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Western consumers are increasingly demanding to know the provenance of their food. In New Zealand, M ori tribal enterprises are engaged in the food producing sectors of farming and

understanding of the world. The M ori worldview is explored to demonstrate how this view manifests culturally.

Then we outline how the modernist worldview conflicts with aims of food provenancing. We explain that food marketers are using provenance to sell 'representations' of people and place, as opposed to an animist approach that seeks to connect consumers into human and nonhuman networks of personal relationships. Put simply, it is a case of image versus substance. In the final sections, we outline how animism can capture and support authentic provenance. A case study, *Ahik Kai*

is, at best, a misrepresentation, and its implicit assumption that the animists are mistaken has resulted in much of the focus on animism directed towards explaining 'why' they made this mistake rather than 'what' they actually believe.

Bird-David (1999) and Willerslev (2007) provide comprehensive histories of the attempts to explain this 'mistake', showing how Durkheim and Levi-Strauss portrayed animism as a symbolic representation –

animal or natural phenomena has personhood – the opposite is true, only those with which they have a relationship with have personhood (Willerslev, 2007). “If the object of modernist epistemology is a totalizing scheme of separated essences, approached ideally from a separated viewpoint, the object of this animist knowledge is understanding relatedness from a related point of view... Against “I think therefore I am” stands “I relate therefore I am” and “I know as I relate” (Bird-David as cited in Garuba, 2012).

Animism is not “a formally abstracted and articulated philosophy”, rather it is a “pragmatic and down-to-earth” practice restricted to “specific contexts of activity and experiences” (Willerslev, 2007, pp. 8-9). Willerslev (2007) explains that often these relationships evolved during the process of sourcing food; not always, but frequently, the most important connections the animist has is with the food they eat because it is so central to their life. Animism is most often found amongst not i15 (e) -1

that the world is "*simultaneously real, like nature, narrated, like discourse, and collective, like society*" (1993, p. 2, 6). We are, as Bai believes, "'hard-wired' for the capacity for participatory consciousness", animism is innate and inescapable (2009, p. 146).

A clear example of animism in practice is the M

material across generations. Instead, the term *tupuna* encapsulates not only the notion of all biological genetic inheritance (including human and non-human), but also non-human elements (e.g. rivers) that have supported the existence of ancestors, and in turn the emergence of current generations. The entire genealogy, or *whakapapa*, consequently encapsulates all contributive living and non-living beings, and determines that each has a place in the cosmic family tree. Furthermore, through situating each being as kin, the notion of *whakapapa* extends personhood beyond humans to encapsulate the entire family tree. However, this does not presume that all persons are human-persons, but instead acknowledges that there are differences between branches of the family.

In addition to *whakapapa*, another key concept for understanding animism from a Māori perspective is the notion of *mauri*. All beings within the cosmic family, or *whakapapa*, are understood to be animated by what is termed *mauri*, which can be translated to mean 'life essence' (Morgan, 2006). *Mauri* is a vitality that is emanated through a being (e.g. a human person) as they continually grow and unfold over time (Morgan, 2006). In essence, it refers to the life, health, and vitality of a particular entity, whether a person or a river. For example, the *mauri*

enables an individual to understand the relationships and interdependencies that give rise to their self.

While provenance is often “conflated with place [it] has a much wider meaning”: it has a “spatial dimension (its place of origin), a social dimension (its methods of production and distribution), and a cultural dimension (its perceived qualities and reputation)” (Morgan et al. 2008, p. 4). Provenance, then, is concerned with almost every aspect of the food’s history, but this only becomes useful when the consumer is informed of the provenance. All food has a provenance, the utility of provenance comes when the consumer is made aware of a correspondence between their values and the food’s provenance as mediated by marketing (Coles, 2013). Thus, the following discussion will largely focus on food provenance marketing, though there will be ongoing reference to provenance proper as well.

Food provenancing is aimed at informing the consumer of the product’s spatial, social, and cultural parameters while contemporary approaches to marketing are often intent on obscuring provenance, of severing the genuine spatial, social, and cultural connections and creating false ones in their stead (Brand, 2010; Cook and Crang; Goodman et al. 2014; Johnston and Szabo, 2011). The danger is that rather than providing consumers with legitimate information, food provenance marketing generates another means of creating a false relationship with the consumer. Food writer Jay Rayner (2014) points out that provenance has been seized upon as a marketing ‘buzzword’, with many producers manufacturing a false sense of provenance rather than informing the consumer of the food’s true provenance. A similar issue is noted by Goodman et al. (2014, p. 5) when they warn of the dangers of large-scale retailers commoditizing ethical values promoted by alternative food and fair trade movements, explaining that these “encounters reveal that the interface between “alternative” and “conventional” is becoming highly permeable”.

It is problematic even for producers who are making genuine attempts at communicating provenance. Sorman-Nilsson (2013) writes, “the French wine industry, as a whole has been slow

celebrity endorsement, but she explains they “need not engage these blatant strategies to qualify as [being an] active relationship partner” (1998, p. 345). Rather, all that is required is “the everyday execution of marketing plans and tactics [that] can be construed as behaviors performed by the brand acting in its relational role” (1998, p. 345). Fournier explains that people’s innate anthropomorphic tendencies mean they will naturally relate to the brand in a humanized manner as long as the marketing reinforces this relationship. This form of marketing seeks to create false relationships by manipulating people’s natural tendency to humanize nonhuman entities, or, as we argue, to relate to them in an animist fashion. This approach is evident in Fournier’s statement that a “brand may enjoy selected animistic properties, but it is not a vital entity. In fact, the brand has no objective existence at all: it is simply a collection of perceptions held in the mind of the consumer. The brand cannot act or think or feel – except through the activities of the manager that administers it” (1998, p. 345). The brand is a fiction, made to seem like it can act, think, and feel by the activities of marketer. There is, then, a fundamental disjuncture between food provenance and the actions of modernist marketing and its cynical manipulation of our innate

interdependent relationships that are integral to the animist worldview: it is food from those who still live with the awareness of their deep relationship to place.

Ahik Kai's purpose is to provide an online platform where “[c]onsumers purchasing products can trace their product..., identify where their food has come from, and learn about the producer and thei

customers.” This feature is not just for the consumer – ongoing awareness of the food’s provenance is critical to Ng i Tahu as well. As one of the founders of *Ahik Kai*, Jymal Morgan, explains, “traceability and verification are the main issue for us. The cultural authenticity of both provides a link to the people”. Chairperson of Wairewa R nanga, Robin Wybrow further emphasizes this in the R nanga description: “Mahinga kai (food resources) are at the heart of Ng i Tahu culture and identity. It is the cornerstone of our spiritual, cultural, social, and economic well-being, and a symbol of our continuing relationship with the traditions and history that place us on our land and tie us together as Ng i Tahu.”

The final animist aspect is the use of a blog and Twitter account. While they allow the provision of extra biographical information on the wider *whakapapa* of the producers, critically, both platforms provide a two-way means of communicating with the consumer through comments and Tweets, respectively. The *Ahik Kai* blog has posts that provide extra information about traditional M ori foods and their meaning M ori, which helps to connect the consumer with the producer. The consumer can leave comments on the blog, allowing them to make connections with the *Ahik Kai*

this by removing the artificial division between culture and nature and affirming that it is our very relationships with nature that gives it the subjectivity from which its agency flows (FitzSimmons and Goodman, 1997).

The ability for animist provenance to increase environmental and ethical awareness through emphasis of interdependence can be seen in *Ahik Kai's* principles. The values of *hauora*, *kaitiakitanga*, *whanaungatanga* and *kaik kiritanga* all embody this, the first with its stress on the indivisible health of the entire ecosystem, the second with its focus on a 'holistic view of living ecosystems', the third with its promotion of 'equity, respect, social justice and stewardship of the shared world' and the fourth with its emphasis on the need to protect the *mauri*, *whakapapa* and *wairua* of the resources because of their ability to sustain life. The *Ahik Kai* principles in their entirety, the *tikanga*, outlines an alternative way for consumers to view their relationship with the world in a more ethical and environmentally responsible manner.

– their names, their location and their connection to their nonhuman *whakapapa* – and the consumers are then brought into this continually unfolding relational nexus through both awareness of these connections and their participation in them. They come to know the entities, human and nonhuman, involved in the production of the food and are able to communicate with them, and we believe this understanding and interaction will make them care more about provenance. In turn, through the mechanism of provenance, the website exposes the consumer to the animist worldview and actually encourages them to develop animist connections with the

the subjecthood of nonhuman entities, showing how *mauri* can embody the relationships of production and communicate hybridity, animism provides this comprehension.

The hybrid nature of the commodity can be seen in the product description for the *t t*, where it is explained that the commodity itself is related to the producer, that the *t t* are *t puna*. Here the commodity becomes hybrid, both ancestor-subject and commodity-

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