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ARTICLE



Experiencing *mana* as ancestral wind-work

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Pacific Traditions Society

ABSTRACT

How is *mana* experienced? Can anyone experience *mana* and *mana*-like phenomena? How do practitioners interact with it? This paper describes experiences of *mana* as wind and weather, the wind/weather predictions of *mana* practitioners, and how modifications to wind/weather are made by interacting with ancestors. I contrast the accuracy of *mana* as weather-work that is ancestrally linked, with inaccurate meteorological predictions that evaded personal and ancestral connections and attempts to modify wind or weather. I relay how wind/weather-workers define *mana*, and explain how it works, and how to engage it. I observe that technocratic and mono-phasic/mono-ontologic framings discount such experiences as unverifiable or unreal.

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Introduction

In this paper I relate how I was taught about and experienced *mana* in the forms of wind and weather behaviors. I highlight the role of personal and ancestral relationships in those experiences, and describe some *mana* and *mana*-like phenomena (hereafter referred to simply as *mana*), so that personally lived experiences might move toward the center of the discourse about *mana*. I argue that by considering personal experiences of *mana*, we will better understand it.

Technocratic culture has urged us toward reductionist and categorical understandings of worldly phenomena and ourselves. But subjects like *mana* resist such framing, because the reality that *mana* is a part of is not what most scientists are willing to deal with. Modern technology, and scientific knowledge in particular, is not a neutral instrument. It uses rational thought and logic to discuss and explain. But it is not good at accessing or dealing with subjects that involve subjective experience, anecdotal evidence, and altered states of consciousness. These subjects are mostly relegated to subjective disciplines, like religion and depth psychology.

In general, waking, rational, and objective states of consciousness are easier to study with technocratic methodologies, which can count or measure things

that everyone can observe, and so get treated as being more real than subjective states, such as sleeping and dreaming. When *mana* is studied in terms that are identified with features of waking consciousness, such as normal social categories and relationships, concepts and beliefs, then what is observed is also regarded as being part of the 'real' world (see Laughlin, this issue; Laughlin 1994, 2011). When subjective experiences such as dreams and other alternative states of consciousness are regarded as somehow 'unreal' or unverifiable, it should not be surprising when researchers from technocratic cultures either do not have these experiences themselves, or are constrained from reporting them by the objectifying models and methods of their disciplines.

People from cultures that regard alternative states of consciousness as just as real as everyday consciousness, do give alternative states equal attention and importance. These non-technocrats regard engagement with ancestors as engagement with the root of cultural structures and concepts, rather than as belief or conformity that is the result of a more primary reality of cultural structures and concepts (Laughlin 1994). I am not arguing that the experiences called *mana* are completely unfamiliar or unattainable by people engaged in scientific disciplines and members of highly technocratic cultures. I am simply noting that technocrats and scientists usually define such experiences as religious, spiritual, or psychological in nature, and relegate them to the realms of belief and subjectivity. These realms do not have the same credence as the technical and reductionist facts that science privileges as knowledge.

In my experiences, expert practitioners of *mana* are agents in a world in which they can and must interact with ancestors. Their ancestral experiences do not derive from the social categories or concepts that have mostly been applied to *mana* by social scientists. Rather, they experience a state of being and engagement with phenomena that are defined by ancestral agencies and relationships. The contrasting view of reality is that there is just one universe (a 'mono-ontology'), in which mind and matter, subject and object, spirit and body, religion and science, culture and nature are radically divided (and opposed) pairs, and that reliable knowledge arises from the detached and disembodied observation of material phenomena. Furthermore, insights that arise from 'spiritual' or 'religious' experience are 'subjective' in nature, and fall outside the realm of reliable, objective science.

The difficulty with mono-ontologic framing is that in many Pacific cultures there are different ontological realms (for instance *te po*, the ancestral realm; and *te kore*, nothingness or the void, among Maori) in which reality manifests itself differently from ordinary, everyday life. When relationships with ancestors are activated, the everyday world and the ancestral realm are linked, and this is associated with flows of *mana* as ancestral power (Salmond 2013).

When those who seek to understand Pacific lives are unaware of or ignore these ontological differences, difficulties in dealing with *mana* arise, because there is no proven reality – or, perhaps, provable reality – about *mana*. A

researcher who directly experiences, or learns to manipulate, *mana* is regarded as engaging in irrational beliefs and psychological pathologies that conflict with scientific methods. This is called 'going native'.

To militate against breaches of 'objective' standards, science students are usually taught particle and classical field theories, as in pre-modern physics, before they learn about wave and quantum field theories. How the two approaches meet in observable reality is the great scientific problem of lack of materiality, or, quantum uncertainty. But the cultural bias of science is to teach a foundation in 'certain' knowledge before students are presented with the problem of a lack of materiality. In this approach researchers are defined as 'objective' observers, and as such are removed bodily and psychically from experiences of *mana*, so the results of their research cannot be influenced by who the researcher is or anything the researcher does.

I argue that understanding of a subjectively defined thing like *mana* comes with recognition that people are constituted by their active relationships with people, land, ancestors, wind, swells, animals, and so forth – these relationships are continually being negotiated. Furthermore, healthy ancestral relationships rely on appropriate, reciprocal, exchanges. I posit that to understand how most of humanity relates to *mana* we must embrace disciplined consideration of experiences of *mana*, and the guidance that practitioners of *mana* offer to those who want to learn what they are doing. I have experienced *mana*; and I embrace phenomenological epistemology, in that it at least recognizes a need for experiential accounts.

Wind as *mana* versus wind as a natural phenomenon

For everyone, wind is an invisible force that can bring cooling or heat, rainy, drying, or storm conditions. Meteorologists regard wind as a type of natural phenomenon, a key part of weather that has no direct relationship with people or their ancestors. Meteorological hypotheses and ideas about weather see the strength or direction of the wind as unrelated to their own personal needs. They do not profess that they or their ancestors have any control or influence over weather. They also believe that no one else has such control.

Meteorologists are interested in differentials in the temperature and pressure of gases and air. They study how heating of air generates higher pressure, and differences in high and low pressure create wind. Other factors include the Coriolis effect, humidity, altitude, and so on. Meteorologists predict what direction and speed the wind will blow from tomorrow after charting the data at various distances, speeds, altitudes, and times. They measure phenomena that heat and cool the air, such as ocean temperatures, currents, or carbon dioxide, and make models based on patterns over time. If these models fail to predict wind/weather behavior, then other data can be gathered, and other models tested. Meteorological models and predictions are expected to

improve over time, as the technology for measuring and observing wind, air pressure, temperature, and so on becomes more accurate and more extensive in coverage of relevant factors.

In the experiences I describe below, *mana* practitioners regard wind as an expression of *mana*. *Mana* practitioners call the wind to assist them when they need it. *Mana* practitioners hold that they can and do control wind, and that ancestors are agents that help people control, or modify, winds that people desire or need. Ancestors can punish or challenge people by modifying wind/weather that people do not want, or that will injure them. They can also move inside the hearts of people to open their awareness and bring healing, as Lederman reported (1991).

I have professional experience using both the meteorological and the *mana* models, as a sailor and as a social scientist studying ancient voyaging skills. I will describe how these experiences illustrate basic differences in understanding, and relating to, weather. I argue that these are relevant to understanding how experiences of *mana* are foundational to cultural expressions, rather than the other way around. In this way *mana* may be a universal thing, like quantum physics, and should be studied as such by scientists.

The wind experiences I describe below happened while sailing with people of various cultures. These included speakers of Siberian Yupik, Euro-American English, and two Austronesian languages. I am writing this study as much from the standpoint of a seasoned mariner as from anthropology. I have navigated and captained small vessels in winter-over voyages in Antarctica and the Arctic, and in the western Pacific, and in other remote oceans. My contributions to describing these technologies include Lewis with George 1985A; 1985B; George 1985; Lewis and George 1993, George 1998, George 1999, George 2006, George 2012; Feinberg and George 2014 and George 2017).

Experiences of *mana* versus meteorology

Three of the four experiences described below are associated with *mana*, or something similar to *mana*, that is known to have originated with Austronesian language speakers. In all these experiences the way people dealt with wind as *mana* contrasts with the way meteorologists deal with wind. In these cases, meteorologists (1) did not and could not explain the wind/weather, (2) did not feel any direct personal connection to it, and (3) were professionally unequipped to attempt to modify it. By contrast, agents of *mana* (1) did predict weather that meteorologists could not, (2) did have direct personal and ancestral interactions with wind (and wind-related) phenomena, and (3) used those connections and ancient interactive techniques to enlist or redirect *mana* as wind, rain, swells, squalls, and suchlike.

As a seafarer, I have experienced many mistaken meteorological forecasts. However, as a researcher of ancient seafaring technology I experienced infallibly correct forecasts of weather by certain master *mana* practitioners. I also had many experiences of *mana* practitioners modifying weather in certain predictable ways. Over a period of nearly four decades, I came to trust in their forecasts and methods.

As I witnessed and experienced the *mana* interactions, and as I was instructed how to do it and practiced doing it myself, I noticed growth in my own ability to interact with natural and ancestral phenomena. I became more able to identify and observe key phenomena, and I became comfortable with the fact that ancestors were key mediators between the phenomena and me/us. I became accustomed to calling upon the same ancestors for help. The people I observed and learned from were clear that they interacted with the wind through the agency of their ancestors, and that the wind was one of their ancestors. They sought the help of ancestors to deal with the wind because the wind itself was an ancestral being with transpersonal characteristics. Through the agency of ancestors, they were able to determine what ancestral wind was expressed and how it was expressed.

It is a meteorologically obvious fact that certain wind orientations, strengths, and movements bring certain types of weather. These winds are also associated with various other natural phenomena, such as bringing rain or drought, flooding, or fires. Some winds are cooling, and some come as storms. The calm absence of wind may define sauna-like heating, fog, or the still freezing of land and sea. Phenomena that are caused by wind include sea swells, currents, migrations of animals, growth cycles of plants, twinkling or occlusion of asterisms (any identified pattern of stars) by clouds, among other effects. Scientists often regard traditional weather lore as superstitious beliefs, or as too difficult to investigate. Examples of this sort of lore include correlations and calibrations between the arrival of certain winds and weather with the rising and setting positions of certain asterisms around the horizon, and weather-heralding behaviors of many animals and plants that scientists are unfamiliar with. But science is even more averse to studying manipulations of wind and weather as *mana*, such as predictions and modifications of wind behaviors. These include the 'weather-work' of calling the wind to blow from a desired position, or making wind move its position or change its speed (blow faster or slower), or making squalls change their path so that they do not interfere with the route of one's vessel.

The Polynesian practitioner's model I cite below describes how wind and weather are worked by an ancestral *mana* practitioner, and illustrates clearly (a) how wind/weather systems are experienced by people, and (b) how ancestors are instrumental in modifying wind and weather as *mana*. I describe and illustrate this model here. But it is a complex model that has reference to, and is unpacked somewhat by, the experiences I describe later in this paper.

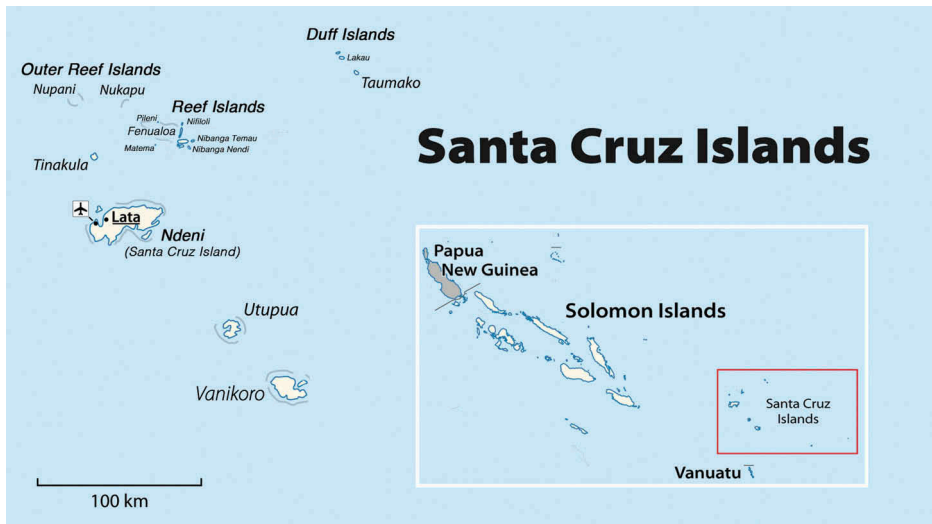


Figure 1. Map of Santa Cruz Islands, Temotu Province, southeast Solomon Islands. Taumako is the largest island of the Duffs Group in the far northeast of the Santa Cruz Islands. (Map by Neil Mortimer.). Source: Neil Mortimer and Vaka Taumako Project.

From 1993 to 2017, Paramount Chief Kaveia of Taumako, Duff Islands (Figure 1), worked to produce good sailing winds for 38 voyages within the southeast Solomon Islands, and from Hawaii to the island of Taumako and return three times. Until 2009, TeAliko Kaveia was alive. After his death, he functioned as an ancestor. I describe instances of his weather-work during his life and after he became an ancestor.

In 1998, TeAliko Kaveia explained that the ancient model of how the overall seasonal wind patterns and each weather cycle (i.e. the wind that arrives with what meteorologists call a ‘weather front’) moves through and then the next front arrives is the work of a special person (Figure 2). Kaveia told me that that person is probably the Taumako culture hero, Lata, the First Voyager. But it is also true that Lata is not just an ancient hero. People who call the wind today are regarded as a present-day Lata because of having that capability. Modifying weather is proof that a person accesses the *mana* of Lata.

This model of the behavior of wind systems works like this (Figure 3): early in the trade-wind season, the eye of the wind (the position that the wind blows from) stabilizes when ‘sitting down’ (*noholalo*) on the *TeAlunga* position. As a weather system passes through Lata’s position, the position that the eye of the wind sits on moves clockwise, such as to *TeTonga* and/or to *TeUlu*. Each time this happens, Lata extends a right arm and pushes it counterclockwise, back to *TeAlunga*. But as the trade-wind season progresses, Lata is unable to push it all the way back to *TeAlunga* and the stabilized/default position becomes *TeTonga*. Lata keeps pushing it back, but eventually the eye of the wind will not be pushed back to the *TeTonga* position. Lata keeps trying, but

cultures knew more about weather than meteorologists demonstrated. Here is a macro-scale example of that.

In September 1981, I was about to depart the Barok community after spending 20 of the last 28 months with them. The Barok are an Austronesian language-speaking people living on the west coast of south-central New Ireland, a 200-mile-long island north of mainland Papua New Guinea. I arranged with my Barok sons (who adopted me) that I would complete my MA thesis and mail it to them. I advised them that I might not return for two years, because at this time next year I might be preparing a sailboat to go to the Antarctic for a winter-over. I explained that this huge land mass was covered in ice and surrounded by sea-ice that freezes solid about 11 months of the year. It would take two months to sail to the place we were going, and then we would allow our boat to freeze in that sea-ice until the following year, when the ice would break up and release us (Lewis and George 1985b). While there, we would travel on the frozen sea-ice and make scientific observations and collections until the following summer would melt the ice. Then I would sail back to Australia and work until the following southern summer, when I hoped to come see them again.

After I told them all this, my sons and daughters gave me grave warnings. 'Next year we will be having a big drought through these islands,' they said. 'You must be careful about where you are going to be next year. You must be prepared so that you have enough food and water ... changes will happen everywhere, not just here'. They asked me what I would eat. 'Oh,' I said, 'we will bring all our food with us ... enough for two years, in case the ice does not let us out after the first year. Also, we will have a rifle to shoot seals and birds ... and we will have hooks and lines to fish with.'

'Well,' they replied, 'as long as you bring enough food with you then maybe you will be okay.'

At the last mortuary feast I participated in before I left in 1982, a ritual that was a precursor to one that was scheduled to happen upon my return, I asked my son Tadi Slei: 'How do you know it is going to be a drought here, and how do you know that the weather will be bad where I will be too?'

'The animals and plants who are here now are telling us,' was the reply. 'These animals and plants are our ancestors. They come, or go, and they tell us when they know that the coming year will be as we are telling you. The stars too are telling us. They twinkle and move like they are now when the following year will be as we are telling you now. For us in these islands, it will be hot and dry. We know that other regions will be cold and wet. We also see that some of these creatures come from very far away. So we know that distant regions will be cold and wet.'

'How often does this happen?' I asked.

'It varies,' I was told. 'The interval between these droughts usually may be 7 or 11 years ... but now we can see that late next year is going to be a drought here.'

Before we departed for the Antarctic, meteorologists assured us that the normal ice and weather conditions were expected. However, when our vessel approached the frozen continent it became clear that it was what Antarctic natives called an 'unexpectedly bad ice year'. Coasts that were usually clear of ice in January were now jammed with 5–10 miles of pack ice. If we were to gain the Antarctic coast, we had to find our way through narrow leads; and we set ourselves to it. After a week of passing through leads, the ice closed on us and we were icebound. This was not a situation limited to our part of the Antarctic. During the 10 days that we were icebound, two large Antarctic supply vessels became icebound and their crews required rescue as their vessels sank. Eventually, an icebreaker came by very near our position and we followed in its wake to open water through the broken ice. We proceeded to survey winter-over anchorages and selected one that served us well until the following year. We were able to ski far up and down the coast over the sea-ice pulling sleds. The Southern Cross circled round our mast until the following summer. Then it became clear that the ice was so very slow in melting and cracking open into leads that we might not have a way to move out of our bay into the open sea before the sea froze over again. In fact, it came down to exactly one day when a thin crack appeared and we had to go for it or stay another winter. We did only just make it out before the crack closed tightly again for another year.

During the next year in Australia and the United States, meteorologists began to say that they thought that the unusual ice and weather conditions of 1982–84 were part of a worldwide El Niño phenomenon. In other words, during the year that we were in the Antarctic, meteorologists first discovered that El Niño was not just a change in the route of a cold current running up the west coast of South America, but a global shift in currents, ocean temperatures, polar ice cover, and weather.

Meteorological models of El Niño–Southern Oscillation (ENSO) cycle variations and predictions contrast with the model of Lata pushing the wind, in that ENSO cycle models include no people and no transpersonal agencies. No balance or adjustment is required in the human interactions with the weather. The model is strictly technocratic in the sea temperature and wind variation factors that are charted. For meteorologists, the cycles are 'irregularly periodic' (see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Niño–Southern_Oscillation) and largely unpredictable until changes in temperatures and winds are well advanced.

My Barok family had accurately predicted the El Niño over a year and a half before it happened. Their close relationship with ancestrally linked animals and plants 'warned' them. By contrast, the meteorologists reduced weather information to measurements of air, and were not interested in whether plants or animals knew what the weather was going to do. Meteorology had not then figured out what over 100 years of global weather and current data meant in a

systematic fashion, and meteorologists saw no indication that anything would be different. Of course, scientists never thought to ask about weather patterns from the Barok or any other people who were not meteorologists!

An ancient equinoctial path beyond the reach of meteorological practice

I experienced another example of superior weather knowledge, this time on the micro scale, in 1998, when a son of Paramount Chief, Koloso Kaveia, the premier Taumako weather-worker, and I were preparing to make a voyage in a small sailing vessel from southeast Solomon Islands to New Zealand. Legally we had to depart from Lata, the provincial capital at Santa Cruz Island, within 24 hours of clearing immigration and customs. Our voyage depended on having a fair wind. I wanted to get south of New Caledonia before October could bring an early-season cyclone, as it had done some years earlier. During the last two years, the south-east trade winds had been extremely strong – what marine weather reports referred to as ‘supercharged’. Before departing Taumako for Lata, I had sought Kaveia’s advice, and he had told me to wait for the equinox. Specifically, he suggested that I depart from Lata a day or two



Figure 4. Diagram of trade-wind and cyclone seasons, solstices, and equinoxes aligned with 16 named wind positions (*Te Nohoanga Te Matangi*). (Diagram by Daniel Jackson, from drawings by Mimi George.). Source: Vaka Taumako Project.

after the equinox (i.e. after the sun passes directly over the equator) (Figure 4). I did not want to wait another full week before departing. So I decided that if the winds I wanted were to arrive earlier than the days that Kaveia recommended leaving, I would depart earlier. I did not tell TeAlike Kaveia my plan.

There were strong southerlies on 15 and 16 September. That night, I saw a bank of high cloud heralding a front from the west. On the morning of 17 September, the wind died, and I went to the Lata weather station to see the latest weatherfax chart and forecast. They called for moderate westerly winds to arrive that day and blow all night until northeasterly winds would arrive on the morning of the 18th and blow for three days. Without delay, we hauled up the anchor and sailed east along the north coast of Santa Cruz Island. Then I saw the high cloud front advancing from the northeast, and I figured we were going to get an ideal wind to go south. However, when we cleared the east end of the island the next morning, we had only light easterlies, which, by noon, became headwinds from the southeast. Thinking that they might eventually move back again to come from the northeast, we started to tack back and forth – but no such luck. The headwind strengthened all day and night and by the 19th we were exhausted and just hoping to maintain some position until the wind changed.

On the night of the 19th, the wind became so strong it drove us north so far that we could not sail back to Santa Cruz Island. We fought as hard as we could, but by the morning of the 20th it was clear that the currents would soon take us past all the islands. We had a tear in the mainsail that needed repair, and we badly needed rest. So, I decided to call ‘force of weather’ and steered for the only possible refuge, Taumako. We arrived early on the morning of the 21st. People came to help us set a tentative anchor on the reef, and Kaveia sent his sons to watch the boat and they told me to go talk with him at an artificial island about 3 km away. When I arrived at Kaveia’s home, he wanted to know why I had not waited until the wind changed like he had told me. I hung my head and admitted that I saw the clouds and had a good weather report and decided to try to get a head-start.

‘When will there be a fair wind?’ I asked him.

‘Well, you see where the wind is positioned now?’ Kaveia replied.

I replied that yes I did, noticing the unusual clouds in the sky. It looked like a tremendous battle between southeastern and northeastern fronts.

‘In another day and a half or two, the eye of the wind will move to there [pointing north] and then you leave immediately,’ Kaveia continued. ‘When you are at sea it will sit down in the north-northeast and take you all the way past Port Vila. Come eat and sleep. It will not happen until tomorrow evening or early the next morning.’

Indeed, that is exactly what happened. We sailed southward in a gale-force, quartering wind for four straight days. The visibility was poor. I listened to the single sideband radio as we sailed south and heard nearby yachts making calls

to other yachts giving their positions and telling of whirlwinds (waterspouts) and knockdowns from sudden and violent winds. These yachts were located no more than a mile to either side of us. On both sides, storm winds were coming from the opposite direction to the wind we were sailing before. Although these yachts were losing spars and having a very uncomfortable time, no one required rescue. So, we sailed on gratefully, and reached the south-most islands of Vanuatu before our narrow lane of fair wind died out.

It was only because I had arrived back at Duffs unexpectedly that I saw that Chief Kaveia had erected 'weather sticks' on his roof. These are short lengths of roots or branches from particular plants, that are barked and carved to a point at one end that then is coated in lime powder. Kaveia had these sticks pointing in the direction that we needed the wind to come from. I knew then that he had done 'weather-work' to reinforce the arrival of the eye of the wind into the position that his son and I desired for sailing to, and past, Vanuatu. On that occasion I asked Kaveia how he knew what the wind would do, and if he already knew, then why did he use the weather sticks anyway? He explained clearly that he was familiar with the seasonal wind/weather behavior, but he was just calling for the wind to take the precise position that we needed and stay there long enough for us to reach our destination.

It is important to note that neither the meteorological instruments in this region (scarce though they are), nor the satellite imagery (which was accessible to meteorologists with enough funds to pay for the imagery), was applied to forecasts given for this region at the time. But even now it is not a priority of meteorologists to be so intimate with the weather in many regions of the world where commercial shipping rarely ventures.

But there was more to Kaveia's practices than knowledge of objectified natural phenomena. Kaveia was also being proactive in his interactions with wind and weather patterns because he had a relationship with the wind and he wanted to communicate clearly with it – just as he would with 'anyone', human or not. His interest was to help his people learn to interact effectively with wind and weather. His method was to enlist ancestral help to stand up and relate directly to the *mana* in the wind/weather – to stand in the center, as Lata did – and mediate between human consciousness/need/desire and those beings that make up what scientists call the natural world.

But in this case Kaveia was not controlling wind directly, because he does not see his role or goal as that of domination. Kaveia asked Lata to help manipulate wind-as-*mana*, in order to help us have the wind come from the position we needed. Kaveia identified and positioned himself with the calm stance and method of his ancestor Lata, and then, according to Kaveia, Lata did listen and calmly did what Lata does. But as happens every equinox, the right wind could only come after the violent collision of winds from two obtusely angled positions, and their counterclockwise creep until they joined forces and sat down in

the *TeTokelauTuPalapu* position (north-northwest) to blow like a banshee and make a narrow lane of fair wind for us for the next four days.

This experience helped me consider what importance Kaveia's model attached to the image of Lata turning in the calm before the wind began to blow hard in the positions of the next season. I asked myself, how could the calm and balanced, dance-like movements of Lata help Kaveia's community, and more specifically our voyaging crew, meet the goal of making a strong wind sit down in the position we needed the wind to blow from? Does Lata need to be a blood ancestor of a person who wants to help with wind? What can humanity learn from Lata's calm and methodical example?

'Calm in the captain's belly fends off storms', and ancestral relationships

The theme of calmness near storm winds arose clearly in another experience I had in the Bering Sea and Arctic Ocean. In June 1988, our small Euro-American crew was motor-sailing up the growing ice lead from the eastern Aleutian Islands north to the southwest Cape of St. Lawrence Island (Figure 5). At midnight, I went off-watch and fell into an exhausted sleep. But after an hour I was jolted by what I perceived as very loud rifle shots. In my hypnopompic dream I stood on the yoke of the boom of the mainsail and scanned the sea between large and jumbled pack ice and the sky in case of any flares. I glimpsed two skiffs between ice flows in the distance. I suddenly woke up and rushed up into the cockpit. There, I learned that no one else had heard the

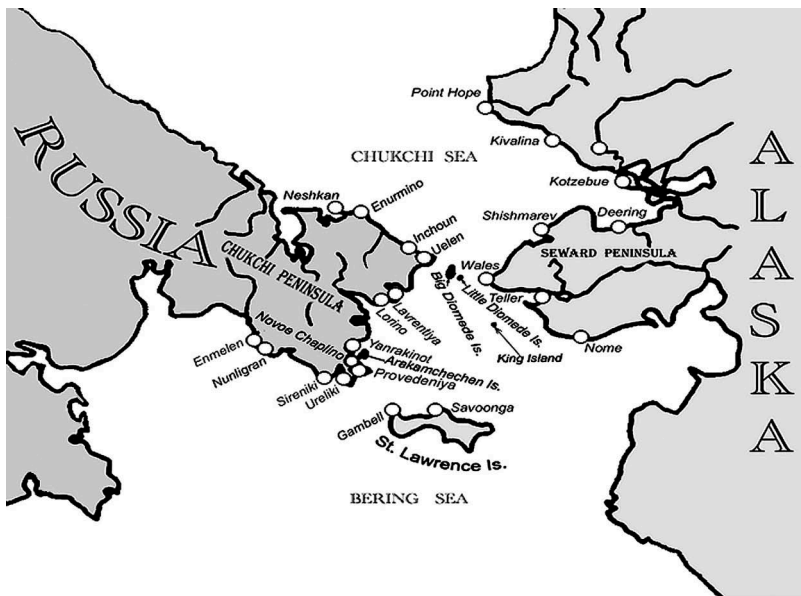


Figure 5. Map of Bering Straits. (Map by Igor Pasternak.)

shots. I told my partner, who was leading the watch, about my dream. We stopped the engines and listened. As happened in my dream, I climbed up onto the yoke of the main boom to see over some of the ice flows. We shot our flare gun repeatedly and listened for a response. There was none. We proceeded to our rendezvous at southwest Cape.

Several days later, we arrived at the Cape to find no one there. We proceeded to the northwest Cape community of Gambell, Alaska. There we learned that for the last two weeks, seven hunters were missing in two skiffs since a sudden change of wind and pack ice dragged them off toward the southwest. The St. Lawrence Island hunters were out in their skiffs and *umiaks* searching for the lost hunters. The US Coast Guard had just given up searching and the National Guard planes would soon be ordered to stop flying.

We agreed to be the 'mother ship' for dozens of small St. Lawrence islander vessels. During the next 12 days we searched the entire Bering Sea clockwise, directed by five indigenous hunters who came on board. Every day our weatherfax was telling us that a giant, late-spring storm was imminent and, indeed, we could see it moving ominously toward us as we sailed up the Soviet coast, across to between the Diomed Islands and around the big polynya (ice-free area surrounded by fast-ice) in the Arctic Ocean north of Diomedes and back down the Alaskan Coast. But it never quite caught up with us.

To cut a long story short, when we sailed round the southeast Cape of St. Lawrence Island we heard the lost hunters calling us on their radio, the batteries of which they had heated up in a fire upon arrival on land. They had just drifted back to the south of their island after having drifted down the Soviet coast past St. Matthews Island and all the way back to St. Lawrence Island in the ice that had cleared behind us as we approached the southeast Cape the week before. We were able to call in their position so that a helicopter could reach them at dusk to take three of them who were near death to Nome hospital. We were then uncertain about being able to make it around the southwest and northwest Capes to debark our crew of hunters before the hurricane force winds of the massive storm hit us.

Weatherfax showed that the violent storm front was located only a mile from Gambell and traveling toward us at 10 knots (13 m/hr). In other words, it would hit Gambell and the entire west coast of St. Lawrence Island in 10 minutes! But the hunters told us that we had two and a half hours to get there, drop them off, and then enough time to get safely anchored in the lee of the mountain to the east of Gambell. We trusted their forecast because during the last week they had always been right when the weather forecasts about this storm were wrong. The hunters were right again, and three days later, when the storm abated we re-anchored off Gambell beach and joined the community for a celebration of the arrival of the lost hunters.

In speeches, both the Mayor of Gambell and the leader of the boat captains' group stated that the week-long delay in the arrival of the storm was due to

the 'calmness in the belly of the captain' of our sailboat. 'Strong winds recognize and respect such calmness,' the Mayor elaborated. 'Your captain should start coming to our boat captains' group – there is obviously some ancient relationship between us.'

As it happened, two months later we received permission from Soviet authorities to bring 11 St. Lawrence Islanders to Chukotka for a reunion with family members they were separated from by Cold War policies between the USSR and the USA. It was mid-August and an autumn storm was already overdue. But we sailed across to Chukotka, and our Siberian Yupik passengers searched and found family members in many different villages and camps along the coast.

Each day the meteorology reports were ominous. Each day a huge storm came closer to our position in southeast Chukotka. When we finally did leave, the report was that the storm would catch up with us before we reached Gambell. But it did not. We could see the big ink-dark shape of its clouds and the fierce white fringe of whipping winds along the sea's surface. But it stalled just a mile behind us, and never caught us up. In fact, we dropped off the 11 'Gambellites' at home, were joined by one other hunter who wanted to go with us and we made 60 miles southing before the storm hit Gambell. As the 11 Gambell people left our boat, various elders made the same observation: 'We had fine weather the entire trip because of the calm in the belly of our captain'. They added: 'In cases like this it is our mutual ancestors who guide the wind and protect us'.

This experience of wind/weather *mana* went a step further than the accurate prediction of weather and ocean conditions the year prior, in that the ancestral intervention was more explicitly identified. The ancestral connections, which had been noted after the successful search for the lost hunters, were confirmed by the safe weather experienced during the visit to Chukotka, when the season of good weather was usually over and storms normally came. The 'Northern Master' wind that brings awesome storms to this area had not come forth on schedule or as heralded in recognition of the character of the captain. This captain was not born Siberian Yupik, but clearly had a balance and calmness in the belly that storms respect. This calm in the belly is a model of spiritual interaction between a person protecting other people, and a storm that posed a threat to the people. According to the hunters, it was an ancestor (or ancestors) who mediated between the two. But also, the storm itself was of ancestral origin.

Controlling *mana* as rain, waves, and wind

Returning to Pacific relations between wind and weather, at the completion of a voyage from Taumako Island to Nifiloli atoll in 1998, the welcome celebration involved preparation of a huge feast. But the rainy weather was problematic. It

was raining because of the interventions of a New Zealand born, southeast Solomons-raised son of European traders, Ross Hepworth. Ross expected the *TePuke* (a type of cargo-carrying voyaging canoe) to arrive at its destination island on a Sunday. So, after months of devastating drought in his islands, he answered the requests of family and community members, and employed the appropriate use of a plant and prayerful invocations, to bring rain on Monday. He thought this would be the day after the *TePuke* would arrive. However, as it happened the arrival of the *TePuke* was delayed by a day, and the rain Ross called began to fall just moments after the *TePuke* arrived. The host-islanders were ready to open the earth ovens to serve a celebratory welcome feast, but no one wanted to sit in the rain to eat. How to stop it? Everyone knew that it would take strong *mana* to stop the rain once it started.

They called on *TeMatua* (parent, or ancestor), as Chief Kaveia is called throughout this region, to stop the rain for just two to three hours. *TeMatua* employed the lime-tipped sticks he had brought on the voyage but had no need of, and prayed to his ancestor Lata to stop the rain (Figure 6). In less than 20 minutes, it stopped. The pause lasted until evening – long enough for comfortable feasting by all, and some joyous day-sailing on the *TePuke* by host-islanders. Some people danced on in the rain through the entire night, just as they would have done had there been no rain. But the rain was welcomed by all and evinced that there were more ancestors at the happy gathering than there would have been without the rain.

On several other occasions crew members, including me, pointed the sticks at approaching rain squalls to move rain squalls from path of our *TePuke*, and threw sticks into the sea to stop dangerous waves from breaking.

On yet another occasion, three years after *TeMatua* had died, the entire crew was exhausted and the wind had been uncooperative for two nights. We knew that we were drifting past the last possible island we could stop at before we would have to sail on for at least another week. We had no more food and were very demoralized. We thought the reason for the bad wind might be that we had not gone to *TeMatua*'s grave to ask his help before we departed. We agreed with each other that we should try to talk with him now.

The very cold rain was beating down on the leeward deck. Although we had lowered the sails, our most experienced steersman was wrestling with the huge blade to maintain our attitude to the wind. The rest of us huddled under our foul-weather jackets, soaked and shivering. We could not sleep for the cold, and we could not see much in the dark. We were failing to reach any island, and the consequences would be dire,

I quietly talked with *TeMatua*, telling him that I was sorry I did not go talk with him before we left. I asked him if he would help this crew so that they would not be discouraged about trying to sail without him in the future. I was crying in the rain but I figured that no one could tell because the pounding rain was falling in my face, and it was noisy and dark.

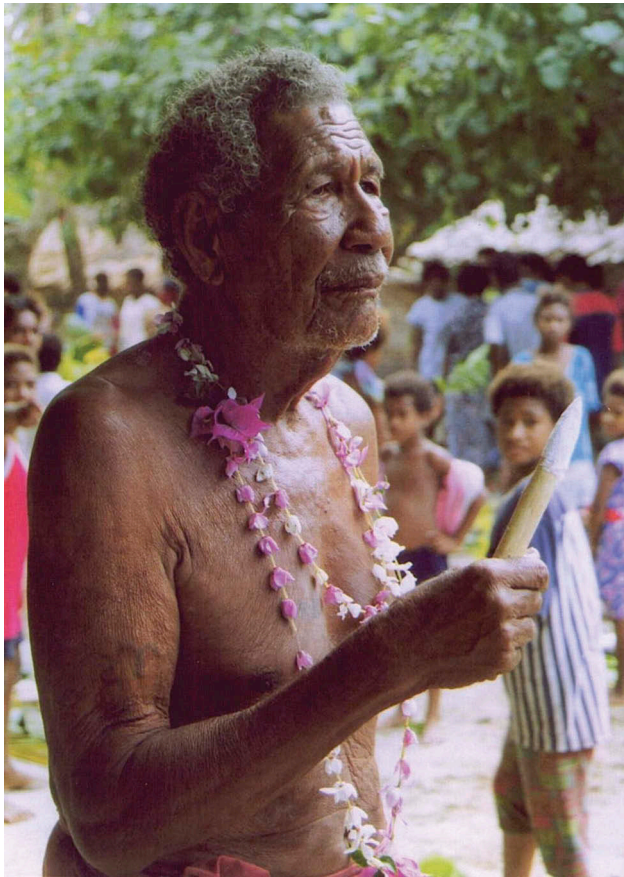


Figure 6. TeAliki Kaveia (*TeMatua*) uses weather stick and prayers stopping rain. (Photo: Lynne Bjarnesson.)

Suddenly, I smelled tobacco smoke. It was incredible that someone had managed to light a pipe in this rain. So I looked around to see who was smoking. No one was moving at all, not even the steersman. After a few minutes of smelling the smoke I realized that it was the smell of homegrown tobacco, and no one on board had been smoking homegrown tobacco during this entire trip. Furthermore, I knew that the other crew had smoked their last cigarettes the day before because I had heard them complaining.

I was sitting partly in the entryway to the shelter, which is on the windward outrigger of the *vaka* I decided to move to the leeward deck in case anyone else wanted to go into the shelter to get out of the rain. But when I started to move Daddy Fox, the steersman, urgently signaled me with his eyes. Then Daddy Jonas said to me 'Noho mana ... *Manava lavoi*'. These words may be translated various ways, e.g. 'stay/sit there ...rest' or '*Mana* is here (sitting) ... abide with the good'. I had a curious feeling. I looked over at Daddy Jonas and saw that he was lying motionless. We all froze for what felt like a timeless interval. Then,

suddenly, the wind changed and the rain stopped. The wind moved to sit down in a position where we needed it to so we could sail toward the last island we could stop at before missing all the islands. We gladly raised the sail. At first light Daddy Jonas told me to dig out the remaining leaf packets of cooked rice, some *panna* and *kumara* (taro and sweet potato). Reggie opened a tin of bully beef with the spoon that was stuck in the walling next to his pipe. We ate and laughed, enjoying the fact that we were sailing well.

Simon then asked me, in a stagey voice: 'Did you smell the smoke?' Five crew members turned to look at me intently. 'Yes,' I said, 'I smelled it'. Then Ambrose asked, 'Did you see him?' I hesitated. Ambrose then pressed me: 'We all smelled *TeMatua's* pipe smoke. Did you see him?' With the odd feeling I get when I remember a dream I replied, 'No, I did not see him. I felt him, and I talked to him'.

'We saw him sitting next to you!' Simon exclaimed.

'Yes,' I cried in recognition, 'I was going to go sit on the leeward platform, but Daddy Jonas told me not to'.

'Yes,' said Miki, 'We did not want him to go away'.

'Did you all see him?' I asked.

'He was sitting right beside you,' Daddy Jonas affirmed.

'That is why I told you not to move,' added Daddy Fox.

'Yes,' confirmed Miki, 'I saw him sail to us in a *TePuke*. He came alongside the outrigger behind you. Then I saw you two sitting there side by side and it made me feel good. We needed his help and he came'.

Daddy Fox further explained: 'It was our ancestor, my father, smoking his pipe and being with us'.

Daddy Jonas added that when he saw him, he knew 'that we were not making any mistakes in navigation or sailing' and that 'we were learning about the wind, and that is what we are here to do'.

That day we rested at one island, then used the now-favorable wind to sail on to our final destination island. Only after we arrived there, dined, and rested did we start to discuss the fact that *TeMatua*(Kaveia) had finally come to us after a year and a half of showing himself to no one since his death. We were overjoyed that *TeMatua* had come to all of us simultaneously, as if to tell us that whenever it happens that the *mana*/wind tests us, he will always be with us. Then *TeMatua* helped us by redirecting the wind to the position we needed.

Daddy Jonas' words kept playing in my head: 'Noho *mana*' and 'Manava lavoi'. I understood that the meanings and intent of those words were recognitions of the *mana* that was sitting with us, and the *mana* of the wind position, in the first phrase, and the *mana* inside of us that was connected to the *mana* all around us, in the second phrase. Just like Lata pushing the wind, as we are challenged to respond appropriately by maintaining balance and calm within us, our guiding ancestor can intervene on our behalf. In a

psychically balanced and aware state, a controlled and controlling dance with an unseen, internal, and powerful reality, all we have to do is ask. Then, from this internal positioning, we can experience the external shift in *mana* as wind.

Concluding remarks

Science usually concerns itself with materially defined natural orders, and proceeds by building a hypothesis and then testing it with appropriate observations in the laboratory or in nature. Over time, the hypothesis is confirmed to be true if it yields reproducible results. In my own experience, my sons in New Ireland were right in their warning about the upcoming change in world weather patterns, and meteorologists were wrong. Chief Kaveia's wind/weather predictions were always right. According to Siberian Yupik mariners, our captain in the Bering Sea, and Chief Kaveia of Taumako, people have an ability to perform procedures that result in changing the path of squalls bearing down on us. I have observed many times that Kaveia and his students have called on the wind to blow, and these efforts were rewarded with changes in the position the wind blew from, and with immediate relaxation (lying down) of unruly waves. As Kaveia's student I have received training in these techniques and have used them to good effect myself, though I do not have space to describe these experiences here.

In trying to make sense of my experiences as an anthropologist, I have noted some differences between the technocratic bias of scientific endeavor and the highly developed awarenesses and practices of *mana*. Now I will note some of what we can learn from practices of *mana* as wind.

In 16 years of sailing, boat building, and social interactions, and during 25 voyages with Chief Kaveia, or following his sailing directions, Kaveia's wind/weather predictions were never wrong, and his modifications always produced the results he sought. Kaveia was also clear about the limits of his abilities to modify events: he could not, and would not try to, change the wind/weather of an established season.

Practitioners of *mana* observe phenomena directly, learn patterns, and then predict weather. But they also treat weather as they treat another person. Their relationships are rooted in an underlying reality of ancestral experiences. When problems arise in their relationship with a phenomenon, then they can negotiate a reconciliation of the adversity or imbalance and regain calm and purposeful momentum with help from ancestors.

Scientists, however, do not regard phenomena as family members who they can lovingly persuade to change behavior. They use their mental prowess to establish what natural laws the various natural phenomena are bound by. Climate scientists attempt to track changes in such phenomena, discretely defined as forces of the atmosphere, and draw conclusions as to how those will impact humans. Typically, the scientists have no direct relationship with

the phenomena, and even the human beneficiaries are unknown to the researchers. In general, they are trained to miss how transpersonal, internal, psychic, and subjective experiences drive many cultural and intellectual projects, rather than being merely the result of them.

Mana practitioners pass their extensive experiential knowledge and spiritual strength down to specific and often well-known individuals of the following generation. This prepares them to track and prepare for irregularities in weather, and to interact with and modify weather, including some of the effects of climate change. The fact that I had these experiences suggests that the experience of *mana* phenomena is not limited to people born and raised in a particular culture, or people sharing DNA with people who were born and raised in a particular culture. This also suggests that *mana* experiences may be available universally to all human beings, irrespective of ethnic or cultural background.

Wind/weather-work operates outside the bounds of projects like meteorology, and outside the scope of most scientific projects. In the Taumako and Siberian Yupik models of *mana* experiences, knowledgeable interactions with wind/weather as *mana*, and knowledge of how *mana* flows between people, ancestors, and elements, are mediated by ancestors, who actually are embodied in the wind/weather. These examples show us that people of at least some Pacific and Arctic/sub-Arctic voyaging cultures regard wind/weather *mana* as residing in human consciousness as well as in many other types of phenomena that scientists treat as material or 'natural'.

Te Aliko Kaveia explained to me that some non-materially defined phenomena, like *te lapa* (a mysterious light phenomenon that emanates from land into the deep sea and shows the direction to land), are invisible to those who are not involved in ancestral interactions (George 2012). But experts in both *mana* and science are aware of, or look for, patterns in material phenomena. They recognize, for example, that various swell patterns signal the vicinity of land, and long archipelagos present screens of islands, which are easier navigational targets than small, discrete, islands (Lewis 1972). But wayfinders not only notice what is predictable and figure out how it can be used, but also engage themselves in communicating with the phenomena, and request it to behave in ways that serve human purposes. Most scientists, however, link their own effectiveness to analytical and computational methods and strategic objectivity. The results or proof have nothing to do with who the inquirer is and should be achievable by anyone who performs the right technical procedures. This monophasic and technocratic way of knowing ignores any effect that their own relationship to the subject may have on the behavior of the subject. This simplistic sort of materialism ignores the possibility of quantum 'uncertainty'. That is, it ignores what I observed and/or experienced in the subjective and internal realms of *mana* as wind/weather.

I have described how some weather-workers observed and read material signs and patterns. I related that what they understood to be the underlying reality of the phenomena they observed was transpersonal in nature. They held that their own intimate awareness and ancestrally connected experiences of a transpersonal reality presented a pathway for them to communicate with that reality and potentially modify the wind/weather such that it could better suit their needs. They experienced that they could be effective in their wind/weather-work if they were calm and balanced internally, and if they worked within the seasons or other big patterns that are basic to each phenomenon.

They also knew how to transmit their experiential knowledge and spiritual strength down to the next generation. The older voyagers showed the younger voyagers what to do before going to sea, while at sea, and after arrival at land. They showed them what key phenomena to observe and relate to. But the most important lesson that student seafarers learn is how to be calm and balanced internally, and how to attend to and interact with ancestors.

I hope that my description of these experiences will encourage interest in experiences of *mana* and the models that go with them. As the effects of technocratic culture degrade the planet, and threaten the very existence of humankind, I think it is relevant to consider how experiences of *mana* can help humanity appreciate the diversity of deep transpersonal and cultural knowledge we have.

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