines ‘these sites’ as “places where events of cultural significance have occurred.”⁵³ While this does capture the importance of particular sites to these cultures, it is limiting in that these sites are the only directly acknowledged manifestation of Native culture on the land. It constrains Native cultural history to particular places and time. Not only is it ignored that the entirety of the environment is culturally valuable to indigenous peoples, but the District also frames Native culture as something that has only ‘occurred’ in the past. Current, active practice is ignored, and the extent to which Native people value these lands is minimized. Given the genocidal history of California,⁵⁴ we know that the entirety of the land managed by the parks is stolen. The Ohlone and other peoples have rightful claim not only to particular sites, but the land as a whole. But this history, and the wider cultural value of land for Native peoples, are not recognized or given voice. The District assumes that the Native peoples value the land in similar ways that US society does today, with culture and history being limited to certain places and objects, ignoring the actual beliefs and practice of indigenous peoples. This is a classic case of colonialism, marginalizing and erasing both Native peoples and their values.

These colonial narratives are continued by the District by their referencing Native peoples in the past tense. To be clear there is some recognition of Native peoples today in the plan, such as in the statement that cultural sites within the Districts control “have personal importance for the contemporary Ohlone, Bay Miwok and Northern valley Yojuts

⁵³ *East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan 2013*. Oakland: East Bay Regional Park District, July 2013. PDF

⁵⁴ Lindsay, Brendan C. *Murder state: California's native American genocide, 1846-1873*. U of Nebraska Press, 2012.

descendants.”⁵⁵ While it is positive that ‘contemporary’ is used in relation to Native peoples, the good of this is potentially limited by adding the word ‘descendants.’ This makes the full phrase read as ‘contemporary descendants,’ leaving open the implication that the people for which these sites have ‘personal importance’ may simply be descendants of Native peoples, and not themselves actively indigenous. At no point does the District simply refer to these groups as being indigenous themselves, and the fact that there are currently living and practicing Native peoples is never actually recognized. While this might not have been intentional, the phrasing used can still potentially play into the larger societal narratives of indigenous peoples and practice being located solely in the past. This narrative is a pervasive one, and is actively harmful as it works to erase indigenous peoples today by either ignoring their existence or dismissing it as somehow ‘inauthentic’.⁵⁶ This disrespect is furthered by the recognition of and desire to sustain “the living culture of contemporary cattle ranching, a lifestyle which has been displaced,”⁵⁷ with the effect of recognizing displaced settler lifestyles as legitimately ongoing while denying that same recognition to Native peoples. The European practice of cattle ranching is given respect, while indigenous practices are entirely ignored, showcasing yet another classic colonial practice.

The current Master Plan, in short, considers only a narrow portion of the wide scope of indigenous culture today. While it might claim to respect certain Native sites, it has shown a disrespect, and outright silencing of actual Native peoples. This needs to change. While this document doesn’t explain the relation between the various tribes and the District, it seems that

⁵⁵ *East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan 2013*. Oakland: East Bay Regional Park District, July 2013. PDF

⁵⁶ Steinman, Erich W. "Decolonization Not Inclusion Indigenous Resistance to American Settler Colonialism." *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity* 2.2 (2016): 219-236.

⁵⁷ *East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan 2013*. Oakland: East Bay Regional Park District, July 2013. PDF

there is at least some dialogue and collaboration. I think this needs to be built upon, by extending actual recognition of current practice and historic wrongs, engaging in deeper conversations, and ensuring Native peoples have a greater say in how to manage the land which is still rightfully theirs.

Nature and environment

The first chance to gain a better understanding of what nature means here comes in the Vision statement. The Park system identifies its ideal as an “extraordinary and well-managed system of open space parkland ... which will forever provide the opportunity for a growing and diverse community to experience nature nearby.”⁵⁸ From this we can understand a few things.

First is that ‘nature’ is something separate from humans and their actions, which can be constrained to particular areas such as well-defined parks. Nature is “nearby” the places in which people live, which implies that it’s not really a part of the human realm. The only way humans can keep experiencing nature in this argument is through the preservation of “open spaces” which can be traveled to, as parks are not places where people live. Nature in this context then can be thought of as existing separate from but alongside human spaces, with what seems to be a fairly firm distinction between the human and the natural. This is not surprising, given the history of this trend in Western thought. This continued today even within growing environmental movements which consider humans as belonging to their environment. One study found that “even though the large majority of our participants considered themselves as part of nature, their general perception of natural environments excluded any humans or human involvement while their general perceptions of unnatural environments included mostly human-

⁵⁸ *East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan 2013*. Oakland: East Bay Regional Park District, July 2013. PDF

made entities.”⁵⁹ The District’s classification of nature as a place to be visited certainly upholds this perception. It may be that the distinction made between humans and the natural world may indicate a perceived superiority of humans over nature, but at the very least the separation supports the conception of nature as something which can be used for human benefit.

This focus on human benefit is another point which can be taken which seems to be present in the District. At first this might not seem to be the case, especially looking at the large areas of land classified as “Regional Preserves.” While the “enjoyment and education of the public” is mentioned as part of the use of a preserve, the primary purpose seems to be to protect the “intrinsic value” of an area with “outstanding natural or cultural features.” There do however seem to be some limits to this protection, such as the qualifications that preservation areas must be “significant” and have “great natural or scientific importance.”⁶⁰ It seems then that humans are deciding what parts of nature actually have intrinsic worth, which seems to diminish the idea of the places having worth outside of human judgement in the first place. This comes across again when considering the protection of biodiversity and ecosystems, the benefits of which are explained as being “for the education, enjoyment and well-being of present and future generations.”⁶¹ While this dedication to well-being future generation is most certainly a good thing, the failure to mention the benefit to the ecosystem itself is worth noting. Intrinsic value does not seem to be considered to a great degree, and it seems that human value is more centered.

For the most part then, the Master Plan is conceived to a significant degree in terms of human use and benefit, primarily in terms of recreation. We see this tendency to consider nature

⁵⁹ Hendy, Justin, Bryan Glosik, and Willis Okech. "Why do Humans View Themselves as Superior to Nature?."

⁶⁰ *East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan 2013*. Oakland: East Bay Regional Park District, July 2013. PDF

⁶¹ *Id.*

in terms of recreation through the use of terms which describe nature as “an amazing gymnasium of hills, oxygen, and natural wonders” or as the “people’s playground.”⁶² While values of human health and well-being are also considered important by the District, the context for these limits their otherwise large definitions. Care for human health for instance is found primarily through the promotion of the Healthy Parks, Healthy People program. This focuses on promoting recreation to benefit wellbeing, but does not address the potential moral or spiritual benefits the land could provide. Nature thus seems to be thought of by the District as a collection of resources which are distinct and separate from humans. While some aspects of nature may be considered to have intrinsic worth, the whole is generally thought of in terms of human benefit, especially recreation.

Influence of market evaluation and concerns

When looking through all the available documents related to this Park District, we’ve seen that the valuation of the Parks worth is always put in terms of the benefits it will derive for humans. But the way these benefits are thought of is also important to consider. This is best seen, I think, through the District’s only major document dedicated to explaining the worth and value of the parks entitled “Quantifying our Quality of Life.”⁶³

The main takeaway from this it that the document, and District more generally, consider the value of things primarily in economic terms. The value of ecosystems, open spaces, well-being, and everything else is only ever talked about in terms of its dollar value, and it is an unchallenged assumption that all benefits of the Parks can be quantified in these terms. The

⁶² *East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan 2013*. Oakland: East Bay Regional Park District, July 2013. PDF

⁶³ *Quantifying Our Quality of Life, an Economic Analysis of the East Bay’s Unique Environment*. N.p.: East Bay Regional Park District, n.d. PDF.

District ultimately justifies the existence of parks not through any moral, or personal basis, but instead makes sure we understand that parks produce more economic value than the money it takes to keep them running (find a quote). If the numbers at some point didn't add up, if the parks were 'losing value' in some way, the District would have lost its overarching justification for why the parks should keep existing. I believe that if push came to shove people would defend the parks whatever the economics said, but the documents as they are present little proof that's the case. The only values formalized are economic ones, and alternatives such as moral or spiritual justifications are given little consideration, to the point that given the right dollar balance it might be worthwhile to get rid of the parks altogether. This is the result of an economic system of valuing things. While this might be influenced by arguments from conservation and preservation ethics, the earlier centering of human concerns combined with this cost-benefit analysis show that at the end of the day its money which guides the Districts determination of value.

It's important to note that this system of economic values goes unrecognized. This is in line with much of what I've discussed already in looking at the District's professed values and goals, which rely on assumed knowledge of the meanings and values which underlie the words and ideas being used. This ties back to what I discussed in the introduction, namely that the dominant view does not have to explain or identify its own assumptions, or even existence. If they were to be honest they would say that, not only do they adhere to a general and vague "environmental ethic," but they also follow the values of capitalism. There is of course more than I can get into, but the major idea is that capitalism is not simply an economic arrangement, but is supported by an entire value system. David Loy makes this case best, pointing out how capitalism can be better thought of as 'the religion of the market.' The first basic assumption is

that market as we know it is a natural thing, rather than the human construction it really is. The workings of the market are thus taken as a given, and the results of this system are right and just. The second basic assumption is that the real value of any given thing can be signaled simply by prices. These together lead to the system being treated as 'natural,' such that its "consequences seem unavoidable, despite the fact that they have led to *extreme* social inequity and are leading to environmental catastrophe."⁶⁴ This value system, whether it's called capitalism, consumerism, the will of the market, the free hand, or any other name, faces many issues of justice and sustainability, which I addressed in the introduction of this thesis. This system still pervades much of the West, and is certainly found within the management of the District. However benevolent the version of these values found in the plan of the District may be, their presence and importance within the District's framework makes it questionable whether sustainability can be achieved there without a strong adjustment of values.

Balance

Rather than laying out how values will be adhered to, the Master Plan primarily speaks of a balancing process which will be pursued. A good example of this can be seen in the District's declaration that it will "balance environmental concerns and outdoor recreational opportunities within regional parklands." How this determination of balance is decided was not stated, and the values which will be favored are not made explicit. It does seem however that human benefits, primarily recreational and economic, will be favored. This can be illustrated again by the Mission Peak parking lot case, where the District has approved parking lots which will disturb

⁶⁴ Loy, David R. "The religion of the market." *Journal of the American Academy of Religion* 65.2 (1997): 275-290.

sacred remains. While the district has made promises to protect culturally valuable sites, this dedication is not solid and can be disregarded if the District wants it to be;

Incorporating the site of the historical resources within open space or placing the site under conservation easement, for example, would preclude development of the project altogether, thereby achieving none of the project objectives. The District must balance preserving cultural and natural resources with achieving the primary purpose of the project, which is to better accommodate park visitor demand for trail access from the existing Stanford Avenue Staging Area.⁶⁵

Ultimately the District decided, against much protest from the Ohlone people and others, that the lot would be built. Thus in their act of balancing the District can completely favor values such as recreation and development ahead of any others, effectively allowing them to pick and choose which values matter in deciding whether or not a project is carried out. Protection of cultural resources might be considered as part of mitigation measures, but is certainly not enough to warrant the termination of a project, even if that project is one of the most blatant violations of Native cultural values one could carry out. This stands in stark contrast to indigenous values and systems, which aim to respect the values of all people's and places.

Community Involvement

For most plans within the District, the Master Plan included, the public is usually involved through meetings and periods of public feedback and commentary. After some initial tinkering, the latest Master Plan draft was made public, and six meetings held dedicated to collecting feedback and concerns from the general public which was invited to attend all events. These were then considered by staff, who did the actual writing of the document. The plan is

⁶⁵ STANFORD AVENUE STAGING AREA EXPANSION PROJECT RESPONSE TO COMMENTS DOCUMENT. Peralta Oaks Court: East Bay Regional Park District, n.d. PDF.

then ultimately decided on by the Board of Directors, who unanimously approved the plan. A similar process of development, public commentary, and revision is also applied to each major individual project that may be carried out for a given park.

This seems like an open, and very much can be. However, it's worth noting some of its limits. For one, the fact that the District represents 2 million people makes it difficult to really engage individual communities, just for the sheer scale of things. And generally with this approach of top-down management people have been noted to disengage in large numbers. There is one study at least which indicates that for increased scale of economy, disengagement from political process is more common.⁶⁶ The trends of globalized neoliberalism seem to be especially responsible, with its promotion of hyper-individuality and free market principles,⁶⁷ is tied by many to disengagement from politics and communities as well as general demoralization.⁶⁸ Young people are especially disengaged in the face of these values, as they have been one of the groups most disenfranchised by this system.⁶⁹ This disengagement leads naturally enough to reduced participation in society generally, and by extension the local and regional politics involved in something like the Park District. To what degree this happens depends in many ways on socioeconomic status, as the poorest are the most likely to feel the negative effects of neoliberalism while the wealthy, such as many in the Bay Area, can insulate themselves from harm.⁷⁰ This means that public commentary approaches to community engagement may do

⁶⁶ Humphries, Stan. "Who's afraid of the big, bad firm: The impact of economic scale on political participation." *American Journal of Political Science* (2001): 678-699.

⁶⁷ McLean, Scott. "Individual Autonomy or Social Engagement? Adult Learners in Neoliberal Times." *Adult Education Quarterly* 65.3 (2015): 196-214.

⁶⁸ Smyth, John, and Peter McInerney. "Sculpting a 'social space' for re-engaging disengaged 'disadvantaged' young people with learning." *Journal of Educational Administration and History* 44.3 (2012): 187-201.

⁶⁹ Edwards, Kathy. "Disenfranchised not 'deficient': how the (neoliberal) state disenfranchises young people." *Australian journal of social issues* 44.1 (2009): 23.

⁷⁰ Bauman, Zygmunt. *Collateral damage: Social inequalities in a global age*. Polity, 2011.

poorly in encouraging and allowing for meaningful public engagement. Regardless, while this is not necessarily the fault of the District it is still a problem of the societal systems of which this management group is a part. Ultimately the structure of management in the District is coming from the top down, with the people of the area only having minor influence. The decisions on how management is set up and what system of values will be followed are made by the bureaucracy, with minimal input from the people.

Scientific Management

The District generally seems to conduct its management through a scientific framework. While there will be some involvement of the public in determining what priorities are addressed with some say in what practices will be used, the general processes and approach taken will be decidedly scientific with an exclusion of cultural resources. The use of a scientific framework in the management of resources is laid out as such;

Resource protection is a primary goal of the District planning process. To this end the District conducts field investigations, research and surveys that analyze existing conditions, constraints, potential threats, and opportunities and then recommends measures to avoid impact to these resources and to mitigate the impact that park development and operation may have on these resources if impact is unavoidable.

The District actively seeks public review and comment on these recommendations.⁷¹

We can see that science as a process is thus used to create new information, explore problems, analyze the state of an issue, and inform decisions of management and

⁷¹ *East Bay Regional Park District Master Plan 2013*. Oakland: East Bay Regional Park District, July 2013. PDF

development. While it's not stated explicitly, like so much else in the Master Plan, the District seems to stand by empirical analysis in these cases.

Conclusion

The District is a large organization, with control over a number of large and diverse areas. Its governmental approach is primarily top-down, though there is a strong effort to at least try and engage the general public. While they have done much good in protecting land and promoting health, there are still serious limitations to be considered. While no ethic is clearly laid out, we see through words and actions that the District functions within the dominant Western value system, including aspects of colonialism and capitalism. These beliefs can often be destructive, and even within these documents works to assert itself while dismissing other worldviews. The District could do well to truly consider and respect other worldviews. Ultimately the people who make up the district may need to reconsider their worldview, and their relations with the environment and each other. Engaging with other practice, such as that of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, can be useful in that process.

CHAPTER 3: Bringing things together

Introduction

There are certainly some similarities between the values of the East Bay Regional Park District and Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. Both, in different ways, care about the environment. They both could agree on there being value in open spaces, the well-being of the communities served, and that at least some aspects of culture and environment are worth protecting. Both I think, are trying to do good. But there are differences that need to be addressed, which can often threaten to invalidate and erase indigenous peoples such as Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. I found four lines along which these differences could be considered, including structure of management, the practice of knowledge, the communication of values, and the actual systems of value held by each. In bringing this groups together in comparison, and engaging with each, I believe we can move towards a better understanding.

Structure of management

The first obvious difference between the two groups is size. For starters, the practice of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei is fundamentally local. Even if the full extent of their land was returned the extent under their management would only be a few thousand acres, though it of course holds immeasurable value. The scale of focus ties directly into the way the land is managed. While Māori feel responsibility for all life, their primary responsibility is to the land with which they share an ancestral connection. They serve as kaitiaki for the land which is home to them, which keeps management on a generally small, local level. The entirety of a community is involved with the upholding kaitiakitanga, and through the process of kaupapa everyone engages collaboratively in establishing values and managing the land. If a larger project is to be done, it

would be carried out in collaboration between groups, rather than by overarching organization with power over the general area. Management is thus focused in the community, building upwards.

This stands in stark contrast to the structure of management in California East Bay communities. Unlike with Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, where the height of the management structure is a single community, the management of open lands in the East Bay is consolidated on the regional level in the form of the District. This centralized control structure stretches over hundreds of thousands of acres, and many communities. This is different from the collaborative structures we would see in a Māori approach, and instead shows an overarching structure which controls from the top downwards. While in theory this structure derives its authority from the many people and communities under its domain, decisions on values and strategies of management are still largely constructed by the people at the top with the authority to enact their desires on the communities below. The input of the people is much more formalized, and is heard primarily through choices in election to the Board of Directors as well as the many sessions of public comment involved with the development of any given plan or project. But this feedback, as noted before, can be a fairly weak form of community involvement, and occurs at such a large scale it can hardly be called a single community at all. The greatest involvement a given community can have is in the consultation portion of a given project, and while this may seem similar to the consultation of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, there are key differences. With the management plan for Pourewa, the community was involved throughout all steps of the plans creation and had influence in the structure and values which they final plan would take. The District on the other hand presents a complete vision of what need to be done developed by those at the top, and so while people may affect aspects project setups and implementation they are

unable to really challenge the basic setup and values of whatever the District has presented. Like much of the West, the District represents yet another top down approach.

The process of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, however, is much more democratic, allowing everyone within the community to actively participate in not only the construction of management systems, but even the determination of principles which will guide their practice. Given the involved nature of this approach, it's likely not scalable in making a plan for the 2 million people represented by the District. But the insistence on large scale management might itself be the issue, with the size and power of the system leading to a weakened community voice, one example being the Mission Peak parking lot case. On the other hand there are many benefits in the community-level management shown by Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, including the greater adherence to democratic values, as well as fostering a sense of responsibility for one's community and environment.

Knowledge practice

The system of knowledge practiced by the District is likely one most people reading this are familiar with. In Western society, we're raised in this scientific, empirical framework our whole lives, which for many goes unchallenged. What knowledge is taken seriously by society generally say in the US is very much determined by this framework. While the scientific community itself has moved beyond simple positivism, these ideas still seem important to the society as large. An observation to be valid must have significant evidence that it is the case, and should be quantified as much as possible. A community may have known they're being poisoned by pollution, but until a geologist shows the pollutant flow, chemists confirm the poisonous qualities of the toxin, and medical professionals agree to the diagnosis of sickness, communities

like the white factory town of Parkersburg,⁷² the black community of Norco,⁷³ and countless others will be ignored and left to suffer. The same applies to the environment and ecosystems. Someone who has lived on the land for decades and observed its changes, will not be taken as seriously as the ecologist who has observed things for a matter of years. The fact that the scientists have gone through an academy, and been taught all the right ideas, give their opinion more weight than the person who has complete knowledge of a specific area such as the people of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.

Then there is the matter of measurement. A statement made with some form of 'data' to back it up is certainly taken more seriously in the Western context. A species won't be protected under the Endangered Species Act until someone can go out and have numbers that show it declining. There might be concern, but action will be much less serious. As well, each thing is categorized and must be proved separately by topic, habitat type, and even species. There is some answer to this in the form of ecosystem management, a growing concept which takes a more open, systems based approach. It's unclear whether this is in practice at the District, but it could easily fit within that framework. All of this is still ultimately focused mostly on the quantitative, with little concern for cultural or moral arguments. Even wellbeing is still justified in economic terms. Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, and Māori generally, are much more holistic in their system of knowledge, taking into account all relations as well cultural, spiritual, and other aspects of being. While the West does not think of some of these aspects of thought being respectable, especially the spiritual, is clear from their practice that Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei are very much thoughtful and critical in their approach to knowledge.

⁷² Blake, Mariach. "Welcome to Beautiful Parkersburg, West Virginia." *Huffpost*. Huffington Post, n.d. Web.

⁷³ "Fenceline: A Company Town Divided." *PBS*. PBS, n.d. Web. 09 Dec. 2016

There have been attempts to reconcile different ways of knowing, such as bringing the Western system together with more indigenous approaches. The basis of this coming together is not that there is necessarily a right or a wrong way, but that there are just different conceptions of the world which can all be valid without contradicting one another. Countless studies have come forward to explore the potential for common ground, and many are actively working to explore ways in which we can coexist and thrive with our differences. Dr. Hikuroa is part of this work, and there is plenty of hope that we can reach a better space.⁷⁴ Community voices are growing stronger, and hopefully localized, indigenous knowledges can grow with them.

Communicating Values

Knowing the ways in which value systems are communicated and understood help both to understand the system itself, and provide insight to the shape of a system's practice. I believe the use of language, and word in particular, can provide valuable insight in looking at these case studies. Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei, for example, tends to use words and ideas with more defined meanings to communicate their values, such as 'mauri' and 'kaitiakitanga.' Given the strong and well established nature of Māori cultural concepts, the use of these terms clearly relates to particular values of that culture and thus clearly communicates the group's intentions. This requires a proper understanding of Māori culture, but even without the full extent of this knowledge it's clear that Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei are referring to well established concepts which are shared by the community. The central place of these ideas in management is made explicit again and again, from personal statements, to the management plan of Pourewa, to the Mauri

⁷⁴ Hikuroa, D. "Mātauranga Māori—the ūkaipō of knowledge in New Zealand." *Journal of the Royal Society of New Zealand* (2016): 1-6.

Model document for Ōkahu Bay. As a result, we are left with a firm understanding of the value system forming and guiding the management of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei.

This is not so much the case with the East Bay District, where the words and terms used by the district are far more nebulous. The prime example of this is their reference to holding “an environmental ethic,” where it is never made clear what particular ethic that might be. The result of this is that the intentions behind the Districts various documents and statements are vague, and the values which will be adhered to are hidden by the use of loose words which do not clearly communicate a particular meaning. Having read the main declarations of the Master Plan, it is still unclear what will happen when it is time for a decision to be made. What is the value system which will be upheld? Which values are more prominent? How will they be weighted, and incorporated into the decision?

As the value system of the District is not made clear through its vocabulary, we can only see it communicated indirectly through action. Take for instance the Mission Peak Parking Lot case, where the district knowingly disturbed the sacred remains of Ohlone ancestors so that a parking lot could be constructed. Through this case we can see the limit of the word “protect” as used by the District, especially in relation to its promise to protect “cultural sites” of importance. Promising to protect cultural sites, while also “balancing” other concerns, leaves a wide range of actions open to the district. “Protect” by itself gives no indication of what protection really entails, and fails to define both the degree to which ‘cultural sites’ will be protected and how this concern will rank in terms of the District’s priorities. Combined with the open term of “balancing,” the District is able to adjust the definition and importance of ‘protect’ to suit their needs. In this case, as discussed in a previous chapter, the priorities of development and recreation override promises to protect cultural sites, and the sacred remains of Ohlone ancestors

were irrevocably disturbed to make way for a parking lot. The Ohlone and others are left feeling betrayed, without the District actually having broken the promises of the management plan. With the language of the plan as it is, there's no guarantee this couldn't just as easily apply to other promises made by the District such as protecting ecosystems or species. The District can make itself look like it holds a wide ranging ethical consideration by declaring it will protect many things, without actually binding itself to respect such things in any meaningful way. As a result, a wide variety of agendas could be pushed through without actually violating the declarations of the Plan. While this may not generally be taken advantage, and what is implemented may generally reflect the Plan and the will of the people, the problem is that there doesn't seem to be a guarantee that this will always be the case.

There can be reasonable explanations for this. In a multicultural society like the US, there is often a need to balance many different voices and worldviews, and being open enough for people to come together is a good thing. The District has to take into account the concerns of two million people with diverse views, and it can be hard to be definitive in the face of that. The problem however, is that this is not explicitly or even implicitly addressed in the Master Plan. There are frameworks for management which work to actively reconcile different perspectives, and this Plan is not one of them. Looking at it, there does seem to be a more singular value system that the District follows, it just is not made clear. This isn't necessarily intentional, but represents a broader colonial trend where people fail to recognize or acknowledge their own world views.

In contrast, groups like Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei are keenly aware of their world view, shown in their ability to clearly refer to their value system throughout the management documents. There's a few reasons why this is the case. The first is that to survive in the face a

dominant system which works to erase and invalidate their beliefs, Māori and indigenous people generally have to actively explore and understand their worldviews to keep them thriving and strong. But even without the threat of colonialism, Māori generally are simply more aware of their worldview. Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei was able to easily reference an extensive, well-defined set of values and beliefs. These worldviews have been built up over hundreds, even thousands of years, with each new generation adding to this knowledge while actively engaging, challenging, and sustaining their system of values and practice. This is not so clear for the District and those behind it. Of course there is a value system present, as we've seen; it just needs to be explored.

The Values We Hold

I want to make it clear that there are similarities between the District and Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei. Both on some level share concerns for open spaces, wellbeing, and ecosystems among other concerns and general care for the land. But there are serious limits to these concerns by the District, limits brought on by a system of values and worldview which the District does not acknowledge or explain. These flaws, and their effect on the people and the land, must be addressed before positive connections can be properly explored.

I believe the best starting point for this analysis is colonialism, and the many colonial narratives I found within the documents of the District. We see this first in the way the District communicates its values, taking for granted many of the assumptions of the dominant Western system. Because they are part of the dominant system they don't need to explain themselves, and their worldview is presented as the only real option. They ignore and marginalize living Native practice,

Even where Native practice is recognized as existing, there is still the issue of validity. To tie back to the introduction of this thesis, the dominant society too often dictates what knowledge and values are considered valid, with indigenous practice being dismissed in a lot of different ways. If the parking lot case shows us anything, it's that the worldview of the Ohlone was not valid enough to be worth protecting in the eyes of the District, even for such a sacred site. Development was simply taken as the only 'real' approach, and the plan of the District that called for a parking lot as the only really valid option. As I talked about in the introduction, one of the prime ways this validity is enforced is through a scientific, empirical system of knowledges, which demands quantification and 'objectivity.' The use of science and empiricism isn't necessarily a bad thing, but taken as the sole path to knowledge it can be limited and exclusionary. While perhaps not knowingly engaging in this process, we can still see that the District adheres to this empirical system. Management is framed around scientific creation and dissemination of knowledge, with promised to incorporate these perspectives in decisions and practice. Even in considering the benefit and values of the park, the District uses an empirical economic analysis to highlight the worth of the parks and well-being in terms of dollar value. While this consideration is not made explicit in the master Plan, the existence of the document shows there is still a deep need to justify worth in quantifiable terms. This ties as well into the market values of capitalism, which uses prices to indicate worth.

All of this contributes to enforcing and justifying the dominant system, especially in terms of relating to the land. In this same way the Western worldview is elevated above any other, so too are humans placed above or superior to nature. While the District does recognize some aspects of intrinsic worth for the land and living things, it's still limited, and the focus centers almost entirely around benefit to humans. The people behind the District still don't seem

to fully recognize themselves as a part of nature, envisioning nature and the land instead as a resource to be used. Even if that use is benevolent in its intentions, it still leaves room for damage and harm from the dominant Western systems of which the District is a part. The land itself is still colonized, still seen a resource, and the people living on it lack connection. These value systems need to be challenged and expanded, for the sake of both those who it works to oppress and the people who hold these beliefs themselves.

One way to challenge this is to present alternatives, as I have tried to do here. The practice of Ngāti Whātua Ōrākei serves as a strong counterpoint to the colonial practice of the East Bay Regional Park District. The group is clear in its communications, referencing a well-established framework of values which is itself respectful of and open to alternative world views. They deliberate, and make sure management comes from the community in an open, meaningful way, and are concerned with process as much as the results. Their practice is fundamentally local, with systems of knowledge and being that are intimately connected with the land itself. They are concerned not only for their own well-being, but that of all future generations, as well as the mauri or vital force of all things. For these reasons and more, their practice, and worldview, are ultimately both just and sustainable. There is much that can be learned from this practice, and steps we can take to reach such a space in our own lives. We can try, where we can, to center community, and localize practice. We can challenge and critique the colonialism of our practice, and actively work to acknowledge and respect alternative ways of knowing. We can make our beliefs clear, and work towards healthier ways of relating to the land, and each other. Engaging with one another, I believe we can create a safe, just, and sustainable world.