

The Whale Road: Transitioning from Spiritual Links, to Whaling, to Whale Watching in Aotearoa New Zealand

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ABSTRACT: The paper treats of the central place of the whale in New Zealand culture and history, from the lore which the Maori brought to New Zealand from Hawaiiki. Further, whaling was an early bond between the South Island of New Zealand, and Sydney. History, Art, and deep-seated belief are all key components of the 'Whale Road'.

Whales and whaling have been hot topics for global news and international debate in recent years. Legal conflict between whaling nations—such as Japan, Norway and Iceland—and anti-whaling nations—such as Australia and New Zealand—as well as anti-whaling conservation organizations, has sparked a keen increased public interest in whales specifically and cetaceans generally. As just one example of that increased public interest the *Animal Planet* cable television channel has produced and aired a documentary-like reality television series called *Whale Wars*. *Whale Wars* premiered on November 7, 2008 and has run for six seasons, following the work of Captain Paul Watson—who founded the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society. The lobbying and legal efforts of organizations and anti-whaling governments has also led to the International Court of Justice agreeing with an action brought by Australia, with New Zealand in support as an intervening state, that Japan's whaling did not meet the criteria of scientific research—which resulted in Japan being ordered to cease their Antarctic whaling programmes.¹

Cetaceans have always held a very special place within the history, traditions and lore of New Zealand. A case can also be built for a segment of New Zealand's economic activity possessing an almost continual link to whales, in one form or another, right up until the present day.

¹ *31 March 2014 Judgement: Whaling in the Antarctic* (Australia v. Japan: New Zealand intervening), General List No.148 (International Court of Justice, 31 March 2014). <<http://www.icj-cij.org/docket/files/148/18136.pdf>> [accessed 20 August 2014].

The legendary histories of Māori *iwi* (tribes) such as Ngāti Porou (from the east coast of the North Island) and Ngāi Tahu (sometimes called Kāi Tahu—this is the primary Māori *iwi* of the South Island) include the lore of Kahutia-te-rangi, or Paikea Ariki Moana,—the whale rider. (Interestingly oral histories record that Ngāi Tahu and Ngāti Porou are descended from two brothers, Porourangi and Tahupōtiki.) To the early Māori whales provided sustenance, tools and arguably a source of heat and light. Some of the earliest European settlements in New Zealand were shore whaling stations—and those stations were important sites for establishing contact between Māori and the *takata pora* (ship people) who would go on to become Pākehā New Zealanders (or non-Māori New Zealanders). Notably those shore whaling stations were also a key element in the developing pioneer economy of New Zealand. There are obvious parallels between the migrations of whales and the migrations of the Polynesian peoples as they moved towards New Zealand. In more recent times whales and whale-lore have featured as subjects of visual arts, novels, films and eco-tourism operations—highlighting the deep cultural links between New Zealand society and whales. The most popular (and infamous) New Zealand political blog in 2014 (Cameron Slater’s *Whale Oil Beef Hooked*—<http://www.whaleoil.co.nz/>) even used a whaling related name—although the choice of name had no connection to the whaling industry.

A Glance at Some Māori Myths, Legends and Oral Traditions

One legendary history of the Māori migrations to New Zealand is the story of how Kahutia-te-rangi travelled to New Zealand from Hawaiki on ‘the back of his taniwha ancestor, Paikea, whose name he then adopted in commemoration of the great exploit’.² That tradition tells audiences that a man named Ruatapu became enraged when his father, Uenuku—a Hawaiki chief, used a hair comb of some significance for Kahutia-te-rangi (his half-brother) when dressing his hair for the launching of a canoe, yet expected Ruatapu to provide his own comb. Consequently, Ruatapu plotted to drown Kahutia-te-rangi. Ruatapu bored a hole in their canoe and covered it with a plug in preparation to drown his step-brother. When the brothers travelled out to sea together Ruatapu removed the plug and let the canoe sink—allowing everyone to drown. Kahutia-te-rangi however began to recite a powerful *karakia* (sacred incantation) and called forth a mythic spirit, or *taniwha* (aquatic spirit beast often with a guardianship function), to protect himself. The *taniwha* appeared in the form of a whale and carried him to the safety of Ahuahu (Great Mercury Island—New Zealand). The tale of Kahutia-te-rangi, or Paikea,

² Gudgeon, W.E., ‘The Maori Tribes of the East Coast of New Zealand’, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 4.1 (1895), 17-32 (p.19).

is deeply significant to New Zealanders and has been an inspiring element in a range of modern cultural texts, including Witi Ihimaera's critically acclaimed novel *the Whale Rider* (1987) and Niki Caro's award winning film of the same name (2002).



'Tutarakauika—Guardian Whale' by Todd Couper
http://www.spiritwrestler.com/catalog/index.php?artists_id=9

Whales were viewed by Māori as *kaitiaki*, or guides and guardians. The tale of Tūtarakauika tells us that—like the *taniwha*-whale who rescued Kahutia-te-rangi—he was also a *taniwha* who appeared in the guise of a whale to Māori. Tūtarakauika helped lead the Tākitimu canoe on its voyage from Hawaiki to New Zealand—providing us with another legendary example of spiritualized whales assisting in the migration process. Later, after arriving in New Zealand, a *tohunga* (or shaman) from the Tākitimu canoe made offerings to Tūtarakauika leading to the *taniwha* becoming a guardian for the Wairoa district's chiefs. It is said that sometimes Tūtarakauika even returned to help drowning Māori of the Wairoa district to shore. Notably the accomplished sculptor Todd Couper, of the Ngāti Kahungunu *iwi*, carved a whale themed piece called *Tutarakauika: Guardian Whale* which was shown in Vancouver's Spirit Wrestler Gallery from 2003. Couper's artwork is a stylized whale tail with a distinct link to Māori carving traditions but a modernized feel. The carved lines of Couper's whale tail are augmented with detailed symbolic black work motifs that clearly link to not only carving traditions but also *tā moko* (or traditional Māori tattoo) motifs. In the book *Kāhui whetū—Contemporary Māori art: a carver's perspective* Couper explained that he carved *Tutarakauika: Guardian Whale* as a way of exploring his *whakapapa* (genealogy) and his tribe's legendary history—as well as recounting the tale of Tūtarakauika.³ This artwork in part evidences the fact that Māori artists, and people in general, are still interacting with and valuing those traditions—and that they remain a

³ See 'Tutara-kauika' in Roi Toia, Todd Couper, and Carolyn Lagahetau, *Kāhui whetū - Contemporary Māori Art: A Carver's Perspective* (Reed Books, 2006).

valid part of the cultural spectrum of Māori. Notably many gift shops throughout New Zealand also sell whale tail *pounamu* (New Zealand greenstone or jade) pendants.

Historical grounding for the *kaitiaki* role of whales on sea voyages from Hawaiki to New Zealand are probable. Māori would have most likely been able to follow pods of whales during migration voyages as the travel speed of whales, three to five knots, is slow enough that the twin hulled sea canoes would have easily been able to keep pace.⁴ Furthermore, Kōpū (Venus), Te Waka o Tamarereti (Scorpio) and Māhutonga (the Southern Cross), all appear in the night sky at roughly the same time that whales begin their annual migratory voyage south. Māori may also have believed that the whales were travelling to other feeding grounds—possibly around other islands—based on their observations of natural whale behaviour around the Hawaiki region.

Whales also appear in a raft of other significant Māori tales. Another commonality within these texts is that whales often possess an elevated status—an example being the legend of Tinirau and Kae, a very old tale that exists in multiple forms not only in New Zealand but also elsewhere in the Pacific. From that myth we learn that the moderated eating of whale meat was culturally permissible, yet more widespread and consumptive eating of whales is not. That principle is illustrated through Tinirau gladly sharing a slice of his (still living) pet whale with Kae—yet being deeply offended when Kae intentionally had the whale slaughtered and fully eaten, sparking a lengthy process of *utu* or revenge. The late Professor Joseph Campbell long argued that a ‘function of mythology is to support the current social order, [and] to integrate the individual organically with his group’—a view that was largely supported by his highly respected colleague Professor Mircea Eliade, who has equally strongly proposed that the primary function of myth is to establish acceptable models of conduct within a society.⁵ It could be argued that the tale of Tinirau and Kae was a vehicle for presenting the value of ecological sustainability or *kaitiakitanga* (guardianship—in this context for the sky, sea and land), through only consuming a small portion of the whale population to avoid significant consequences. Equally however, one could interpret that the same segment of the myth presented the

⁴ ‘In one marking experiment, the average travelling speed of two sperm whales [...] was 2.4 knots for a four-day period’. David K. Caldwell, Melba C. Caldwell and Dale W. Rice, ‘Behaviour of the Sperm Whale, *Physeter catodon* L.’, *Whales, Dolphins and Porpoises*, ed. by Kenneth Stafford Norris (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1977), 677-718 (p. 697).

⁵ Campbell, Joseph, *Occidental Mythology* (Arkana, 1991), p. 520. ‘Because myth relates the *gesta* of Supernatural Beings and the manifestations of their sacred powers, it becomes the exemplary model for all human activities.’ Mircea Eliade, *Myth and Reality*, trans. by Willard R. Trask (Harper and Row, 1963), p. 6.

values of trustworthiness and integrity—which were also held in high regard within traditional Māori society.

In terms of the Māori oral tradition of *whakataukī*, or proverbs, there are several key references to whales—once again indicating the significance of whale-lore within the broader spectrum of *Māoritanga*. ‘*Ana ta te uaua paraoa*’, or ‘behold the strength of a sperm whale’, was an important *whakataukī* used to express a challenge and link the challenger to the powerful image of a whale. ‘*He rei ngā niho, he parāoa ngā kauae*’, or ‘to have a whale’s tooth, you must also have a whale’s jaw’ positioned the holder of the whale’s tooth—in this case most likely the wearer of a culturally encoded *rei puta* whale tooth pendant—as someone who had the strength ‘of a whale’, which was required to retrieve the *rei puta* from the ocean. Notably that *whakataukī* is used as a critical plot element in the film *Whale Rider* to indicate the strength and *mana* (influence, prestige, power or perhaps honour) of the central character. In both of those cases the whale is placed in a respected and elevated position that people aspire to be linked to.

Looking across a range of other Māori traditional oral texts the exception to the motif of depicting whales in elevated positions of strength lays in specific *waiata* (song poetry)—usually *tumoto*, which was a form of verse sung to avenge defeats—where the image of beached whales is used to illustrate the prostration of defeated enemies. In 1902 Elsdon Best, writing for the *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, recorded three important instances where the slain were depicted in this way—in one case regarding fallen warriors after a battle between Ngāi Tūhoe and Te Arawa at Puke-kai-kāhu (notably this case specifically references the whales in the land to the south), a second regarding the fallen from a war between Ngāi Tūhoe and Ngāti Ruapani, and the third was composed by Te Kaupoke of Ngāti Manawa also regarding war slain. While this evidence does present a different vision of whales it is possibly linked the notion that beached whales were offerings from Tangaroa, selflessly offering themselves for the sustenance of local *iwi*—and hence in a way also prostrated themselves.⁶

Architecture, Carving, Weaving and Traditional Tattooing

Notably ‘relationships with animals among different indigenous peoples are embedded in subsistence practices, affirmed by the deep values of mythic narratives, and celebrated in ritual performances.’⁷

⁶ See Elsdon Best, ‘Notes on the art of war as conducted by the Maori of New Zealand, with accounts of various customs, rites superstitions, & pertaining to war, as practiced and believed in by the ancient Maori’, *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 11.3 (1902), 127-162.

⁷ Grim, John, ‘Knowing and Being Known by Animals: Indigenous Perspectives on Personhood’, in *A Communion of Subjects: Animals in Religion, Science, and Ethics*, ed.

Anthropologist, Dr Ian W. G. Smith found that ‘ethnographic data do[es] suggest that seals and whales may have provided not only fresh food during the coastal hunting season but also oil for heating and light and stored food supplies for use during some or all of the remainder of the year.’⁸ As Smith indicated in his thesis it is most probable that large cetaceans (such as whales) were acquired through scavenging rather than direct hunting. Scholars including Smith have suggested that this was as the sheer size of the creatures would make it difficult for Māori to have successfully killed them on a regular bases with the level of maritime hunting technology that was readily available. Arguably however this was equally related to the Māori *weltanshauung* which held whales in a sacred position and viewed their beachings as gifts from their sea god Tangaroa—as well as significant offerings from the whales themselves.

When we turn to the archaeological evidence and explore artistic carvings on traditional Māori buildings we see that the barge boards, or *maihi*, of many *pātaka* (food store houses) are covered in *pakakē* (symbolic whale) patterns. In many examples a ‘v’ shape is carved within the mouth of the *pakakē* to represent teeth—while there are some cases where the entire mouth is shown to have rows of these ‘v’ shaped teeth. The carvings usually include humans using ropes to pull the beast ashore. Notably in many examples we only see the tail of the *pakakē*, with the body and head remaining out of view. This provides a good case for the stylized tail of a whale being a traditional motif for symbolically depicting the beast.

While on a simplistic level a stranded whale most likely meant a full *pātaka*, the use of those carvings can be argued to also suggest a deeper significance of the whale as not only a food source but also a respected member of the natural and supernatural worlds whose value to Māori as a resource offered up by Tangaroa was immeasurable. It should be noted however that scholars do not believe that Māori positioned their settlements close to sites of regular whale strandings, and that our knowledge of Māori subsistence strategies holds that they did not explicitly rely on whales for success in maintaining food supply levels. Whale products were instead gathered with reverence towards both the whale for offering itself and Tangaroa for supplying such a rich gift. Further to traditional architectural carving links, Paikea Ariki Moana, or Kahutia-te-rangi, is depicted on Ngāi Tahu *marae* (meeting grounds) due to the deep cultural significance of his role as a whale rider to their tribe.

Looking for whale motifs in traditional tattooing, or *tā moko*, *taratarekae* patterns are of deep interest. A *taratarekae* pattern is often

by Paul Waldau and Kimberley Patton (New York, NY: Columbia University Press, 2006), p. 374.

⁸ Smith, Ian W.G., ‘Sea Mammal Hunting and Prehistoric Subsistence in New Zealand’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Otago, 1985), p. 4.

composed of two parallel lines with usually equi-spaced blacked in ‘v’ elements along the lines to stylistically and symbolically represent teeth. (Here we should not the way that *pakakē* teeth were depicted on *pātaka* carvings.) Taking on *tā Moko* is an ancient ceremonial process, with analogues found in cultures of all Polynesian peoples. The name *tā moko* comes from a lizard—and lore suggests it was given to tattoos due to the way that reptiles shed their skin. The *tā moko* process was viewed as a ceremony that signified a sacred right of passage and provided deep links to not only the *iwi* but both the sacred and profane worlds through important symbolism used in tattooing motifs. Many of the stylized *moko* motifs could be readily interpreted by a culturally literate reader to reveal information about the wearer’s life events, status or *iwi*. The person undergoing tattooing would be born again with their new tattooed skin—like the lizard who takes a new skin, a heightened status within their *hapū* (sub-tribe, clan or descent group) and *iwi*, and being a more desirable mate. The tattoo artist, or *tohunga tā tā moko*, was considered a highly sacred person of great significance—even *tapu* (holy, sacred or with restriction). This process held deep cultural and spiritual significance. Whalebone or albatross bone were commonly processed to make tattooing *uhi* or chisels.

The *taratarekae* pattern itself is a very ancient Polynesian motif. It does include some regional variation in terms of both name and style (as well as slight artistic variation based on the particular tattoo artist) yet it is a distinct artistic *tā moko* motif across New Zealand. In those regional variations the teeth it represents alter at times—but similarities still seem to be larger than differences. *Taratarekae*, in some regions, are viewed as *taniwha* teeth. This is significant to present arguments as within the symbolism rich realm of myth and legend *taniwha* often appear in the forms of whales. One Christchurch based tattoo artist, who asked not to be named, identified that while this motif is used within the current traditional tattoos of Māori across New Zealand he has found it to be more common with clients who are geographically affiliated with either the West Coast or upper North Island regions. He also commented that whale tails are a feature commonly requested by his current clientele when seeking Kiwiana tattoos—and that they are usually depicted using negative space.

It could be argued that the *taratarekae* teeth patterns bear some small ancient links to *niho taniwha* (teeth of the *taniwha*) patterns on *tukutuku* (weaved lattice work) panels within *wharenui* (the communal meeting house on a *marae*) and the traditional *tāniko* weaving on cloak hems.⁹

⁹ Rawinia R. Higgins explores some links between *niho taniwha* motifs on *tukutuku* panels and *tā moko kauae* (traditional Māori female chin tattooing) in ‘He Tānga Ngutu, He Tūhoetanga, Te Mana Motuhake o te Tā Moko Wāhine: The Identity Politics of Moko Kauae’ (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Otago, 2004), p. 338.

Furthermore, *nihō taniwha* patterns are also commonly found in traditional Māori textiles work for a wide range of objects including mats, belts, and clothing. Once again these patterns focus on the teeth of a spiritual beast, or *taniwha*, which was known to regularly appear in the shape of a whale to act as a *kaitiaki* (guardian) of Māori, presented in ‘v’ patterns similarly to the carving and *tā moko* patterns discussed above. *Nihō taniwha* can also be used as a motif to represent the historian—and hence could be seen as a way to represent a form of cultural *kaitiakitanga*. The prevalence of this motif within Māori artistic expression must further highlight the significance of those concepts within Māoridom, and by extension New Zealand, society and culture.

Whale-related New Zealand Māori Place Names and Geography

A quick study of New Zealand place names also reveals a number of culturally significant sites for the relationship between Māori and whales. Foveaux Strait was named Te Ara-a-Kewa (the path of the right whale) by Māori, Moutohorā (whale island) is an island off the coast at Whakatāne, Te Ara-a-Paikea (the path of Paikea) is a whale-shaped hill on the Māhia Peninsula, and, Whangaparāoa (bay of sperm whales) is a place name in both Auckland and the Bay of Plenty. Furthermore there is a spring of white water that flows through the hills around Welcome Bay and Pāpāmoa called Te Waiū-o-Te-Tohorā (the breast milk of the whale). Notably the hills themselves are said to be a stranded pod of whales Māori in myth.

Place names are often considered to be an indicator of either historical, cultural or spiritual connections between the concepts or figures within the name and the geographical location or features of the landscape. When we consider cultures with oral traditions place names become more significant as they can be seen, when viewed in regional groupings, as evidence of the folk memory associated with that region that can collectively tell us a story about the regions settlement or significant events after the settlement process.

The natural landscape within New Zealand has also been described in literature and used for film settings due to its connection to whales. In Ihimaera’s *Whale Rider* Whangara Island, off the East Coast of New Zealand’s North Island, is described in terms of its physical shape resembling a whale—and a spiritual link between the geographic environment and the beasts is emphasised. This helps ground the text not only in terms of New Zealand settings and culture, but also as a text that helps mythacise the New Zealand landscape with traditional Māori motifs for Pākehā audiences. When Niki Caro came to shoot the film for his 2002 version of the tale he choose to use that same location because, in the words of the producer John Barnett:

it would almost have been heresy to shoot anywhere else. There are very physical things that are described in the book – the sweep of the bay, the island that looks like a whale, the meeting houses, the number of houses that are present and of course, the people whose legend we were telling.¹⁰

This once more highlights a cyclical link between New Zealanders and New Zealand cultures with whales and the mythicization of the landscape based on those connections not only in the period prior to the arrival of *takata pora* but also today.

Whalebone Processing for Weapons, Tools and Ornaments

Considering whalebone as a natural resource for the manufacture of important tools, weapons and ornaments, bone and teeth were processed by Māori to produce a wide range of products. Research has shown that ‘industrially worked whale bone occurring in New Zealand archaeological sites was processed using tools which were not intended for the specific use of processing whales.’¹¹ This ties directly to the above idea that whales were viewed as a gift from Tangaroa and accepted graciously when they gave themselves for the good of the people yet were most likely not actively hunted.

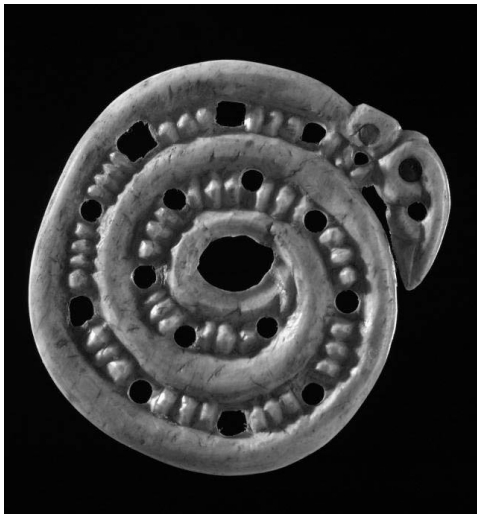
Whale bone weapons, including *kotiate*, *patu paraoa* and *wahaika* have been found in numerous sites. All three of those weapons are from the *patu*, or traditional Māori short handled striking weapon, family. A *patu paraoa* is the correct name for a whalebone *patu*, while a *wahaika* is a *patu* with slight hook shape and a carved human figure near the handle. The name *wahaika* is a compound word made up of *waha* meaning mouth, and *ika* meaning fish. Visually the striking end of a *kotiate* resembles a split section of a human liver—with the name being a compound word for just that, *koti* meaning to divide or cut in two, and *ate* meaning the liver. Of rarer frequency there have been finds of whalebone *tiaha* (fighting staff) and *hoeroa*. The Otago Museum houses a sound collection of traditional whalebone weapons including a splendid example of a *hoeroa*, measuring 1320 x 57mm and made from the jaw bone of a Sperm Whale, which was presented to the museum by Dr and Mrs Hocken. *Hoeroa* were used as striking weapon, stabbing spears, or missile weapons. Māori did not traditionally use bows and arrows so this

¹⁰ Barnett, John, in *Notes About the Location*, press release (South Pacific Pictures). <http://www.whaleriderthemovie.co.nz/html/location_notes.html> [accessed 5 September 2014].

¹¹ Cunliffe, Emily A., ‘Whales and Whale Bone Technology in New Zealand Prehistory’ (unpublished master’s thesis, The University of Otago, 2013), p. i.

heavy slant toward melee weapons is representative of the general range of weaponry available.

In terms of common tools we have substantive collections of whalebone harpoon tips and fish hooks. There are also some examples of sacred tools made from whalebone—such as *ahao*. An *ahao* is a ‘sacred article, used by the priests in religious ceremonies: they passed it through the gills of fish offered to the gods, with many prayers.’¹² Notably these tools are also sometimes referred to as *purupuru*—and under that name they are used to caulking holes in canoe manufacture. A wide range of other traditional Māori whalebone tools exist within the collections of New Zealand museums. As another example The Otago Museum houses a whalebone *whakapapa*, or ancestry, stick which was obtained from Long Beach in Otago. That particular *whakapapa* stick includes notches that indicate it records seven hundred and fifty years of lineage. Given Māori possessed an entirely oral based culture items such as notched *whakapapa* sticks and important carving motifs were their only way to produce physical aids for remembering ancestors and traditions—making pieces such as this of deep cultural and historical significance.



*Koropepe (pendant), 1850-1900,
New Zealand. Maker unknown.
Purchased 1907. Te Papa*

When we consider decorations it becomes clear that Māori employed both the bone and teeth of whales in a wide range of ways. Museums across the world (for example the British Museum) host examples of *rei puta* (also correctly referred to as *rei niho*), or Māori whale tooth pendants, and they have been found in sites across the length of New Zealand. *Rei puta* were considered status symbols within traditional

¹² Newman, Dr A.K., ‘A Very Rare Maori Implement: Ahao’, *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand*, 41 (1908), 216-218 (p. 216).

Māori society and marked the *mana*, or prestige, of the wearer. Generally it would only be people of great importance who would wear items such as *rei puta*. There is some suggestion that a *rei puta* would allow a wearer to draw upon the *mana* of the whale it was drawn from. *Koropepe* pendants were also made of whalebone and required great carving skill to manufacture. Carved in a spiral pattern to represent a coiled creature a *koropepe* pendant was worn around the neck—most likely only by a member of tribal nobility due to their high value. More common decorative whalebone items include highly stylized hair combs and cloak pins.

In Sum of the Period Prior to the Arrival of takata pora

Coupling the evidence from myth and legend of a *kaitiakitanga* philosophy toward whale consumption, the anthropological evidence for scavenged whales being used for sustenance, tool, weapon and ornament manufacture, energy procurement, and the proof of their significant depiction in traditional carvings on buildings such as *pātaka* and *marae*—as well as the use of whales in place names, it is evident that the whale was a highly significant beast within early Māori culture. Throughout that evidence there is a commonality of theme that would suggest that the giant cetaceans held an almost sacred status—and that status has been recognised with their achieving a *taonga* (cultural treasure) status under the Treaty of Waitangi and a special place in recent New Zealand legislation.¹³ This all dovetails neatly into the creation of an overall big picture view of the significance to whales to the Māori way of life and culture.

Whales and Seals as a Focal Point for Early Exchanges Between Māori and takata pora and the Influence of the Weller Brothers

The first sealers of European ethnicity in New Zealand could be argued to have been members of Captain James Cook's crew as in 1773 he anchored at Dusky Sound in Fiordland and his crew killed and ate a group of seals. Generally however we recognise that sealers and whalers arrived in December 1791 with Eber Bunker (an American captain)

¹³ 'The Crown acknowledges the cultural, spiritual, historic, and traditional association of Ngāi Tahu with the taonga species.' (Section 288) 'The Crown, having acknowledged the special association of Ngāi Tahu to the taonga species listed [... must] consult with, and have particular regard to the views of Te Runanga o Ngāi Tahu when the Minister makes policy decisions concerning the protection, management, or conservation of a taonga species.' (Section 293(b)) Humpback, Sperm and Southern Right whales are listed in an associated schedule titled 'Taonga Species: Marine Mammals.' Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement. New Zealand Statutes. <<http://www.legislation.govt.nz/act/public/1998/0097/latest/DLM429090.html>> [accessed 20 August 2014].

hunting in New Zealand waters with the British boat *William and Ann*. It is believed that interest in New Zealand as a whaling destination was ‘first roused when British convicts were brought to New South Wales in Australia and ships needed cargo to bring back. The British government offered money for whaling, in order to contribute to the training of seamen for the Royal Navy, and enticed Americans to join their fleet.’¹⁴

Historians are aware that Māori began joining the crews of whaling ships almost as they arrived to the region—with records existing for the participation of Māori as crewmen on whaling vessels from 1795, and for a Māori named John Begg to take on the role of pilot for the ship *Mermaid* at Rio de Janeiro in February 1796.¹⁵

Given a combination of the above discussion of the Kahutia-te-rangi legends and their links to Ngāi Tahu, the initial sealing in Dusky Sound, and the arguably wider distribution of whale bone reported in archaeological sites from the South Island, as compared to the North Island, the present writer will primarily contain further discussion in this segment to the South Island.¹⁶

In the southern regions of New Zealand, or Murihiku, early relations between Māori and *takata pora* were generally amiable, or even friendly, until the Sealer’s War began in 1810.¹⁷ Relations were however repaired before shore whaling stations were established in the late 1820s. Ship based whaling and shore based sealing industries flourished prior to the shore based whaling stations except for a brief lull in sealing during the Sealer’s War, however, some scholars have attributed that the lull to both a heavy reduction in seal numbers from the over harvesting of the preceding years and a reduction in seal fur prices rather than the conflict

¹⁴ Phillips, Jock, ‘Whaling: Ship-based Whaling’, *Te Ara - The Encyclopedia of New Zealand*, updated 13 July 2012. <<http://www.TeAra.govt.nz/en/whaling/page-1>> [accessed 20 August 2014].

¹⁵ Dawbin, W.H., ‘The Maori Went A-whaling: And Became One of the World’s Best Whalers’, *Pacific Discovery*, 7.4 (San Francisco, 1954), p. 19.

¹⁶ On the distribution of New Zealand archaeological sites containing whale bone see: Emily A. Cunliffe, ‘Whales and Whale Bone Technology in New Zealand Prehistory’ (unpublished master’s thesis, University of Otago, 2013), p. 47 (Figure 2).

¹⁷ The Sealer’s War began after Te Wahie, a Māori chief, stole several items (including a shirt—hence the alternate name ‘The War of the Shirt’) from a ship called the *Sydney Cove* whilst it was anchored in Otago Harbour and the crew of that ship killed him in retaliation. Following those initial hostile acts the conflict escalated with reports soon reaching the Australian media that ‘several boats’ crews in various employs having been barbarously murdered, and mostly devoured by the cannibal natives.’ See: *Sydney Gazette* (30 March 1811), p. 2, repr. in *Gaining a Foothold: Historical Records of the East Otago Coast 1770-1839*, ed. by Ian Church (Dunedin, NZ: Friends of the Hocken Collections, 2008), pp. 53-54. The conflict included important episodes at Waipapa Point (in The Catlins), Dusky Sound and Moeraki. Hostilities were ended and peace established by 1823.

itself.¹⁸ There is scholarly debate about the location of the first shore based whaling station as John Guard (an ex-convict from Australia) claimed that he began shore whaling in 1827 at Te Awaiti in Tory Channel—yet without conclusive proof of beginning quite that early—while we do recognise that Peter Williams established a whaling station at Preservation Inlet in 1828. Notably both of those locations are in the South Island.

The early ship based whalers and sealers were of largely European ethnicity (and often sailing out Australian home ports)—with some lascars and Māori who joined crews—and then shore whaling stations were once more largely manned by men of European, and a lesser extent, Māori ethnicity. In the early 1830s, shore based whaling was one of New Zealand's most prominent industries in terms of the value that it generated for the economy and those early stations were established, and continued to run, for most intensive purposes at the pleasure of the Ngāi Tahu chiefs. Most of the stations at that time were owned and operated from either Sydney or Hobart. This rapid rise of whaling however was built on an entirely consumptive, and ecologically unsustainable, yet highly efficient business model—where even cows and calves were taken. That model allowed whaling to quickly rise to prominence within the region's economy, yet also was also the primary reason for the equally rapid decline of the industry.

Generally it is thought that of the southern stations the Ōtākou station, which was established by Edward, George and Joseph Weller on the Otago Peninsula in 1831, was the most successful. Notably, the Ōtākou station of great significance to this study as in 1831 the Weller brothers established this small yet functional 'settlement' some seventeen years before the arrival of the first Scottish settlers to the Dunedin region—consequently when considering the early formation of an 'Otago identity' the Weller brothers must feature significantly. It is generally understood that Edward and Joseph Weller—having migrated from England to Sydney in 1829—set out in their barque the *Lucy Ann* for New Zealand to establish whaling operations. They made land at Te Umu Kuri, or Weller's Rock, in the Otago Harbour and quickly established a nearby whaling station which they called Otago. It was founded in close proximity to a Māori village – to allow for trade and a supply of labor—and the two have since merged as Ōtākou.

Those interactions would have facilitated important transferences and acquisitions of information, culture and technology, between the two

¹⁸ See: Jonathan West, 'An Environmental History of the Otago Peninsula: Dialectics of Ecological and Cultural Change From First Settlement to 1900' (unpublished doctoral thesis, The University of Otago, 2009), p. 175.

groups—including important geographical knowledge and attitudes toward and knowledge of cetaceans.

The Ōtākou station produced 310 tons of whale oil in 1834 as a peak season – yet in 1841 it produced only 10 tons and was closed down. Notably the Weller brothers had been declared bankrupt in 1840, which is not atypical of the boom and bust cycle of pioneering whaling operations.

Notably the Weller brothers also aided other prominent Australian whalers, such as Captain Edward Cattlin. Cattlin, who we primarily know about from his 1827-1840 journals, worked several whaling ships in the Pacific. After stints as mate on the *John Bull* (1827-1828), and the *Alfred* (1828-1829), and as master on the *Australian* (1829-1833)—all of which sailed north toward Japan with notable stops at the Solomon Islands, New Hebrides and New Caledonia, after a brief stint on the *Byron* in 1834 he took on the role of master on the *Genii* in that same year. After several other episodes in New Zealand waters from 8 June 1836 until 24 Oct 1836 the *Genii*, under the command of Captain Cattlin, whaled off Port Otago. Cattlin mentions receiving significant help from his fellow Australian, Weller, in that time.¹⁹ In terms of the formation of identity and the engagement of current New Zealand communities with past whaling traditions—or figures—this is highly significant as The Catlins, a pristine and rugged region that runs along the southernmost eastern section of the South Island’s coastline, were named after Captain Cattlin. Cattlin managed to purchase a large section of the land within that region from the Ngāi Tahu chief, Hone Tuhawaiki, on 15 February 1840. Notably Hone Tuhawaiki is also a significant figure in the region’s history—and was often known as ‘Bloody Jack’. Whilst the New Zealand Land Commission chose not to endorse the purchase, the region has come to bear the whaler’s name as his legacy, while The Catlin’s Jack’s Bay and the nearby Tuhawaiki Island took their names as part of Hone Tuhawaiki’s legacy.

The impact of the Weller brothers on the development and early imagination of the region was significant. In the 1860-1870 period a folksong (writer unknown) titled *Soon May the Wellerman Come* was coined. The song’s lyrics highlight the way that many whaling stations relied upon the ‘wellermen’ as from 1833 ships used by the Wellers travelled the coast from their Ōtākou base to sell provisions to other whaling operations. That tune is still performed and recorded by folk artists today with recent recordings available by artists including the well known David Coffin, the Celtic Acoustic group Pinniped, and the Dunedin Celtic Rock band, Maud Gonne. A brief search of

¹⁹ Cattlin, Edward, *fl 1827-1840: Journals*, 2 vols (Photocopied from the originals in 1970). These photocopied volumes are held by The National Library of New Zealand.

<www.YouTube.com> also produces a range of recent recordings of the track including a spirited live performance by a New Zealand bush band called The Royal Fortune. The song is also listed—with a detailed historical explanation and transcription on <www.folksong.org.nz>.²⁰

Remembering the significance the Weller brother's Ōtākou station, in 1931, the local Ngāi Tahu Māori invited members of their iwi from the entire South Island to celebrate the arrival of whalers one hundred years earlier in 1831. Lord Bledisloe (who the Bledisloe Cup is named after), the then Governor General of New Zealand, spoke at the official proceedings of that celebration regarding the Weller's station—of which he said:

This rock is said to mark the site of the first British Settlement... if in such an unsettled atmosphere the Weller's whaling station... could be so described. They seemed to have brought in the 'Lucy Ann' a good deal of rum and a good deal of gunpowder... and some at least were rum characters.²¹

Arguably Lord Bledisloe's view of early whalers was at least in part consistent with many of their contemporaries, such as Edward Wakefield, who wrote in 1845 that:

The frankness and manly courage of the sailor mingle with the cunning and reckless daring of the convict, or "lag," in no common manner. Though prone to drunkenness and its attendant evils, the whaler is hospitable in the extreme, and his rough-built house is a model of cleanliness and order.²²

Of greater significance here however is the prominent place that Ngāi Tahu have attributed to the Ōtākou station in the history of the region and the development, within the region, of relations and understandings between Māori and Pākehā.

²⁰ David Coffin, 'Soon May the Wellermen Come', *David Coffin and the Natucket Sleighride*, Track 4 (Digital CD, Good Dog Records, 2008) <http://www.amazon.com/gp/product/B002TUV17K/ref=dm_ws_sp_ps_dp/184-0933369-1397625> [accessed 20 October 2014]. Pinniped, 'Soon May the Wellermen Come', *Toe in the Water*, Track 2 (Digital CD, Mark Iler of Greyhawk Productions, 2013) <<http://pinnipedmusic.com/album/toe-in-the-water>> [accessed 20 October 2014]. The Royal Fortune, 'Soon May the Wellermen Come: New Zealand Sea Shanty', (20 April 2013) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j9i2gv_XQtw&safe=active> [accessed 20 October 2014].

²¹ Lord Bledisloe in Erik Olssen, *A history of Otago* (Dunedin, John McIndoe Limited, 1984), p.197.

²² Wakefield, Edward Jerningham, *Adventure in New Zealand* (John Murray, London, 1845), vol. 1, pp.311–312.

Looking at just the stretch of coast from Moeraki to Riverton other stations were established at Omāui (1830s), Toetoes (Fortrose—1835-1836), Oue (1836-1838), Riverton (1835-1840s), Moeraki (Boxing Day 1836-1846), Waikouaiti (1837-1847), Purakanui (1837-1838), Bluff (1838–1846), Port Molyneux (1838), Waikawa (1838-1840), Taieri Island (1839-1840s), Tautuku Peninsula (1839-1846) and Tokanui (1840s). Each of those whaling stations has stories to tell that make notable contributions to the early pioneering history and lore of the deep south of New Zealand.

The Moeraki station is probably of interest for a range of reasons—not least of which being that prior to the arrival of shore whalers in 1836 the region had featured in the Sealer's War during 1814, when a party of eight under the command of Robert Brown, including five lascars and two Europeans, were killed and eaten. When the whaling station was established in 1836 it was founded by several men from the Weller brother's Ōtākou station. The most interesting thing about this station is that unlike the Ōtākou station it is believed to have been near alcohol free. In terms of cross-cultural interactions it is believed that the Moeraki whalers maintained excellent relations with Māori and that many of them married local Māori women and remained in the region even after the closure of the station.

The Waikouaiti station is also of significant interest—however primarily due to it being established by John 'Johnny' Jones. Waikouaiti is located approximately half way between Moeraki and Dunedin. Johnny Jones was an Australian, born in Sydney, who came to New Zealand and purchased a whaling station and land in Waikouaiti—and at the same time a large parcel of the present day North and Central Otago from chief Hone Tuhawaiki—the same chief who Edward Cattlin purchased The Catlins from. While most of that purchase was quashed Johnny Jones managed to retain about 11,000 acres.

Notably it was Johnny Jones that founded the Harbour Steam Navigation Company which was an important forerunner to the highly influential Union Steamship Company which was formed by James Mills (who had been helping run the Harbour Steam Navigation Company) shortly after Jones' death.

Stations in the eastern Murihiku region generally began operation later, and were more short lived, than ones such as Preservation Inlet in Fiordland which ran from 1829 until 1839. Whaling had largely faded as a full time occupation by 1850, with mostly only occasional work available in the industry.

Like the name of The Catlins region—as discussed above -, the southern Otago and Southland coastline is scattered with place names that similarly record the close historical bond between whalers, many of

whom were Australian, and the landscape. The Australian Thomas (Tommy) Chaseland (1802/1803-1869), born to an English father (a convict also named Thomas Chaseland who had been convicted in Middlesex, on October 26 1791, and then transported to Port Jackson upon the *Royal Admiral*) and an Australian Aboriginal mother came to be one of the most notable whalers within New Zealand. It is understood from ship records that Chaseland eventually departed Australia working on the *Nereus* under Captain Emmett in 1824 on a voyage to transport convicts and then go sealing—and appears that Chaseland departed the vessel in the region of Foveaux Strait to begin his New Zealand career—as no later record of him exists in the crew or passenger lists of Australian ports.

Reasonable records exist showing to show that Chaseland worked as a sealer, whaler and pilot in and around Stewart Island, Southland, Otago and The Chatham Islands—where he was wrecked. We also know that Chaseland married a Māori lady named Puna who was thought to be a powerful *tohunga*. Traditions of the southern Māori record that after the wreck the two ‘built a boat & put sufficient food on it & came back [... to Otago]. She was a great *tohunga* & pulled one of her hairs, said a *karakia* & put it in the sea, so they had a safe voyage and landed at Moeraki.’²³ It is significant that such a tale is recounted in the traditions of southern Māori as it demonstrates not only the firm belief in spiritualism and *tohunga* lore during this period, but also both gives a concrete example of that lore being transferred and shared in the lives of *takata pora* while clearly highlighting the elevated place of Chaseland and Puna as individuals of note within a Māori historical context. From both folkloric and anthropological standpoints this is a significant episode.

Of greatest note, regarding his whaling career, is a short period in 1835 when at Toe-Toes (on the mouth of the Mataura River) in The Catlins, Chaseland and his then partner James Brown took 11 whales in 17 days. While oil was lost due to a lack of suitable containers to store it in. That feat quickly gained Chaseland much notoriety with reports that it was ‘the greatest feat of the kind ever performed in the country’ circulating.²⁴ Chaseland also worked a variety of other whaling jobs within the region—in 1844 he managed the Taieri Mouth station on behalf of owner Johnny Jones, and then in 1848 we know he worked the Tautuku station. There are a number of notable episodes during his years on the coast—the most exciting of which recounts that when coming up too close upon a whale one day Chaseland’s boat was broken up by the

²³ Beattie, Herries, Nigel Prickett, ‘Trans-Tasman stories: Australian Aboriginies in New Zealand Sealing and Shore Whaling’, in *Islands of Inquiry: Colonisation, Seafaring and the Archaeology of Maritime Landscapes*, ed. by Geoffrey R. Clark, Foss Leach and Sue O’Conner (Australian National University Press, 2008), pp.351-366 (p.353).

²⁴ Shortland, Edward, *The Southern Districts of New Zealand* (London: Longman, Brown, Green and Longmans, 1851), p.145.

whale's fluke and sank. All bar Chaseland and two other men drowned—with the three of them holding onto a piece of wreckage to stay afloat. Eventually—with a heavy fog setting in—Chaseland set off swimming, volunteering to seek help from shore. A boat eventually rescued the other two men but no one could locate Chaseland until sometime later when he was spotted coming up to shore, naked, having swam six miles back to the station.²⁵



Try pot (2011.238)—from the Tautuku station and used between 1839 and 1843. (Try pots were used to remove and render cetacean oil from blubber. Sometimes these were also used on pinnipeds and penguins. The flat sides allowed them to fit closely together and to conserve heat.) Item from the Owaka Museum.

²⁵ On this tale see: John Wilson, *Reminiscences of Early Settlement of Dunedin and South Otago* (Dunedin, 1912), pp.3-4.

Chaslands, and Chaslands Mistake, in the southern end of The Catlins, take their names from Chaseland. Those place names once again confirm the way that communities have engaged with whalers and whaling stations as part of the process regional identity formation—and also sit within the broader context of place names being a tool through which we can read the stories of a region. Notably this also provides another link between the region and seafarers from Australia.

The early shore whaling stations of New Zealand are of particular interest for a number of reasons. As Nigel Prickett of the Auckland War Memorial Museum has identified they are ‘places where Māori and Pākehā [including escaped Australian convicts and the offspring of convicts] first came together for a common end, many stations can throw light on the process of early contact between European and Maori. The period and its outcomes were important in our history.’²⁶ Notably their evidence also provides key insights into the early process of European settlement within New Zealand. A distinct cultural shift here is that unlike the earlier and more transient sealing workers the whalers tended to settle within the south after the whaling industry collapsed. It is important not to under-estimate the power of cultural transference in pioneering communities where they have sustained regular contact with indigenous peoples. This can be likened to the widely explored influence of traveller’s tales in creating small shifts and slow metamorphosis of the *weltanschauung* to each absorb some elements from the other.

Whaling Station Links With Māori Whalebone Carvings

The accelerating demand for Māori artefacts spurred the whale bone carving industry to meet the demands of European trade and exchange, and the number of whale bone items being manufactured – particularly weapons such as patu – dramatically increased [after the commencement of pākehā-led commercial whaling] as shown by the relatively large number of whale bone artefacts of post-European contact manufacture in New Zealand museum collections.²⁷

²⁶ Prickett, Nigel, *The Archaeology of New Zealand Shore Whaling*, National Historic Heritage Workshop (The Department of Conservation - Te Papa Atawhai, Wellington, September 2002).

²⁷ Cunliffe, Emily A., ‘Whales and Whale Bone Technology in New Zealand Prehistory’, pp. 36-37.

Demand for whale bone carvings, as well as a range of other Māori traditional artworks—sometimes even including *mokomokai* (preserved severed Māori heads covered with *tā moko*)—fed not only domestic collections but also museums, art galleries and private curiosity cupboards in Australia, North America and Europe.²⁸ Despite the market for whale bone carving flourishing at a time where it could feed off a by-product of the Pākehā-led whaling industry it is clear that Māori possessed a deep cultural history of using whales in that way prior to European settlement. It should also be noted that the designs in the period after the introduction of commercial whaling include little variation from earlier pieces.



Scrimshaw of trees and floral motifs carved on the lower jaw of a Long-finned Pilot Whale. Item from the Owaka Museum.

²⁸ See T. Dunbabin, 'A Strange Trade: Deals in Maori Heads', *Sydney Sun* (21 January 1923).

That high level of demand for Māori artefacts, such as traditional whalebone carvings, continues today. In 2012 Christie's ran an auction titled 'Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas'. Lot 8 of that auction was a c.19th century hand carved whale bone Kotiate, or hand club. That piece had a detailed beaked tiki head carving on the handle butt. The estimated auction price for this Kotiate was 20,000–30,000 USD however the hammer sale price ended at 60,000 USD.

Alongside the flourishing market for Māori whalebone carvings was the development of a burgeoning market for New Zealand whalebone scrimshaw. Shrimshaw—an art tradition of engraving, carving or scrollworking bone and ivory that has a strong link to pieces made from the bones of marine mammals.

International Shifts from Whaling to Whale Conservation and Their Regional Impact

In 1931 the Geneva Convention for the Regulation of Whaling was signed, marking the first attempt to regulate whaling, in the same year that a record catch of 29,410 blue whales were killed in the Antarctic. In New Zealand Southern Right Whales became a protected species in 1935. With global recognition of whales slowly beginning to take hold 1936 saw the signing of the International Agreement for the Regulation of Whaling in London. Notably however 1937 saw the 46,039 whales killed in Antarctica.²⁹

During 1946 the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling was signed by fifteen nations in Washington D.C.—using the International Agreement for the Regulation of Whaling as a precursor document. The Convention was set out to govern the use of whales including aboriginal subsistence whaling, the scientific use of whales and commercial operations, and the International Whaling Commission was formed as an body to implement and govern the Convention. There have however been several disagreements between nations over the scope and authority of the Convention and the Commission respectively. New Zealand was a founding member of the International Whaling Commission.

Whaling was finally abandoned in New Zealand in December 1964. The decision to abandon whaling was admittedly largely due to a fall in economic viability at the time, however it arguably allowed for a groundswell of anti-whaling sentiment to gain a more substantive

²⁹ See 'Convention for the Regulation of Whaling', *The American Journal of International Law*, 30.4, Supplement: Official Documents (Oct., 1936), 167-174. On whale kill numbers by year, see Kieran Mulvaney, *The Whaling Season: An Inside Account of the Struggle to Stop Commercial Whaling* (Shearwater Books, 2003).

foothold. The last station to operate was Perano station—located in the Tory Channel of the South Island’s Marlborough Sounds.

During the 1970s, shortly after the closure of the Perano station, the global community began showing an increased interest in the burgeoning anti-whaling movement. At the 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment a proposal was adopted that recommended a decade-long moratorium on commercial whaling.³⁰ The goal of that moratorium was to allow whale stocks to replenish—and during the intervening years several studies showed that several whale species were possibly heading rapidly toward extinction. It was at this time that a wider number of states began to join the International Whaling Commission. In 1975 Greenpeace made their first anti-whaling voyage in the North Pacific. Other conservation societies of note to the preservation of whales were also formed in the late 1970s. In 1977 Captain Paul Watson, formerly a member of Greenpeace, founded the Earth Force Society—which would become the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society—in Canada, with the goal of protecting marine mammals and ending illegal whaling and sealing. The Earth Force Society purchased its first vessel in 1978 and renamed it the *Sea Shepherd*. This contributed to the shift in name to the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society.

In 1978 all marine mammals gained protection under New Zealand law—notably New Zealand was the first nation to protect marine mammals in such a way by law. Notably 1978 also saw the closure of the last whaling station in Australia (Cheynes Beach Whaling Company, in Western Australia). Following the closure of that station Australia became more actively involved in international anti-whaling debate—adopting an anti-whaling policy in 1979 that permanently ended whaling in their waters and taking on a leadership role in international protection and conservation efforts. 1979 also marked the International Whaling Commission declaring the Indian Ocean, north of 55°S, a sanctuary for whales, and banning pelagic factory-ship whaling for all whale species except minke whales.

As the 1980’s dawned anti-whaling nations grew stronger in their resolve to end all whaling in line with swelling public interest in and support for cetaceans. Eventually on 23 July 1982 the International Whaling Commission voted, with a 25-7 majority, to effect a pause on commercial whaling. The pause began in 1985. This however was not a pause to all whaling as both both scientific research and aboriginal subsistence provisions existed in International Whaling Commission rules—allowing some states to continue to whale under those auspices.

³⁰ See ‘Stockholm Declaration on the Human Environment’, U.N. Doc. A/Conf.49/14/Rev.1, 11 I.L.M. 1416 (1972); and; ‘Stockholm Action Plan, Recommendation’ 33, U.N. Doc. A/Conf.49/14/Rev.1, 11 I.L.M. 1421 (1972).

Since that time nations including Japan have continued whaling, making substantive numbers of whale kills, for scientific purposes in the Southern Hemisphere. Both the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and Greenpeace have sent vessels to intercept and deter the Japanese whaling efforts in the Antarctic since that time.

In 1987 the South Island town of Kaikoura began the development of New Zealand's core whale watching eco-tourism industry, Whale Watch. While mainstream banking institutions refused to assist with the formation of Whale Watch in 1987, a local *iwi* group, Ngāti Kuri, was able to obtain funding from an indigenous people's bank using their assets as security. That same year saw Ihimaera's *Whale Rider* published. Operation started in 1989 with a single vessel taking members of the general public on whale watching tours, and Whale Watch quickly gained in notoriety as a quality eco-tourism provider with a high level of environmental integrity. The initial expansions of Whale Watch were made possible when Ngāti Kuri approached the Ngai Tahu Māori Trust Board (which is their tribal authority) and gained additional funding—with the Trust Board buying a major shareholding.

More Reflections of Whales as 21st Century taonga

Leading into the 21st Century one goal of New Zealand foreign policy was the creation of a twelve million square kilometer South Pacific Whale Sanctuary. This policy was widely publicised within New Zealand and generally accepted to be in keeping with broader attitudes towards conservation. The proposal was however strongly opposed by Japan and was defeated at a meeting of the International Whaling Commission in 2000 in Australia. New Zealand and Australia campaigned strongly for that decision to be overturned with arguments that the sanctuary would not only protect the living cultural heritage of the region but also ensure a sustainable economic boost through regional growth industries such as whale watching and other eco-tourism concerns.³¹ Notably however not all groups within New Zealand supported the proposal—a delegation representing Te Ohu Kaimoana, a Māori trust which advocates for indigenous fisheries rights, lobbied against the proposal with their representative Archie Tairaroa telling the International Whaling Commission that:

The sanctuary proposal [...] undermines the principles of sustainable use, and considering Maori own about 40 percent of New Zealand's commercial fisheries, it is absolutely essential that we base all our

³¹ See 'New Zealand Under Attack for Whale Sanctuary Plan', *The New Zealand Herald* (24 July 2001). <http://www.nzherald.co.nz/nz/news/article.cfm?c_id=1&objectid=201826> [accessed 20 August 2014].

decisions on the best available traditional ecological knowledge of Maori.³²

The New Zealand and Australian governments continued to lobby strongly for the establishment of whale sanctuaries and the cessation of commercial whaling. Notably during this period groups such as Greenpeace and the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society became even more active in their opposition to whaling fleets as well.

Then in 2002 Niki Caro released his film interpretation of Ihimaera's *Whale Rider*—a film that is still often used as a teaching text in New Zealand secondary schools to highlight the unique culture and the values of the nation. The international award winning film has been globally recognised as an important post-colonial indigenous story that not only empowers women and draws links to legend but also presents a message about ecological and cultural sustainability. Its role as a film that invokes principles of sustainability, and hence *kaitiakitanga* towards the natural environment and culture, has been highlighted by the global academic community—as an example of that Dr. Adrian Ivakhiv of the University of Vermont has used *Whale Rider* as a text for his 'Ecopolitics and the Cinema' ENVS295 course.

New Zealand popular culture also continued to draw upon traditionally mythicized representations of the sea. The 2007 video clip for Tiki Taane's first single, *Tangaroa*, includes lyrics about the spiritualized landscape and the role of Tangaroa as well as imagery that draws on several traditional Māori cultural elements such as *tā moko*, traditional Māori costume—most often used for Kapa Haka performances in the contemporary period—and a natural rocky outcrop that rises from the sea in the shape of the head of a whale. The track includes several traditional performance styles in terms of chanting, dance and the use of both *poi* (swinging tethered weights) and *tiaha*. Arguably the style of some sections of the vocal melody also have traditional analogues.³³ That contemporary music video seamlessly ties a wide range of traditional cultural icons, presenting the significance of the ocean—and *tapu* ocean creatures like whales through the symbolic use of whale shaped landscapes (perhaps further spiritualizing the landscape in the process)—to positively engage youth with Māori ideologies, values and culture. In terms of the link for whales and mythicized landscapes here it is important to remember the use of landscape in the novel *Whale Rider* and the comments about landscape with regards to the film version

³² Taiaroa, Archie, in 'NZ says YES! Maori say NO!', *The International Harpoon*, International Whaling Commission, 53 (London, 24 July 2001), p. 2.

³³ Tiki Taane, 'TANGAROA: God of the Sea: Tiki Taane', *YouTube.com* (Uploaded on 23 August 2007). <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNDiFXY6n-k&list=TLQjVsfUcf1liIkJmtxZ16gU4sVcWeb_4> [accessed 16 September 2014].

of that text. We should also recall the aforementioned whale shaped hills who were named Te Ara-a-Paikea in recognition of the cultural significance of their shape.

Also in 2007, on December 1, the Museum of New Zealand Te Papa Tongarewa opened an exhibition titled ‘Whales|Tohorā’ presenting one of the world’s largest whales and whaling collections. The Whales|Tohorā’ quickly received over 140,000 visitors at Te Papa—helping shape public opinion and build a widespread level of knowledge about the history of whaling within New Zealand. The exhibition was such a success that it was booked to tour the United States of America and Canada from 2008 until 2015.

As the ‘Whales|Tohorā’ left New Zealand to begin touring in 2008 two members of Greenpeace, Junichi Sato and Toru Suzuki, were arrested on June 20th in Japan over their work to investigate the sales of whale meat and links between whale meat sales and Japan’s scientific research whale kills—once more drawing a tighter focus on whaling within the public domain. Their investigation had led to Sato and Suzuki presenting a box of whale meat which had been stolen by the crew of Japan’s scientific whaling fleet to the Tokyo Public Prosecutor on May 15th arguing that it clearly demonstrated commercial links to the whale kills. Greenpeace supporters argued that Sato and Suzuki should have been viewed as whistleblowers. In September 2010 they were eventually convicted of having stolen the whale meat and trespassing by the Aomori District Court. Notably it was also in 2008 that the conflict between whalers and anti-whaling organizations became more clearly displayed to the general public through Animal Planet’s cable television series called *Whale Wars*.

While whaling has continued to be debated, and largely opposed, within meetings of the International Whaling Commission anti-whaling conservation groups have taken a more active role in the campaign against commercial whaling. In 2010 a Kiwi anti-whaling activist, Peter Bethune—a member of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society and captain of the *Andy Gil* until it sank after colliding with a Japanese whaling vessel. Bethune was detained by Japanese authorities for interfering with Japanese whalers, and assaulting them by throwing projectiles, then boarding a Japanese vessel unlawfully. Like Sato and Suzuki he was convicted and received a suspended sentence. During Bethune’s captivity and court case the New Zealand media closely followed all developments—sparking further public awareness of conservation campaigns. The fact that Bethune was a New Zealander was strongly highlighted.

Also in 2010, on May 31st, the Australian government lodged proceedings against Japan with the International Court of Justice in an effort to have their scientific whaling expeditions halted. On February

6th 2013 New Zealand then followed up by filing a Declaration of Intervention—becoming an ‘intervening state’ with their own submission—in support of halting Japanese whaling. As a result of those actions, in 2014, Japan was ordered to cease its scientific research whaling operation in the Southern Ocean in a 12-4 judgement by judges at The International Court of Justice—who agreed with the plaintiff (Australia) that the number of whales being killed could not be justified by the claimed purpose of their deaths.³⁴

In the South Island

Throughout New Zealand’s South Island links to our whaling history, our spiritual connection to whales through traditional legends, and our whale watching present, are maintained. Riverton (also called Aparima after the regions original Māori settlement), a small town on the shores of the Jacobs River Estuary about twenty minutes drive from Invercargill, which can trace early origins for the settlement to the establishment of a whaling station in the 1830s by John Howell, there is a giant whale statue. The giant whale statue is located in the playground at Taramea Bay and features on several tourism reports about the Riverton area. That statue reflects the deep connection that the Riverton region possesses to whales, and shows continued engagement with whale themes by the popular consciousness.

The region discussed above regarding coast whaling stations, roughly the Otago and Foveaux Strait region, includes an active cultural response to whales—in terms of visual arts, community theatre, the exhibitions of ecology festivals like ‘Seaweek’ and regular research topics at the University of Otago.³⁵ Museums along that stretch of coast also hold well developed regional museum coverage of whales and whaling—with whaling being a feature within the ‘Southern Land, Southern People’ gallery at the Otago Museum in Dunedin (as well as carved whale bone

³⁴ See ‘Japan Ordered to Halt Whaling’, *The Otago Daily Times* (1 April 2014). <<http://www.odt.co.nz/news/world/297302/japan-ordered-halt-whaling>> [accessed on 15 August 2014]., and, ‘Warning Japan may sidestep whaling ban’, *The Otago Daily Times* (1 April 2014). <<http://www.odt.co.nz/news/national/297320/warning-japan-may-sidestep-whaling-ban>> [accessed 15 August 2014].

³⁵ The 2014 Seaweek celebrations in Dunedin included short films such as ‘Once a Pod of Whales’ by Vanessa Marshall and Sara Kultz, and ‘On the back of whales’ by Mio Hoshino. See ‘Seaweek 2014 film screening: our fragile taonga’, *The Otago Daily Times* (5 March 2014). <<http://www.odt.co.nz/events/general/293984/seaweek-2014-film-screening-our-fragile-finite-taonga>> [accessed 21 August 2014]. In terms of community theatrical performances one might consider a performance crafted by Louise Potiki Bryant, 2014 Caroline Plummer Fellow at the University of Otago, titled ‘*Whakaahua: Coming to Form*’, which was performed at Toitu Otago Settlers Museum during the Puaka Matariki midwinter festival. ‘The performance is based on a Ngai Tahu version of the story Tinirau and Kae.’ Charmian Smith, ‘Stepping Through Time’, *The Otago Daily Times* (19 June 2014). <<http://www.odt.co.nz/entertainment/arts/306331/stepping-through-time>> [accessed 20 August 2014].

artefacts and an entire whale skeleton appearing elsewhere in the museum), and smaller museums such as; the Port Chalmers Maritime Museum, South Otago Museum (Balclutha), Waikawa Museum and Information Center and the Bluff Maritime Museum, all holding interesting collections regarding whaling of varying scope; while Invercargill's Southland Museum and Art Gallery opened a detailed exhibition in June 2014 titled 'Southern Seas: Whales, Whaling and the Antarctic'. That exhibition explores, in depth: whale evolution, Māori spiritual and legendary traditions of whales, the southern whaling industries and the recent efforts of conservation organizations and anti-whaling governments to save whales from their predicted extinction. As an example of another significant collection the 'Kāi Tahu' gallery at Dunedin's Toitū Otago Settlers Museum includes a range of artefacts including a whaling boat—the *Maori Girl* (which was built in 1871 for Waikouaiti whalers Tame Parata and Parahu Tira)—a (blubber) try pot, tripods, harpoons, flensing tools and whale products.

The Owaka Museum and Catlins Information Centre also contains a well developed whaling collection that has been presented in a modern interactive display. One important part of our visual record of southern New Zealand whaling, within the Owaka collect, is a black and white print (CT78.371) showing two ships at sea. It is believed that the print is an image of the *Splendid* which was a whaling barque that worked from both Foveaux Strait and Port Chalmers before moving north to whale in the Bay of Islands. Notably in 1880, while she was docked in Port Chalmers, the *Otago Daily Times* published a lively account of the *Splendid*'s whaling efforts under Captain Soule, around the South Seas (including several diverse locations such as Stewart Island and Wallis Island). That account spoke not only of the capture of whales but also of the danger to crew during events such as a whaling boat being destroyed when it went under the *Splendid*—with its crew needing to be fished out of the ocean—and in a separate incident the boat-steerer, John Oaho, breaking his leg whilst cutting in a whale after it was killed.³⁶ A wide range of interesting reports about the movements of the *Splendid* feature in the records of the region. The Owaka collection also includes a range of other interesting items including the scrimshaw on whalebone and whaler's try pot depicted above, harpoons and tools consistent with the kinds used at the Tautuku station and a range of whale bones and supporting documents. The prominence of whaling in the display clearly demonstrates the importance of the industry to the regions pioneering history and early identity formation.

Dunedin based artist Peter Fleming—whose genealogical heritage includes one of the early Riverton whalers—has also made a series of

³⁶ See 'Shipping', *Otago Daily Times*, Issue 5686 (11 May 1880), p. 2.

whale sculptures. Amongst other locations Fleming's statues were exhibited in Dunedin's Wall Street Mall. Fleming has campaigned for the sculptures to be installed at all of Otago's early whaling stations, especially around the Dunedin region, as a way of linking to past traditions and providing a strong visual tie to that history for tourists and visitors to the region.³⁷

Kaikoura now boasts an impressive array of whale watching options with not only the boat based Whale Watch, which is arguably the most recognised of New Zealand's eco-tourism operators, but also whale watching flights with the Wings over Whales company. Wings over Whales boast an impressive sightings rate for sperm whales of over 95%. On the 6th of August 2014 the New Zealand government created a Whale Sanctuary of 4696 square kilometres in the Kaikoura region. Dr Nick Smith, the New Zealand Conservation Minister, explained that:

Kaikōura has the most biologically rich ocean environment in the world at over 500 metres' depth with its deep canyons so close to shore. This extraordinary marine environment needs the recognition and protection of these new reserves, sanctuaries and the tighter fishing limits that are being signed into effect tomorrow [...] It is fitting that New Zealand's first whale sanctuary is in the area of Whale Watch which now supports a \$134 million per year tourism industry.³⁸

Coupled with the whale reserve the government also created the Ohau Point Fur Seal Sanctuary and the Hikurangi Marine Reserve simultaneously. One interesting observation that can be made here is the shift in roles from the *kaitiaki* position of whales towards humans during the period of the Māori migrations from Hawaiki to the *kaitiaki* position of humans towards whales in trying to conserve and protect them following a near global recognition that the actions of the global whaling industry of the 19th and 20th centuries were far less than appropriate.

Some scholarly debate has taken place within New Zealand about the ecological sustainability of whale watching. Professor James Higham of the University of Otago noted that whales specifically, and cetaceans generally, have in some—but not all—cases suffered from the stress on feeding grounds and interruptions to behaviour patterns caused by overuse of wildlife tours within their habitats. Higham edited a thoughtful study on this topic titled *Whale-watching: Sustainable*

³⁷ See Nigel Benson, 'Artist's Tall Tails Displayed in Mall', *The Otago Daily Times* (1 June 2012) <<http://www.odt.co.nz/news/dunedin/211552/artists-tall-tails-displayed-mall>> [accessed 18 August 2014].

³⁸ Smith, Nick, 'New Whale Sanctuary, Fur Seal Sanctuary and Marine Reserve Opened', *beehive.govt.nz: The official website of the New Zealand Government* (6 August 2014). <<http://www.beehive.govt.nz/release/new-whale-sanctuary-fur-seal-sanctuary-and-marine-reserve-opened>> [accessed 27 August 2014].

Tourism and Ecological Management highlighting those potential issues and setting out a framework for future thought in terms of planning for the conservation of cetaceans that considers that non-consumptive enterprises like whale watching might have on natural habitats or animal activity patterns.³⁹ Notably however the current Kaikoura commercial whale watching has been shown several times to be a best practice model. That study highlights, and is in keeping with, a deep commitment within the broader New Zealand public to the preservation of whales as a global *taonga*.

Final Thoughts

It is clear that whales were not only sacred beasts of Māori legend and myth but that they also played an integral role in Māori history through their connection to migration patterns, their role in sustenance provisions and their use to make a wide range of tools, weapons and ornaments (including sacred objects). The whale has featured heavily in the artistic expression of New Zealanders from the time of the first Māori New Zealanders until the present day. As a society our transition from originally viewing whales as a sacred part of the world, and only utilising them when provided as gifts by Tangaroa, to a consumptive model of whaling was arguably fueled by financial greed—however that process did aid deeply in the settlement of our nation. The present shift towards conservation efforts, in keeping with global attitudes toward cetaceans, has occurred seemingly in parallel with a revitalization of the respect towards and use of whales in artistic expression throughout New Zealand. The whale is an important cultural symbol whose history in the Southern Pacific this region is obviously tightly tied to the history, culture and imagination of New Zealand as a nation.

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³⁹ *Whale-watching: Sustainable Tourism and Ecological Management*, ed. by James Higham, Lars Bejder and Rob Williams (Cambridge University Press, 2014). On this line of argument see also: *Marine Wildlife and Tourism Management: Insights from the Natural and Social Sciences*, ed. by James Higham and Michael Lück (CABI, 2007).

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Place Names

Readers will be pleased to note the further progress of the *Journal of the English Place Name Society*, volume 45 appearing in 2013.

While there have been no recent survey volumes, work on Shropshire is far advanced, and should soon appear.

Active fieldwork is continuing for Cornwall, and Shropshire, and there is imminent Dr Cavill's new edition of John Field's *Dictionary of English Field-Names*.

All of this work is likely to have flowon effects for the study of the place names in Australia that have a significant link to settlement and land use in this country.

JSR.