

New Histories of Pacific Whaling

Edited by

Ryan Tucker Jones and Angela Wanhalla

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Introduction

Over two days in June 2018, a group of 16 scholars met in Honolulu to share their research on the history of whales and whaling in the Pacific Ocean. These scholars came from all corners of the great Pacific—British Columbia, Aotearoa New Zealand, Japan, Australia, and Oregon among others—and the histories they related inhabited an even greater portion of that ocean. This, in fact, was the aim of the seminar “Across Species and Cultures: New Histories of Pacific Whaling,” funded generously by the Rachel Carson Center, the University of Otago’s Centre for Research on Colonial Culture, and the University of Oregon. The seminar brought together a great diversity of viewpoints, methodologies, academic traditions, and areas of research, all looking inward towards the ocean, all looking at the relationship between humans and whales. The collection of essays that follows is the result of that seminar. Together, they delve into the depths of Pacific history and human–animal relations, they investigate and test the Pacific world concept, and they probe the limits of humans’ abilities to know other species.

Whaling has long enjoyed a central place in narratives of Pacific history. Long before Europeans came to that ocean, many Pacific peoples traced their ancestries and in some cases built their societies on the backs of whales. As ancestors, whales occupy a privileged place in Pacific societies and histories. As a number of the contributors to this collection highlight, whales regularly feature in accounts of voyaging traditions, often as protectors, and their significance remembered in songs and carvings. In fact, what we might see as “new” histories are actually old, often couched as “stories” by cultural outsiders. Remarking on the Māori relationship with whales, Billie Lythberg and Wayne Ngata argue for a temporal conceptualization situated within Indigenous histories that “span deep ancestral time to the present,” in which “the commercial whaling era is a mere ‘blip’ in this *longue durée*.” Looking below the ocean surface, to animal lifecycles, also forces a reimagining of scale and time in ways that disrupt the predominance of cross-cultural histories and modern whaling as frames of analysis. Contributors to this volume explore what whale and whaling histories look like from the ocean, as well as from islands, shorelines, ships, or stations.

In the nineteenth century, the whaling industry touched nearly every latitude and longitude of the Pacific Ocean. The industry forged new paths of mobility for Pacific Islanders, Indigenous North Americans, Euroamericans, and Asians alike, while tracing and disrupting the paths of whales. Honolulu claimed its spot as the central hub of the Pacific in large part thanks to the whaling industry, and many colonial histories around the ocean turned on how, when, and by whom whales were killed and their products distributed. But historians have pondered too little how women, African-Americans, Indigenous Pacific peoples, and whales themselves helped shape these histories. The authors in this volume go some way towards filling out these histories, reinforcing the coercive role whaling often played in Pacific colonialism and its importance to imperial expansion, while also revealing its potential for creating richly heterogeneous local societies.

While less celebrated—and less researched—than the age of sail whaling, the twentieth century saw the rise of an industrial whaling industry that sometimes built on earlier whaling cultures, but wrought environmental destruction unprecedented in its thoroughness and ruthlessness. Degradation of ocean worlds placed Pacific traditions, practices, economies, and communities under pressure. Yet, out of these forces, and from within local Pacific communities—both human and cetacean—new whale cultures have arisen. This volume's authors chronicle those developments in new and revealing detail: environmentalists desperate to save the last of the Pacific's whales stumbled upon resilient Indigenous worlds; whales took center stage in some Pacific peoples' post-colonial legal and political claims; and whales themselves—perhaps—also responded to this new Pacific world. While Alaska's Iñupiat, Australia's Ngarrinderjeri, Aotearoa's Māori, and Honshu's Buddhist priests all claimed that whales made meaningful choices, often to aid human societies, most Euro-Americans denied the animals were capable of any such thing. But as Western scientists increasingly see whales changing their behavior, resuming lost migration routes, even becoming friendlier to the humans who once slaughtered them, this opposition is falling apart. This new Pacific world calls for historians who, like its inhabitants, can cross those increasingly blurry boundaries that separate cultures and species.

So what follows are 14 short essays that heed this call. Arranged in three main sections—North Pacific, South Pacific, and post-colonial whale worlds—some use Indigenous frameworks of relationality in which humans and animals occupy shared worlds; others call for more Indigenous sources to be used in constructing historical narra-

tives; others rely on the insights of Western science to reveal lost stories of humans and whales. While no single story emerges, no one way of bringing whales to the ocean's surface, together they speak to the historical importance and continued resilience of whale and human communities all around the Pacific.

South Pacific Whale Worlds

Lissa Wadewitz

The American Animal Welfare Movement and Pacific-World Whaling

The American whaling fleet shifted its operations to the Pacific Ocean in the 1830s and thousands of mixed-race whaling crews moved into the far reaches of that ocean in pursuit of whales and other animals. In the process, they caught, tormented, maimed, and killed thousands of creatures. Given the nature of our contemporary relationships with animals, the violence that infused the commercial whaling industry is striking. Indeed, the sheer volume of animal blood that was shed over the course of the nineteenth century is a critical part of Pacific World history that deserves more systematic analysis.

Although mainly produced by literate Euro-Americans, available sources indicate that crew members' attitudes toward whales, in particular, could be surprisingly nuanced; in fact, many seafarers of this era expressed a level of wonder and sentimentality toward whales that was at odds with the violence usually associated with the industry. This suggests that the inchoate American animal welfare movement spawned by the Second Great Awakening of the 1820s and 1830s had filtered—albeit incompletely and imperfectly—into the Pacific whaling fleet. And yet, the goals of these ventures, in addition to the strict social and economic hierarchies that emerged on nineteenth-century American whaling ships, ultimately held sway in determining whalers' interactions with the animals in their midst.

Anthropomorphizing Whales

Whalers viewed most animals as lesser beings, sources of food, potentially life-threatening, and/or fully expendable. Sailors caught porpoises and turtles for food variety, toyed with albatrosses and other birds, and took great pleasure in catching and tormenting sharks. In contrast, many seafarers recognized the intelligence and human-like qualities of whales. Although the American animal welfare movement largely focused on domesticated species that lived in close proximity to humans, the campaign's "gospel of kindness" ideal appears in nascent form in the nineteenth-century whaling world. Given the aims of the commercial whaling industry, it is easy to overlook the capacity of whalers to express appreciation for the mammals they pursued and killed, but the sentiments are there.

Whalers observed and marveled at the whales' sociability and intelligence. In the spring of 1840, for example, Francis Olmsted witnessed the lancing of a pilot whale that, minutes before, had been playing about the bow. When the boats towed the bleeding animal to the ship, they were "accompanied by all his companions spouting and foaming around the boats like attendant tritons. So affectionate are these poor fish, that when one of their number is struck by the whaler, the school continues around the sufferer, appearing to sympathize with him in his agonies. Even when dead, they do not desert him, and it was not until a long time after the victim had been hoisted upon deck, far from their sight, that they abandoned him."¹ Whales were obviously more animated and companionable than other animals that were more easily captured and killed.

Notably, whalers also regularly recorded the touching maternal behavior of female whales. By the 1840s, for instance, American whalers found that attacking gray whales on their birthing grounds (which sailors called "the nursery") was a highly effective way to kill female whales, because, according to one whaler, the calf's mother "will not readily desert her offspring, and in her extreme solicitude for her young, is a frequent victim. The taking of one of a school, almost always ensures the capture of another, for his [or her] comrades do not immediately abandon the victim."² On observing a right whale, Reverend Henry Cheever noted that "its immediate recourse is to flight, except when it has young to look out for, and then it is bold as a lion, and manifests an affection which is itself truly affecting."³

The expanding American animal welfare movement directly tapped into such concerns about maternal behavior and familial relations; in fact, children's literature and Sunday school curricula increasingly presented anthropomorphized stories of animals with human-like feelings and animal families that showcased maternal love.⁴ These emphases in popular culture back home may have prompted Euro-American whalers in particu-

1 Francis Allyn Olmsted, *Incidents Of A Whaling Voyage To Which Are Added Observations On The Scenery, Manners And Customs, And Missionary Stations Of The Sandwich And Society Islands* (New York: D. Appleton And Co., 1841; Rutland, Vermont, Tokyo, Japan: Charles E. Tuttle Co., 1969), 155. Page number refers to the 1969 edition.

2 Charles Melville Scammon, *Journal Aboard the Bark Ocean Bird on a Whaling Voyage to Scammon's Lagoon, Winter of 1858-1859*, ed. David A. Henderson (Los Angeles: Dawson's Book Shop, 1970), 27.

3 Henry T. Cheever, *The Whale and His Captors; or, The Whaleman's Adventures, and the Whale Biography, as Gathered on the Homeward Cruise of the "Commodore Preble"* (New York: Harper & Brothers, 1850; Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1991), 110. Page number refers to the 1991 edition.

4 Katherine C. Grier, "'The Eden of Home': Changing Understandings of Cruelty and Kindness to Animals in Middle-Class American Households, 1820-1900," in *Animals in Human Histories: The Mirror of Nature and Culture* (Rochester, NY: Rochester University Press, 2002), ed. Mary J. Henninger-Voss, 340-41.

lar—especially those of upper-/middle-class origins who were more likely to be literate—to pay closer attention to these behaviors among the whales they encountered.

The Hunt Proceeds

Whalers thus often admired whales, but this reverence ultimately did not interfere with the hunt for several reasons. Some of these motivations are straightforward given the demands of the industry and the economic goals of individual workers. To fully grasp whalers' ability to both revere whales and then purposely kill them, however, requires a more in-depth examination of the ways in which social relations aboard ship were changing as the American whaling fleet moved into the Pacific.

Perhaps the most compelling driver of whaler behavior was the desire to make money. When whalers signed onto a voyage, they agreed to both a specific position on board and a set "lay," or percentage of the ship's total profits at the conclusion of the trip. Because the length of the voyage and the crew members' final pay were both directly related to how much whale oil and baleen a ship accumulated, whalers kept careful track of the ship's total supplies. The need to return home with a specific amount of oil and bone in the hold to make the voyage profitable could provide tremendous incentive for whalers not to succumb to sentiment when it came to the animals around them.

The fact that chasing and harpooning whales was also a highly dangerous and often frustrating experience most certainly helped whalers rationalize their behavior. Every time whalers engaged in the chase, they knew their lives were at risk. Stories about angry whales smashing boats and summarily tossing men into the sea were common. Whalers regularly broke bones, suffered from exposure to the elements, and, of course, lost their lives. Crews also often hunted whales for days on end, with nothing to show for the effort. Even if a harpooner managed to fasten to a whale, the animal could escape by diving or by sinking; many vessels lost thousands of dollars of equipment when this happened, which then affected the ship's profit margins.

Less obvious motivations likely emanated from the class tensions that pervaded most whaling ships in this period. Like most marine vessels, whale ships were organized according to a strict hierarchy based on status and skill that directly correlated to wage

rates. The captain and the ship officers tended to hail from more privileged backgrounds, were more highly skilled, and earned the largest returns on the ship's profits. Such class and status hierarchies sharpened as the industry expanded. If the captain or an officer were also prone to corporal punishment and cruel behavior, as many were, these tensions were often exacerbated further.

As the American whaling fleet more regularly entered the Pacific, racial tensions grew in overall intensity as well. Finding adequate hands became difficult, so whaling captains started leaving New England ports with mere skeleton crews, seeking to hire enough laborers *en route* to distant whaling grounds. The result was that American whaling crews grew strikingly diverse. Between 1803 and 1860, over 3,000 African Americans worked whaling ships out of New Bedford, Massachusetts, for instance, and one in six whale-ships had at least one Native American on board. After leaving New England, these ships made for the Azores, or "Western Islands," whose population was Portuguese, Catholic, and mixed-race. Next was the Cape Verdean archipelago, which had a darker skinned population that Euro-Americans often referred to as "Portuguese blacks." Once in the Pacific, whaling captains next took on additional islander crew members, particularly Hawaiians and Māori from New Zealand.

Given that the crews were so diverse and the dominant nineteenth-century racial discourse so predicated on Euro-American men's sense of cultural and biological superiority, tensions between racial groups were bound to erupt. Historians have found that African American men, due to white racism, stereotypes about their abilities, and the fact that they were often hired to do "women's work," fared the worst in the American whaling fleet. Racial animosities were so pronounced on some vessels that living spaces were segregated by race.

Despite instances of violence and inter-racial tensions, whaling still generally offered thousands of men of color a way to achieve some sense of freedom, self-respect, and a chance to advance in their careers. According to historian Nancy Shoemaker, rank trumped race. "That a man of color as an officer had special privileges could have fueled white foremast hands' resentment," she argues, "but ship rules protected and legitimated those privileges."⁵

5 Nancy Shoemaker, *Native American Whalers and the World: Indigenous Encounters and the Contingency of Race* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2015), 66.

Did this inverted world of race relations affect whalers' relationships with the animals of the Pacific World? It is difficult to say with certainty, but the lines between animal and human were definitely blurry, especially for Euro-Americans thrown into new situations and places inhabited by "exotic," dark-skinned people who were rumored to eat human flesh. That Euro-American ideas about the proximity of non-whites to the animal kingdom were evolving over the course of the 1800s, and that many Americans remained unsure about how to classify whales (fish or mammal?), merely added to the confusion about the accuracy of existing taxonomies of the natural world. It is certainly possible that these uncertainties influenced how whalers' perceived and acted toward the animals they so readily killed.

The Pacific whaling grounds thus presented a racially mixed-up world where Euro-Americans continually articulated deeply held beliefs about their superiority and the clash between "savagery" and "civilization," despite the racially diverse reality of the whaling fleet and the actual power structures they lived with every day. Unable to freely lash out at the men of color aboard their ships and seeing the special privileges afforded all officers regardless of skin color may have pushed Euro-American whalers to channel their frustrations at the animals they did have license to harm.

But what about whalemens of color? Because they left behind so few written sources, their motivations have to be carefully teased out of the records we do have. Men of color may have felt compelled to join the hunt due to their frustrations with racist treatment or abuse. Although whalers of all ethnicities also saw the whale hunt as a way to distinguish themselves as men and prove their worth to their fellow crew members, men of color may have more acutely felt a need to prove themselves, to appear brave, skilled, and so worthy of their positions. Surrounded by potentially hostile white crewmates, some men of color may have more zealously pursued the animals they encountered as a result.

Unlike spontaneous and more individualistic approaches to animal slaughter involving birds, turtles, and sharks, the whale hunt was also an inherently collective enterprise. No man would pursue a whale on his own—that would be sheer folly. The whaleboat required all hands to act in concert as they determinedly rowed toward their quarry on the open water. That their prey was revered as intelligent and powerful heightened the challenge. Although the hunt itself had the potential to unify men across lines of race and class, perceived social and biological distinctions may have instead spurred whalers' actions when confronted by angry leviathans and thrashing flukes.

A Failed Gospel of Kindness

Nineteenth-century whalers had a tremendous impact on many of the animal populations of the Pacific. However, their attitudes and actions toward whales appear to have been based on complicated and evolving understandings of human/nonhuman relations and perceived ethno-racial hierarchies. Emerging debates about slavery, taxonomies of nature, and the proper treatment of animals also seem to have combined and percolated into the whaling world of the 1800s, particularly for whalers of Euro-American descent. Whales' intelligence, curiosity, sociability, and especially the maternal instincts and actions of female whales, all struck a chord with many of the men engaged in this industry. Yet, at the end of the day, such sentiments did not deter the harvest of these creatures for financial gain; the "gospel of kindness" may have given Euro-American whalers pause, but it ultimately failed to interfere with the hunt.

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Nancy Shoemaker

Oil, Spermaceti, Ambergris, and Teeth: Products of the Nineteenth-Century Pacific Sperm-Whaling Industry

Laborers in the nineteenth-century whaling industry harvested four body parts of sperm whales: oil from the blubber, spermaceti from whale heads, ambergris if discovered in a whale's intestines, and teeth. Only the first three counted as commodities, as that word is typically used. Oil, spermaceti, and ambergris circulated in a global marketplace as impersonal, passionless objects subject to a standardizing system of weights and measures, quality grading, and monetary exchange. Moreover, these three whale products realized their ultimate value in the act of consumption. Whale teeth took an alternate route. They became a blank template for cultural inscription and consequently were more likely—than other parts of a whale—to be exchanged as gifts, and they gained value through preservation and old age. The different manner in which people treated different parts of a whale adds to our understanding of how global capitalism worked. It fed the growth of two kinds of markets: the commodity market most familiar to historians of capitalism and niche markets attuned to cultural meaning, social relationships, and distinctiveness versus standardization.

Sperm Whale Commodities

The Pacific sperm-whaling industry began with the 1789–90 voyage of the *Emelia* out of England. Prompted by that voyage's success, the *Emelia's* owners commissioned James Colnett in 1793 to take the *Rattler* to the Pacific Ocean to discover exactly where and when sperm whales congregated. A few years later, Colnett published a narrative of the *Rattler's* journey along with what is perhaps the earliest, most accurate diagram of a sperm whale (see Figure 1). He divided the whale into different sections. "A" identifies "the case," which held the spermaceti. The diagonal lines across the whale's body demonstrate how whalers cut the blubber into large "blanket pieces" to lift onto the deck of the vessel preparatory to boiling into oil. The whale clearly has teeth in its lower jaw, which the text further describes, but only as one of the whale's physiological features and not, like the spermaceti and blubber, as a merchandisable product.

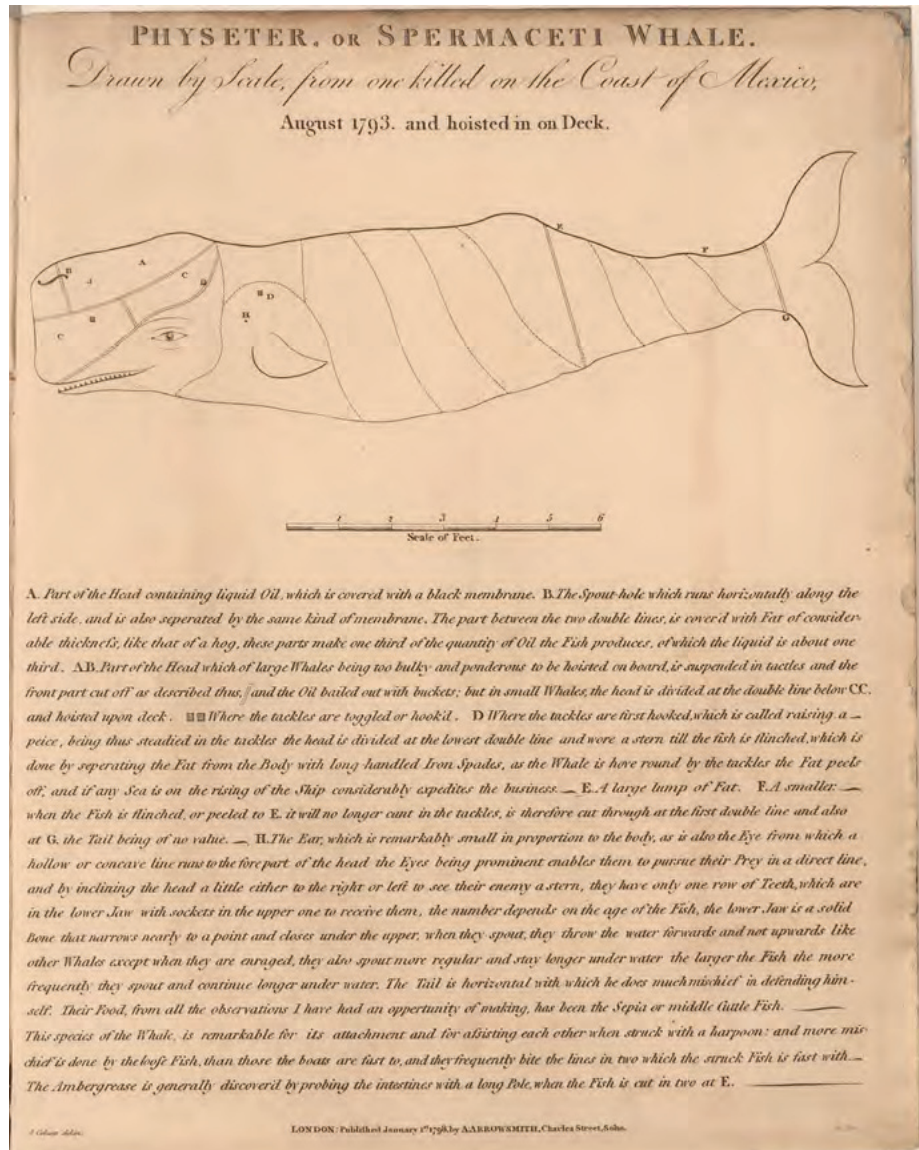


Figure 1: This diagram showing how to “cut-in” a sperm whale appeared in James Colnett, *A Voyage to the South Atlantic and Round Cape Horn into the Pacific Ocean, for the Purpose of Extending the Spermaceti Whale Fisheries, and Other Objects of Commerce* (London: W. Bennett, 1798), 80–81. This version of the image was published separately by Arrowsmith in 1798 and comes from the collections of the John Carter Brown Library. Courtesy of the John Carter Brown Library at Brown University.

Sperm oil and spermaceti, the former used in lamps and the latter in candles, fueled the eighteenth-century lighting revolution, inside homes and outside on public thoroughfares. Like the commonly hunted right whale, sperm whales had a thick layer of blubber that could be melted into oil. However, “sperm oil” burned more brightly and with less odor and smoke than “whale oil” taken from right whales. It therefore commanded a higher price. Spermaceti, called such by early naturalists for its resemblance to male reproductive fluid, was a wax that produced a more luminous and cleaner flame than the candle-making alternatives of beeswax and tallow. Unique to sperm whales, spermaceti came from the case, the membrane-lined cavity at the top of the head, which today is more commonly referred to as the spermaceti organ. Marine mammal scientists theorize that the spermaceti organ is an echolocation mechanism enabling effective sensory perception during deep dives. By the mid-eighteenth century, a large whale fishery developed around sperm oil and spermaceti wax along with an industrial infrastructure of oil refineries, candle works, and merchant middlemen.

Ambergris—a rarer, more precious sperm whale product—was a lump of half-digested fecal matter that occasionally clogged up whale intestines, unless expurgated, in which case it could be found floating at sea or cast up on a beach. Ambergris had an overpowering, earthy odor comparable to musk and civet and acted as a scent fixative, making it a staple in perfumery. It sold at exorbitant prices. Nineteenth-century New Bedford whaleships that happened upon ambergris could expect \$10,000 to \$20,000 for a one-hundred-pound lump.

Niche Markets for Whale Teeth

Very briefly, teeth also became a commodity of the whaling industry once Europeans and Americans realized how much Pacific Islanders wanted them. Anthropologists and other scholars have ruminated at length on the differential value of sperm whale teeth in nineteenth-century Oceania as part of a larger query into the culture, economy, and politics of exchange. Most conspicuously in Fiji, but also in Tonga, the Marquesas, Hawai‘i, and elsewhere in the Pacific, the warm, gold-white glow of polished animal ivory combined with their rarity made whale teeth high-status objects exchanged and displayed as symbols of divinity, truth, integrity, trust, wealth, and power. In Fiji, presentations of a whale’s tooth endowed political pacts and marriages with good intentions. American

commercial interests in the Pacific adapted to take advantage of this regional, niche market. Shortly after the boom in Fijian sandalwood began in 1804, a market in whale teeth emerged in the United States as American ships flocked to the Fiji Islands to harvest the aromatic wood to sell in China. To do business in Fiji, American traders needed to stock up beforehand on large supplies of whale teeth.

Despite the new interest in whale teeth in the mercantile communities of eastern port cities generated by Pacific Islanders' demand for them, the market remained small and confined to Oceania trade. Within the whaling industry, whale teeth never attained the status of whale oil or whalebone (baleen) taken from right whales and bowheads. Whale-ship owners reporting to customs officers on goods imported to the United States at the end of a voyage continued to list only sperm oil, "head matter" (spermaceti), whale oil, and whalebone as products of the voyage. Thus, the Pacific whale-tooth trade had little impact on the whaling industry's main objectives.

Another niche market in whale teeth opened up in the early nineteenth century, when the whaling industry's laborers took up scrimshawing. Scrimshaw experts date its origins to at least 1817, based on a tooth engraved with a whaling scene and text that reports it as the London whaleship *Adam* at the Galapagos Islands. Scrimshaw was primarily a sentimental pastime for whalers. They turned out etched whale teeth, corset busks, swifts (yarn winders), pastry crimpers, inlaid boxes, and other knickknacks intended as voyage souvenirs and gifts for loved ones. Much scrimshaw had a feminized cast to it: the swifts, pie crimpers, and busks all evoked women's work or dress. When the tooth's shape was preserved to serve as the canvas for a drawing, often referenced were domestic spaces, such as parlors, or genteel women in fashionable outfits as appeared in magazines from the period. This aspect of scrimshawing reveals it to be more than just a means to kill time aboard ship; it became a contemplative act in which men away from loved ones on three- to four-year voyages embodied their emotional attachments to home through gift production.

The differential uses for and value of whale products—how oil, spermaceti, and ambergris became expendable commodities whereas teeth became treasured relics conveying a host of human emotions—continue to bear on the present day. Many countries prevent the sale of whale oil, spermaceti, and ambergris through such measures as the U.S. Marine Mammal Protection Act, International Whaling Commission mandates, and

agreements reached under the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). In contrast to how these national and international regulatory systems prevent whale parts from being treated as commodities, the cultural artifacts of nineteenth-century Pacific Islanders and whalers can be bought and sold as “Antique Parts” of sperm whales. Teeth transformed into expressions of culture by Pacific Islanders or by industrial whalers circulate mainly among museums and art collectors, who are willing to pay a high price for these objects. Fijian *tabua* sold at art auctions can reach a value of a thousand dollars or more. As for scrimshaw, if an etched tooth can be attributed to a well-known “artist,” its price could soar to hundreds of thousands of dollars.

Even though ambergris has also been regarded as precious and, moreover, could be said to acquire its extraordinary value from its power to evoke human emotions (by titillating our sense of smell), like the more mundane, lower-cost oil and spermaceti, ambergris realized its value through a transformation that resulted in its destruction. Sperm whale teeth have had the opposite experience. The blank canvas of the whale’s tooth inspired people to transform it in ways that enhanced its value and called for its preservation. It was the meaning, and not the transitory material benefits, of sperm whale teeth that made them objects of human desire of great worth in a variety of niche markets.

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Kate Stevens and Angela Wanhalla

Māori Women in Southern New Zealand's Shore-Whaling World

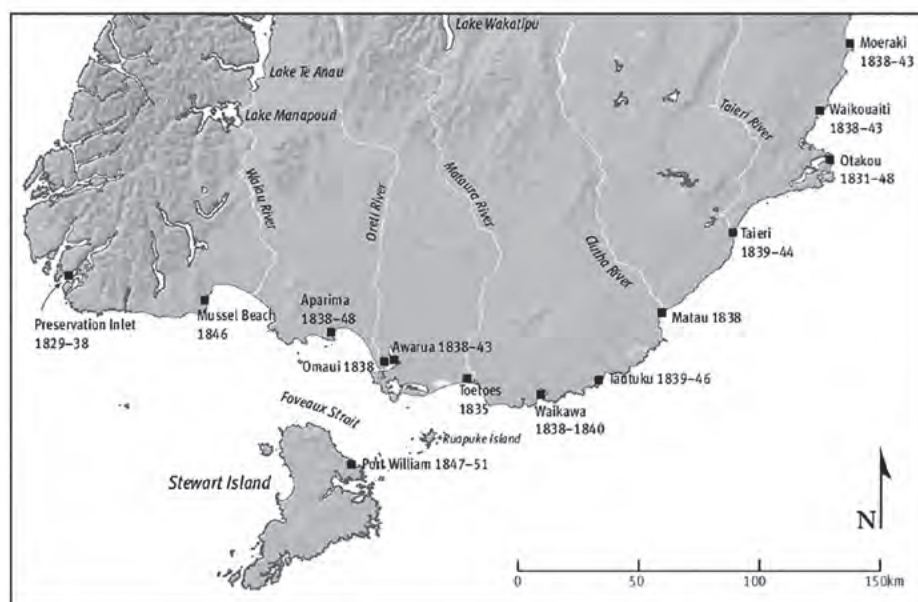
From the 1790s to the 1840s, a range of newcomers arrived in New Zealand, drawn to the southern shores by seals, whales, and trade opportunities with Māori communities. In southern New Zealand, it was the presence of southern right whales (kewa, or tohorā) in the bays between April and October that attracted shore whalers to the region, who established whaling stations on Kāi Tahu tribal territory (see map). Southern New Zealand hosted shore-whaling stations from 1829 until the industry declined from the 1850s onwards due to over-exploitation.

An important site of cross-cultural encounter, the shore-whaling station was a vanguard of colonialism and capitalism in the Pacific. Inter-marriage was a vital component of the shore-whaling world: it operated to fold new members into Kāi Tahu relational economies and networks and fostered the development of long-standing, cross-cultural settlements. Such relationships cemented the rights of whalers to establish stations on Kāi Tahu land, guaranteeing their protection but also a “right to use the small areas on which they dwelt.”¹

Māori women and men played crucial roles in the development and success of the industry. Recent scholarly work, for instance, has identified shore whaling as a key site of interracial marriage, and of expanding global capital in which Māori made significant contributions as employees.² As such, stations were a liminal space, both between and connecting different communities. Yet, as Jonathan West has highlighted, the whaling station was also a site of environmental encounter, straddling the marine and terrestrial, and human and nonhuman.³

- 1 Atholl Anderson, *Race Against Time: The Early Maori-Pakeha Families and the Development of the Mixed-Race Population in Southern New Zealand* (Dunedin: Hocken Library, 1991), 28.
- 2 On interracial marriage, see Kate Stevens and Angela Wanhalla, “Intimate Relations: Kinship and the Economics of Shore Whaling in Southern New Zealand,” *The Journal of Pacific History* 52, no. 2 (2017): 1–21. On links between shore whaling, capital, and the “imperial global economy,” see Tony Ballantyne, *Webs of Empire: Locating New Zealand's Colonial Past* (Wellington: Bridget Williams Books, 2012), 124–36.
- 3 See Jonathan West, *The Face of Nature: An Environmental History of the Otago Peninsula* (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2017), which dedicates a chapter to the Ōtākou shore-whaling station and its fisheries.

Figure 1:
Map of Foveaux Strait and Rakiura/
Stewart Island,
showing locations of
key whaling stations
and settlements in
the area. Note that
Kāi Tahu rohe (tribal
territory) extended
further north to en-
compass other shore
whaling areas in
present-day Otago
and Canterbury.
Image from
Wanhalla, *In/visible
Sight*.



Kāi Tahu women made an important contribution to the whaling station—as both wives and workers. Here, we move beyond these roles to examine women’s knowledge work, focusing on their role as intermediaries between humans and the marine world. We argue that indigenous understandings of the ocean, which have gendered dimensions, are a critical and under-examined element of the shore-whaling industry. Different sets of knowledge and values were embedded in these environments and shaped the operation of the whaling community and its activities. Whalers brought their skills in chasing whales and transforming these leviathans into tradeable oil. Aside from access to land, however, they also relied on Kāi Tahu knowledge about the land and ocean. The interplay of these environmental knowledges underpinned the emerging industry.

Kāi Tahu Women and the Ocean

The European division between nature and culture was blurred from a Kāi Tahu world-view. As such, understanding the whaling economy requires an examination of the interconnections between peoples, species, and environments operating within this resource industry, which relied upon local knowledge and ways of managing relations.

Whakapapa (genealogy) is a key framework for ordering the Māori world. It is “a way of being based on complex networks that encompass all forms of life, interlinked and co-emergent,” that Anne Salmond argues “might assist in exploring relational ways of understanding the interactions between people and the land, other life forms, waterways, and the ocean.”⁴

Centering Maori relational models that encompass all forms of life brings to the fore relationships and knowledge that can easily be obscured when whaling is examined solely on economic terms. It also situates the whaling station within a broader environmental context. Though these mammals were at the heart of the industry, shore whaling relied also on significant engagement with, and knowledge of, the wider environment as a source of sustenance, trade, and identity.

One reason why Kāi Tahu women’s contributions to shore whaling have been read in limited ways is that their link to the sea and the maritime environment is little recognized. It is acknowledged that Māori women held important economic roles and were political leaders, but they also played significant roles in voyaging traditions as navigators and helped create marine life. Some traditions depict the sea as female, as Hine-moana, who with her husband Kiwa, are the progenitors of certain kinds of fish, shellfish, and seaweed.⁵ In some accounts the ocean’s protectors or guardians are female.⁶ Women feature as archetypal figures associated with the ocean in accounts found across Polynesia, which were applied to particular local circumstances to help explain the world and its creation, including its natural features and the creatures that populate it. Traditions relating to Hina, who is said to have given fish their special characteristics, are found throughout Polynesia, where she is known variously as Sina, Hine, or Ina.⁷ In a southern New Zealand version, collected by the ethnographer James Herries Beattie, Hina is known as Hine-te-iwaiwa, who stomped the sole, trampled the sandfish, and scratched the paikea (southern humpback whale), creating the distinctive markings on its front.⁸

4 Anne Salmond, *Tears of Rangī: Experiments Across Worlds* (Auckland: Auckland University Press, 2017), 3.

5 Margaret Orbell, *The Encyclopaedia of Maori Myth and Tradition* (Christchurch: Canterbury University Press, 1995), 86 and 129.

6 Angela Wanhalla, “Maori Women in Waka Traditions,” in *Shifting Centres: Women and Migration in New Zealand History*, ed. Lyndon Fraser and Katie Pickles (Dunedin: University of Otago Press, 2002), 21.

7 Christine Tremewan, *Traditional Stories from Southern New Zealand = He kōrero nō Te Waipounamu* (Christchurch: Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies, University of Canterbury, 2002), 121.

8 Tremewan, *Traditional Stories*, 151.

Given their strong relationship with the oceanic environment, it might be expected that women feature in historical treatments of shore whaling. Associations between Maori women and the sea, however, are rarely noted in most accounts of the nineteenth-century shore-whaling industry, where the dominant narrative remains focused on stations as masculine spaces and the ocean as men's work.

Oceanic Relationships in the Whaling Era

Women's role as guardians continued into the whaling world of the nineteenth century. An account recorded by ethnologist James Herries Beattie in the early twentieth century demonstrates the role of Kāi Tahu women and their knowledge of and relationship with the environment during the shore-whaling era:

Woman's Island for the tītī (muttonbirds) of Rakiura belonged to Tuhawaiki-Parapara, who conveyed it to Puna, the wife of Chaseland or Tame Titireni, and she became the boss of the island. Her husband and she went to Chatham Islands and were wrecked. They built a boat and put sufficient food on it and came back here. She was a great tohunga [expert] and pulled one of her hairs, said a karakia [prayer] and put it in the sea, so they had a safe voyage and landed at Moeraki.⁹

The marriage between Puna and Australian Aboriginal whaler Tommy Chaseland was a partnership in which both were active participants. In particular, this narrative demonstrates Puna's status and knowledge through her ability to bring the pair to safety, while also highlighting the continued importance of Maori knowledge and traditions in interracial relationships formed around sealing as well as whaling stations. The arrival of whaling as a commercial activity did not displace these enduring forms of engagement with the natural world.

Puna's actions, though, also recalled the role of women in traditions in which human beings triumph over external forces by calling on the spiritual world through karakia.¹⁰

9 Ellison, quoted in a notebook entitled, "Casual allusions to the whalers made by Maoris in interviews given to Herries Beattie between 1900-1950," 2, James Herries Beattie Papers, MS-582/G/9, Hocken Collections, Dunedin.

10 Tremewan, *Traditional Stories*, 16.

Puna may have been thinking of Pūpū-mai-nono, who features in southern traditions. She ritually protected her siblings on their quest to avenge the death of a brother through a karakia, used to calm the stormy seas, so that they could cross the ocean safely.¹¹ An account collected by Beattie from Kāi Tahu leader Magda Wallscott in 1910 relates to Puna's role in protecting a crew, including her husband Tommy Chaseland, on a journey to New Zealand from the Chatham Islands. Magda told of how Puna “sat in the bow of the boat from Chatham Island karakia-ing to keep the storm down.”¹²

Given their spiritual significance, accounts also show whales as kaitiaki (or guardians), as well as tūpuna (ancestors) (see Lythberg and Ngata in this volume). The continued role of whales as kaitiaki appears in Beattie's ethnological project that he conducted for Otago Museum in 1920, in which he interviewed elders across the southern region about all aspects of Kāi Tahu life. Beattie recorded:

A well-informed old man referred to the traditional lore that in storms at sea an efficient tohuka (or tohunga) could call up a great fish to protect the canoe. [...] Any whale, or shark, or big fish, or taniwha, or monster of the deep thus called up was called a takaroa, or tangaroa, and all were “paid with a hair from the human head”.¹³

The account has clear parallels to the protective actions taken by Puna. More generally, karakia and related rites were used to ensure good fishing with the acquiescence of Tangaroa.

Whales are also a tohu (sign) that represent positive omens. George Robert, the first child of Kohikohi and her whaler husband John Howell, was born on a whaleship in 1838 as the family returned from visiting relations on Centre Island in the Foveaux Strait. Betsy, an old Māori woman, and Kohikohi's young servant were also on the boat. After the birth, which was aided by Betsy, they spotted a whale:

Betsy was very superstitious, and thought this was a good omen. Better still, if the Captain could get it. Father thought this would be impossible, but egged on by the

11 Tremewan, *Traditional Stories*, 185.

12 Cited in Lynette Russell, *Roving Mariners: Australian Aboriginal Whalers and Sealers in the Southern Oceans, 1790–1870* (New York: SUNY, 2012), 58.

13 J. H. Beattie, *Traditional Lifeways of the Southern Maori*, ed. Atholl Anderson (Dunedin: University of Otago Press/Otago Museum, 1994), 154.

women made the attempt, and with the help of the women was successful. There was great jubilation, when he returned from his visit with a whale—and a son.¹⁴

The account suggests that the women were adept at sea, and maintained knowledge and beliefs that informed the practices of the whaling communities. The affective aspects of the shore-whaling economy thus went beyond cross-cultural relationships to include cross-species ones. Maintaining such knowledge and connection with the wider environment helped ensure the success of the industry.

Māori Women: Intermediaries of the Sea

Māori accounts of the natural world and its formation highlight the importance of looking beyond a solely economic framework for interpreting Kāi Tahu engagement in the shore-whaling world. These accounts reveal patterns of kinship that encompassed animals and the landscape, and how people related to them. The cross-cultural worlds of maritime communities drew upon personal connections forged through marriage and kinship as well as enduring connections to the whenua (land) and moana (sea). Indeed, the shore-whaling station was not simply an economic resource, but a cross-cultural and environmental space where land, sea, and people met and related to each other.

Māori women often took roles as intermediaries between humans and the environment in this maritime world. Kāi Tahu relationships to the sea set the foundation for their economic and political roles in the southern whaling world. While many Kāi Tahu women provided formal and informal labor on the whaling station, their interactions with the maritime world were more than economic or affective. Their connections to the ocean built upon traditional accounts of female ancestors, who provided models for women's roles and activities in the shore-whaling world. Yet their knowledge and engagement with the natural world are largely invisible if whaling is framed as a quintessential masculine and colonial economic activity.

14 Eva Wilson, *Hakoro ki te iwi: The Story of Captain Howell and his Family* (Orepuki: E. Wilson, 1976), 16.

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Susan A. Lebo

Newspaper Stories Promoting Local Nineteenth-Century Shore-Based Whaling in Hawaiian Waters

WHALES; BAY WHALING; WHALING OFF MAUI; WHALER EXTRAORDINARY; A SPERM WHALE TAKEN; SPERM WHALING OFF HONOLULU; THERE SHE BLOWS; GOT A WHALE; FIRST RETURNS. From the 1850s to the 1870s, these riveting headlines and accompanying stories appeared in local news columns in four English-language Honolulu newspapers: *Friend*, *Hawaiian Gazette*, *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, and the *Polynesian*.¹ These accounts generally promoted entrepreneurial whaling by small local parties in bays, channels, and along coasts frequented by humpback and sperm whales. They announced sightings of whales and reported the pursuits, strikes, kills, losses, and returns of the whaleboats launched by crews from the shore. Some also provided reports from or about pelagic whalers sighting or taking whales in the same areas as shore parties, while sailing from one island port to another, or while engaged in short cruises in Hawaiian waters.

An early editorial extolling the potential of local shore-based whaling appeared in the *Polynesian* in 1841. A foreign resident told of witnessing the processing of a drift whale off the northwest shore of the island of Hawai'i:

MR. EDITOR.—Last January, a large Sperm Whale drifted ashore near my residence at Kohala, and had there been any one there who understood the business of saving the oil, a large quantity might have been made, provided he had conveniences. The natives went from every quarter by hundreds and cut off as much of the blubber as they could conveniently carry away, and carried to their houses—some of them, with a design to eat it. Some had small iron pots, in which they boiled their pieces, and stowed their oil in calabashes; several barrels of the best of oil was thus made. Since that time I have seen whales spouting off Kohala at three different times—in less than four months.

¹ The newspaper data are supplemented, where missing or inconsistent among sources, with information (e.g., registry, captain's name, voyage catch) available in the Honolulu Harbormaster records (Hawaiian Government, 1842–1894, Series 104, Volumes 1–4, 5 Folio, 6–7). Where appropriate, place names have been standardized with modern English- and Hawaiian-language gazetteers and diacritical spellings. Nineteenth-century spellings are retained for all quotes. Riggings, hailing ports, and captain's names of American vessels have been inserted where missing and standardized using Lund (2001). Vessel data are presented using the following format: registry, rigging, vessel name, and captain's name (e.g., Hawaiian bark *Desmond*, Gilley).

The query arose in my mind—would it not be a profitable business for some person skilled in taking whales, to establish himself somewhere on Hawaii, provided with boats, &c. and be on the watch for whales, and thus add to the resources of wealth to these islands. It was mere accident, as it were, that I saw the whales as above mentioned; and should a man attend to the business, he might much oftener discover these lords of the deep . . .²

In the late 1840s, accounts describe fledgling efforts to obtain “exclusive rights” from the government to take whales from designated locations, as well as efforts to establish a Honolulu-based pelagic fleet. They illustrate foreign resident and government interests in bolstering the kingdom’s whaling economy.³ On 20 May 1848, the *Polynesian* documented the first instance of a local whaling company taking whales in Hawaiian waters:

THE WHALE-FISHERY.—Sperm whales are frequently seen near these islands, and several projects have been set on foot at different times to capture them. Mr. Jas. Hough of Lahaina obtained a few months since a charter for the exclusive right of fishing for whales at Honuaula, on the Island of Maui, and at length succeeded in capturing a sperm whale. In consequence of the difficulty experienced in “cutting in” and getting the “blubber” on shore, only about 30 barrels of oil was secured. This at the current rates, here is worth about \$800.⁴

News stories extolling whale sightings and shore-based whaling did not regularly appear in Honolulu’s newspapers until the late 1850s, more than three decades after merchant Stephen J. Reynolds began recording in his journals (1823–1855) vessel arrivals and departures at the port of Honolulu as well as sightings and catches taken by foreign pelagic whalers in Hawaiian waters.

Newspaper stories about shore-based whaling from the late 1850s to early 1870s reveal that some parties likely engaged exclusively in shore-based whaling or pelagic whaling, while others clearly engaged in both. For example, on 25 December 1854, the Hawaiian Government granted a petition from C. J. Clark and H. Sherman to ob-

2 *Polynesian*, May 29, 1841, 1(51): 203.

3 *Polynesian*, January 25, 1845, 1(36): 146–47; *Polynesian*, September 5, 1846, 3(16): 65; *Polynesian*, May 20, 1848, 5(1): 3.

4 *Polynesian*, May 20, 1848, 5(1): 3.

tain fishing rights for one year to take whales from Mā'alaea Bay, Maui.⁵ Reportedly former shipmates, Clark and Sherman “bought boats and whaling tackle . . . to engage in humpback whaling at Kalepolepo Bay.”⁶ On 2 April 1855, they killed three humpbacks,⁷ and in late 1856, their company chartered the schooner *Haalilio*, with a plan to fit the schooner out “for the sperm whale business in the neighborhood of these islands.” The schooner was a regular inter-island trader to Kona, Hawai‘i.⁸

News stories indicate shore-based whaling involved the launching of small whaleboats from shore and, when successful, of hauling the dead whales onto the beach where they were tried out in try-pots (trying out is the process of extracting oil from blubber in heated vessels). They reveal that some shore-based enterprises likely lasted a single season and all likely involved minimal investment—one or two whaleboats and try-pots and a small crew. None are described as involving stations with buildings.

Stories document shore-based enterprises strategically located on four islands—O‘ahu, Maui, Kaho‘olawe, and Hawai‘i—to target near-shore migration routes and breeding areas; sightings occurred primarily from January to April, less frequently between mid-October and the end of December, and included sightings of both solitary whales and pods and occasionally humpback and sperm whales together.⁹ Numerous shore-based parties centered along the leeward coast of Maui, where frequent sightings of humpbacks were reported off Lahaina, opposite Lahaina in Mā'alaea Bay, and in Kalepolepo Bay near Kihei.¹⁰ A smaller number of shore-based parties were located at Hilo, Hawai‘i. Stories identify the leeward coast of Maui as a humpback breeding area and report the presence of a sperm whale breeding area off Ka‘ū, the southern

5 Privy Council, *Minutes*, December 25, 1854; Maude Jones, “Whaling in Hawaiian Waters,” *Paradise of the Pacific* 50, no. 4 (April 1938): 20.

6 *Friend*, January 1, 1855, 4(1): 2.

7 *Friend*, April 2, 1855, 4(4): 28.

8 *Polynesian*, December 20, 1856, 13(33): 130.

9 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 19, 1857, 1(34): 2, 3; *Polynesian*, March 14, 1857, 13(45): 179; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, April 23, 1857, 1(43): 2, March 11, 1858, 2(37): 2, March 18, 1858, 2(38):2, April 21, 1859, 3(43): 2, April 19, 1860, 4(47): 2; *Polynesian*, January 19, 1861, 17(38): 2; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 5, 1863, 7(3): 2, March 12, 1864, 8(37): 2; *Hawaiian Gazette*, December 8, 1867, 3(48): 3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, March 2, 1868, 11(35): 3, March 26, 1870, 14(39): 3, February 17, 1872, 16(34): 3, February 28, 1872, 8(7): 3 March 26, 1873, 9(11): 3 February 28, 1877, 13(9): 3.

10 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 19, 1857, 1(34): 2, March 18, 1858, 2 (38): 2, April 2, 1857, 1(40): 2, April 9, 1857, 1(41): 2, April 23, 1857, 1(43): 2, February 18, 1858, 2(34): 2, March 11, 1858, 2(37): 2; *Polynesian*, February 11, 1860, 16(41): 3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 5, 1863, 7(32): 2; *Polynesian*, March 28, 1863, 19(48): 3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 17, 1872, 16(34): 3; *Hawaiian Gazette*, February 19, 1873, 9(6): 3.

district of the island of Hawai‘i.¹¹ No shore-based enterprises were identified along the Kohala-Kona coastline of Hawai‘i, although sperm whales were reported on various occasions off Mahukona and sperm and humpback whales off Kawaihae,¹² as well as at Kailua and Kealahou Bay.¹³

The stories suggest that in 1858, four or five shore-based enterprises operated along the leeward coast of Maui, primarily near the port of Lahaina,¹⁴ with two or three new parties operating the following year.¹⁵ In 1859, two enterprises were located on the island of Kaho‘olawe, of which only the enterprise of Messrs. Turton and Lockwood of Lahaina is identified in newsprint.¹⁶ In 1866, parties on Maui included O. J. Harris and Pat Shaw. Both reportedly engaged in humpback whaling between Lahaina and Kalepolepo and, in March, Shaw’s crew succeeded in killing and beaching a whale about eight kilometers east of Lahaina. The whale yielded “a thousand gallons [approximately four thousand liters], more or less.”¹⁷ Captain Spencer operated an enterprise at Hilo in the spring of 1869¹⁸ and possibly the same party or another was located there in 1870. Another enterprise operated from the leeward coast of Maui in 1870,¹⁹ and several in 1872, including one operated by O. J. Harris. The last known shore-based whaling enterprises involved several unidentified parties centered at Lahaina in 1873.²⁰

Stories about shore-based whaling mention both drift whales and live whales. They record that Indigenous Hawaiians harvested drift whales for whale meat, rendered blubber into oil for personal use or for sale, or simply sold beached whales outright.²¹

11 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, May 7, 1863, 7(45): 2, March 10, 1866, 10(35): 2.

12 *Friend*, April 2, 1855; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, March 19, 1857, 1(38): 2, March 30, 1867, 11(39): 3, June 19, 1869, 13(51): 3.

13 *Polynesian*, February 4, 1860, 16(40): 3, February 18, 1860, 16(42): 3; *Friend*, March 1, 1860, 9(3):24; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, March 12, 1864, 8(37): 2; *Hawaiian Gazette*, February 28, 1877, 13(9): 3.

14 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 18, 1858, 2(34): 2; *Polynesian*, March 6, 1858, 14(44): 348; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, March 11, 1858, 2(37): 2.

15 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, January 20, 1859, 3(30):2, January 27, 1859, 3(31): 2.

16 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, January 27, 1859, 3(31): 2; Maude Jones, “Whaling in Hawaiian Waters,” *Paradise of the Pacific*, 50, no. 4 (April 1938): 20; A. Gove Day, *Hawaii and Its People* (Honolulu: Mutual Publishing, 2005), 161.

17 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, March 2, 1868, 11(35): 3, March 10, 1866, 10(35):2.

18 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, March 13, 1869, 13(37): 2; *Hawaiian Gazette*, March 17, 1869, 5(9):3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, March 30, 1869, 13(38): 3.

19 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, March 26, 1870, 14(39): 3.

20 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 24, 1872, 16(35): 3, March 9, 1872, 16(37):3; *Hawaiian Gazette*, February 19, 1873, 9(6): 3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 22, 1873, 17(34): 3.

21 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, July 9, 1857, 2(2): 2; *Hawaiian Gazette*, February 1, 1871, 7(3): 3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, March 7, 1874, 18(35): 3, May 20, 1876, 20(47): 3; *Hawaiian Gazette*, February 28, 1877, 13(9): 3.

One account from 1866 involved an individual named Hema who “fitted some boats for Humpback whaling off this port [Lahaina, Maui] and the seas adjacent.” One of his boat crews caught a whale estimated likely to yield 25 barrels of oil. However, the observer expressed concern that Hema’s try-pots were not yet ready. The observer went in company with others to where Hema’s crew had stranded the whale. The observer reported, “We found that the people were laying out a feast on whale beef. About one-fourth of the blubber was on the beach, and the rest still on the whale” and the casks were not yet cleaned and readied.²² Another Indigenous Hawaiian shore-based whaling enterprise located near Lahaina was operated by Kakainahaole and his wife and included an “all-native crew” reportedly from Honolulu. On 1 March 1858, the crew killed a cow and a calf in “sight of the town.” The same day, a bull was killed by crew from the American whale ship *Sharon*, Captain King. Reportedly, Kakainahaole was in Honolulu at the time and so his “wife had taken charge of the business and went in the boat herself, superintending the capture and saving of the whales.”²³ This report provides the only known reference to Kaikainahaole’s wife as actively participating in the taking of whales.

Newspaper accounts identify some shore-based enterprises by name, including Hema, Kakainahaole, Thomas Welcome Roys, Pat Shaw, and Thomas Spencer; and as partnerships such as C. J. Clark and H. Sherman, James Hough and Henry Fennes, and Messrs. Turton and Lockwood. Other sources expand this list to include an unnamed shore-based enterprise at Keka’a, Maui, that possibly operated from 1849 to 1859.²⁴ Others include John Freeman, who in 1847 received exclusive whaling rights from the Hawaiian government for the area spanning from Pu’uloa (Pearl Harbor) to Diamond Head, O’ahu;²⁵ James Hough of Lahaina who received a charter in 1850 granting him “the exclusive right of fishing for whales at Honuaula, Maui”;²⁶ and E. M. Mayor, who received permission in 1858 from R. C. Wyllie, lessee of the entire island of Kaho’olawe, to establish a station on the island to take whales in the “coming season.”²⁷

22 *Hawaiian Gazette*, March 10, 1866, 11(8): 2.

23 *Polynesian*, March 6, 1858, 14(44): 348.

24 *Fornander*, 1918–19, *Fornander Collection of Hawaiian Antiquities*, 5: 542–43.

25 *Privy Council*, Minutes, May 26, 1847; *Privy Council*, Records, vol. 2T, 21 August 1846–28 June 1847, 423–24; Maude Jones, “Whaling in Hawaiian Waters,” *Paradise of the Pacific*, 50, no. 4 (April 1938): 20.

26 *Polynesian*, May 20, 1848, 5(1): 3.

27 E. M. Mayor to R. C. Wyllie, Letter, May 8, 1858; Maude Jones, “Whaling in Hawaiian Waters,” *Paradise of the Pacific* 50, no. 4 (April 1938): 20.

Published reports from the 1860s describe shore-based parties engaging in bay whaling using sloops, schooners, or other small vessels. A story from 1861 reported: “Bay Whaling—From Lahaina, we hear that six whales have been captured in Kalepolepo Bay. The sloop *Live Yankee* is engaged in the service.”²⁸ A party on the leeward coast of Maui in 1862 engaged in shore-based whaling for at least several years, sailed a pelagic cruise in 1868, and was again engaged in shore-based whaling in 1872.²⁹ In early 1863, Captain Harris, sloop *Laanui*, took a large humpback whale off Lahaina, where it was seen on 25 March “trying out the oil, laying at anchor.”³⁰ In January 1870, Captain Thomas Welcome Roys erected tryworks at Olowalu, about six to eight kilometers from Lahaina. He chartered the Hawaiian schooner *Annie* [also spelled *Annel*] for a short whaling cruise off the leeward coast of Maui. The *Annie* secured two whales using Captain Roys’s new whaling guns manufactured by Mr. Hopper of Honolulu,³¹ reportedly in what was the first time such guns were used in Hawai‘i.³²

Reflecting the demise of this whaling activity in Hawaiian waters, the last news stories about shore-based whaling date to February 1873.³³ Collectively, nearly three decades of news stories about shore-based whaling appeared in the *Friend, Hawaiian Gazette*, *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, and the *Polynesian*. They provide invaluable locally recorded documentation of the small enterprises centered at strategic locations on the islands of O‘ahu, Maui, Kaho‘olawe, and Hawai‘i from the late 1840s to early 1870s. Their importance is elevated by the paucity of information about shore-based whaling in local archival sources, including journals, logbooks, government records, or in published articles or books. As such, they hold considerable potential for contributing to a broader understanding of the range of whaling activities conducted in Hawaiian waters, including short cruises conducted by vessels in the Honolulu-based fleet, which returned to island ports with catches including whale, seal, shark, and/or turtle

28 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, April 18, 1861, 5(42): 2.

29 *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, April 17, 1862, 6(4): 2; *Polynesian*, March 28, 1863, 19(48): 3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, May 14, 1863, 7(43): 2; *Polynesian*, May 30, 1863, 20(5): 3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 1, 1868, 12(29): 3; *Hawaiian Gazette*, March 4, 1868, 4(7): 3; *Hawaiian Government, Collector General, Series 104*, vol. 6, (1868–1880); *Hawaiian Gazette*, November 11, 1868, 4(43): 3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, November 14, 1868, 13(20): 2; *Hawaiian Gazette*, October 6, 1869, 5(38): 3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 24, 1872, 16(35): 3.

30 *Polynesian*, March 28, 1863, 19(48): 3.

31 *Hawaiian Gazette*, February 2, 1870, 6(3): 3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 26, 1870, 14(35): 3, March 5, 1870, 14(36): 3.

32 *Hawaiian Gazette*, March 2, 1870, 6(7): 3.

33 *Hawaiian Gazette*, February 19, 1873, 9(6): 3; *Pacific Commercial Advertiser*, February 22, 1873, 17(34): 3.

oil, and cruises conducted by foreign vessels visiting the islands, as suggested in stories titled: ISLAND LOCALS; FOR A CRUISE; ISLAND WHALING; WHALING NEWS; A NEW ENTERPRISE.

Vicki Luker

Whaling, Tabua, and Cokanauto



Figure 1: Tabua. Whale tooth presented in 1967 by the government and people of Fiji to the governor general of Australia, Lord Casey, on the disappearance of the Australian prime minister, Harold Holt. Ceremonial whale teeth have changed little in appearance since early nineteenth-century Fiji. “Whale Tooth with a Rope Attached to it.” National Library of Australia.

Cokanauto (ca. 1810–1851), also known as Mr. Phillips, was a high chief of the Fijian polity of Rewa.¹ He received the paramount Rewan title Roko Tui Dreketi in 1845. Although no integrated treatment of his life is available, the widely read colonial historian of Fiji, R. A. Derrick, described him as a “whaler.”² As will be seen, commercial whaling in Fiji and Cokanauto’s involvement in the industry warrant a description that is more precise. Yet this paper argues only that whaling could be a *chiefly* pursuit—giving Cokanauto access to the highest chiefly valuable: tabua, or whale teeth (Figure 1). During his lifetime, the supply of tabua increased due to commercial whaling, and many changes in Fijian politics, including war, can be attributed to tabua. One might be reminded of Judy Bennett’s thoughts on the Second World War: that the human dimension of nonhuman worlds interests environmental historians.³ Although whales and their teeth are the

1 Following convention in Fijian spelling written “c” is pronounced “th” in English, written “b” is pronounced “mb” and “d” as “nd.”

2 R. A. Derrick, *A History of Fiji* (Suva: Government Press, [1946] 1974), 57.

3 Judith A. Bennett, *Natives and Exotics: World War II and Environment in the Southern Pacific* (Honolulu: University of Hawai‘i Press, 2009), 21.

precondition for this paper, it is the human dimension of Cokanauto and his people that concerns us. First, some background information on Fiji, Fijian chiefdoms, whaling, and tabua is needed.

Fiji and its Chiefdoms

Fiji is an island group in the southwest Pacific. Some one hundred of its three hundred islands are inhabited. The three largest are Viti Levu, Vanua Levu, and Taveuni (Figure 2). These large islands are to the west of the Koro Sea, in which several important islands exist. The east of the Koro Sea is fringed by the Fijian islands of Lau, and beyond them, further to the east, lies the Tonga group.



Figure 2: Map showing Fiji, Tonga, and neighboring islands. CartoGIS Services, College of Asia and the Pacific, The Australian National University.

Today Fiji is home to nearly 900,000 people. More than half are Indigenous Fijians or Taukei. The next biggest group is Indo-Fijian, its members mostly descended from labourers indentured under colonialism. Britain ruled Fiji from 1874 to 1970, but the importation of laborers from India effectively ceased in 1916.

Cokanauto's home of Rewa, through which flows Fiji's largest river, the River Rewa, is a short drive from Suva, Fiji's capital city. A short distance from Rewa is the small island of Bau, home to Cokanauto's cousin, widely known as Cakobau (ca. 1815—1883), who led the chiefs who ceded the Fiji Islands to Queen Victoria in 1874.

In 1840, Fiji consisted of some 1,400 villages, a Taukei population of perhaps 300,000 people, several mutually unintelligible languages, and fiercely independent polities. Bau, which missionaries and others labelled the most powerful chiefdom, might have directly ruled some 15,000 people. The Rewa delta hosted one of the largest concentrations of people in the Pacific, supported by the intensive cultivation of swamp taro. The chiefdoms of Bau, Rewa, and Cakaudrove (to the north, occupying most of Taveuni and some of Vanua Levu) expanded in the early nineteenth century through war, marriage, and trade. The latter included commercial whaling and related industries.

Whaling and Tabua

Whaling in Fiji should be placed in scare quotes. While whaling was important in different ways for many Fijian communities in the nineteenth century, the commercial exploitation of whales, and the traditional hunting of whales or the harvesting of the odd beached whale, appear to have been activities undertaken elsewhere. Yet from the late eighteenth century, whale teeth or tabua were items of great chiefly power in Fiji. Tabua were central to affairs of state. The increased supply of tabua owing to commercial whaling was therefore politically significant.

Tabua, often with a wa (or cord) attached, came from the teeth of the sperm (or cachalot) whale. The whale usually has 42 teeth on its lower jaw. Sperm whales migrate north from the Antarctic to equatorial waters, where they breed. It was in these equatorial waters that commercial whalers hunted them. Americans and Britons dominated commercial whaling.

From at least the eighteenth century, sperm whales passed through Tonga and the small number that beached there furnished Tongans with whale teeth. During the late 1700s, Tongans came in great numbers to live permanently or temporarily in Fiji.⁴ Among the

4 Thomas Williams, *The Islands and their Inhabitants, Fiji and the Fijians*, vol. 1 (London: Heylin, 1958; Suva, Fiji Museum, 1982), 94. Page reference refers to the 1982 edition.

goods they brought with them were whale teeth. If tabua were originally made from other materials, as Ratu Deve Toganivalu and his brother Pita Emosi Tatawaqa averred, then exchange between Tongans and Fijians perhaps resulted in the equation that tabua = whale teeth.⁵ Indeed, the whale teeth most prized by Fijians were “red” tabua; that is, whale teeth smoked after the Tongan example to achieve that color.⁶

Although some sperm whales evidently passed through Fijian waters in the nineteenth century, as they continue to today, observers followed the views of Charles Wilkes of the United States Exploring Expedition, who, when noting a pod that passed near the island of Ovalau in 1840, remarked on how local seafaring did not cater for the hunting of whales, and although tabua were highly valued, “natives” from thereabouts seemed ignorant of the animals from which they came.⁷ When some Fijians, including the young Cokanauto, encountered a whale near Tahiti in 1834, they were reportedly much afraid and ignorant of the creature; when informed that whale teeth came from “these fish,” Cokanauto erroneously thought that the sperm whale could be killed by the shot from a musket.⁸

Tabua aside, whaling was significant for Fiji in several ways. Many ships and much shipping, although not intending to profit directly from whales, partook of whaling ship design, culture, infrastructure, and personnel. Ships and shipping, whether whalers in narrow or broader senses, used whaling centers as bases for provisioning and recruiting. Some Fijians passed through port towns such as Levuka on Ovalau or later Galoa Bay on Kadavu to join the wooden world of ships, from which they encountered foreign parts of the Pacific or travelled further. Becoming a crew member was a way for any Fijian to see the world and prove his worth.⁹ And it worked the other way too. David Whippy, a

5 Deve Toganivalu, “Ai Yau Kei Nai Yaya Vakaviti (Fijian Property and Gear),” *Transactions of the Fijian Society*, 1917; Emosi Tatawaqa, *Transactions of the Fijian Society*, 1914.

6 Interpretation board “Tabuadamu, Smoked Presentation Whale’s Tooth Sperm Whale Ivory, Presented by Manueli and Karalaini Babana, 1983 (FM 83/8),” Suva, Fiji Museum, viewed 12 September 2017.

7 Charles Wilkes, *United States Exploring Expedition During the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842, Tongataboo, Feejee Group, Honolulu*, vol. 3 (Suva, Fiji Museum [1845] 1985), 194.

8 Cheever, *Emerald log*, 25 July 1834, microfilm, Department of Pacific and Southeast Asian History, Australian National University, cited by Nicholas Thomas, *Entangled Objects: Exchange, Material Culture, and Colonialism in the Pacific* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1991), 233.

9 Herman Melville went to sea in 1841 and spent much of his time in the Pacific. Although Fijians and Fiji were not as prominent in his fictional accounts of whaling as other persons and places, Fiji was clearly a part of his whaling world. See Herman Melville, *Moby Dick* (Melbourne: Oxford University Press, [1943] 1949), 13. Chappell estimates that by the mid-nineteenth century, about one fifth of whaling crews were Oceanian. David A. Chappell, *Double Ghosts: Oceanian Voyagers on Euroamerican Ships* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharp, 1997), 12, 42, 163.

founder of Levuka and a large family of descendants in Fiji, acted as interpreter between Fijian and Euro-American cultures. He came to Levuka as a young man, having set out in a Nantucket whaler. The whaling and related maritime industries overlapped.

Therefore, captains involved in the sandalwood (1804–1813) and *bêche-de-mer* (1828–1850) trades in Fiji imported into Fijian societies whale teeth from commercial whaling. Such traders were more numerous than whalers narrowly defined. Whale teeth helped Europeans obtain from their Fijian collaborators access or services required for obtaining tradeable sandalwood and *bêche-de-mer*, or more generally for securing Fijian crew, provisions, and repairs. Whale teeth were indeed a reason for ships to call by Fijian ports: captains had an item for which local chiefs were willing to exchange.

Tabua were currency for Europeans. On his inaugural visit to Fiji, the US *bêche-de-mer* trader and Cokanauto's close collaborator, Captain John Eagleston, presented the first chief he encountered with a whale's tooth—he understood whale teeth were valued by Fijians—and explained to his hosts that he had come to trade.¹⁰ The man after whom Cokanauto was informally named, “Mr. Phillips,” organized trading expeditions to Fiji while based in Salem in Massachusetts, and shipped 571 whale teeth on the *bêche-de-mer* brig *Spy* in 1832.¹¹ In her contribution to this volume, Nancy Shoemaker describes whale teeth as secondary products of whaling, with a market in Fiji.

Toganivalu remarked that whale teeth were Fiji's premier chiefly valuable.¹² The Fiji Museum has noted: “Huge undertakings in the history of Fiji have been made possible with the presentation of tabua.”¹³ Tabua featured in a range of exchanges between Fijian chiefly parties as gifts to allies, or would-be-allies, in order to win their support in war, to assassinate a rival chief, to embody the marital alliances between ruling chiefs,

10 John Eagleston, “Barque *Peru* of Salem: Two Voyages to the Islands in the Pacific Ocean 1830–33,” in the John Henry Eagleston (1803–1884) Papers (Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum, Salem, Massachusetts) microfilm PMB 450.

11 R. Gerard Ward, “The Pacific Beche-de-Mer Trade with Special Reference to Fiji,” in *Man in the Pacific Islands: Essays on Geographical Change in the Pacific Islands*, ed. R Gerard Ward (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972), 109, table 4.1.

12 Deve Toganivalu, “Ai Yau Kei Nai Yaya Vakaviti (Fijian Property and Gear),” *Transactions of the Fijian Society* (1917): 8.

13 Interpretation board, “Na Uluniyau: The Most Valuable of Items,” Suva, Fiji Museum, viewed 12 September 2017.

to build houses for gods and chiefs, or to secure the care for a chiefly child.¹⁴ In the early 1800s, the role of *tabua* in war-making and killing was prominent.

There are many examples of the power of *tabua*; take for instance the ransom demanded in about 1838 by Cokanauto's half brother, the high chief Veidovi, of the whale ship *Nimrod* from Port Jackson (present-day Sydney). Veidovi was a Rewan chief, but Veidovi's mother was from Kadavu, an island conquered by Rewa. The *Nimrod* had arrived in Kadavu to organize provisions. Veidovi had allegedly observed that the *Nimrod*'s mate possessed large whale teeth, so he captured the mate and crew, and demanded from the captain "fifty whale teeth, four axes, two plates, a case of pipes, a bundle of fish-hooks, an iron pot, and a bale of cloth."¹⁵ Veidovi appreciated that, for foreigners, whale teeth were tradeable, but for Fijian chiefs whale teeth were much more—they could "make things happen." Therefore, it comes as no surprise that Veidovi demanded so many whale teeth and that they topped his list of demands.

Other examples are the use of whale teeth in the war between Rewa and Bau (1843–1855), which Marshall Sahlins describes as the biggest war in the Pacific prior to the Second World War.¹⁶ According to Tatawaqa, the war began with whale teeth obtained from the first "whaling ships" arriving in Fijian waters. These teeth were acquired by Cokanauto's uncle, Tanoa of Bau, and Cokanauto's half brother, the then Roko Tui Dreketi.¹⁷ While Bau was nominally ruled by the *vunivalu* (literally "root of war") Tanoa, the real ruler was said to be Tanoa's son and Cokanauto's cousin, Cakobau. In the war, Cokanauto did not side with Rewa. Importantly, because Cokanauto's mother, Adi Salawai, was Tanoa's sister, Cokanauto identified with his cousin's and uncle's Bauan party. And this party prevailed. According to Mary Wallis, wife of a *bêche-de-mer* trader, Cokanauto hoped to win "kingship" of Rewa through the predominance of the Bauan military house. Cokanauto therefore demanded that several villages *soro*—that is, ritually submit to him through offerings of earth and whale teeth.¹⁸

14 Marshall Sahlins, "The Discovery of the True Savage," in *Dangerous Liaisons: Essays in Honour of Greg Dening*, ed. Donna Merwick (Melbourne: University of Melbourne, The History Department, 1994), 60.

15 Wilkes, *United States Exploring Expedition*, 138.

16 Marshall Sahlins, *Apologies to Thucydides: Understanding History as Culture and Vice Versa* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2004), 15.

17 Pita Emosi Tatawaqa, "The *Tabua*," *Transactions of the Fijian Society* (1913): 2.

18 Mary Wallis, *Life in Feejee, or Five Years among the Cannibals by a Lady* (Boston: William Heath, 1851; Suva: Fiji Museum, 1983), 168. Page reference refers to the 1983 edition.

No longer do whale teeth in Fiji exercise their former command. Chiefly politics, among other things, have changed. Some functions once performed by whale teeth are now performed by money. Tabua remain, however, compelling marriage offerings and convey great political respect.

Cokanauto

Cokanauto (Figure 3) has been commemorated as a gifted individual; a collector of European curios, a speaker of many languages, and a leader with, implicitly, European ideas for future rule.¹⁹ He also had high ambitions for power in Rewa, and as *vasu*, or “sister’s son,” to Tanoa, he was by custom the most important person in Fiji.²⁰ Glimpses of his role

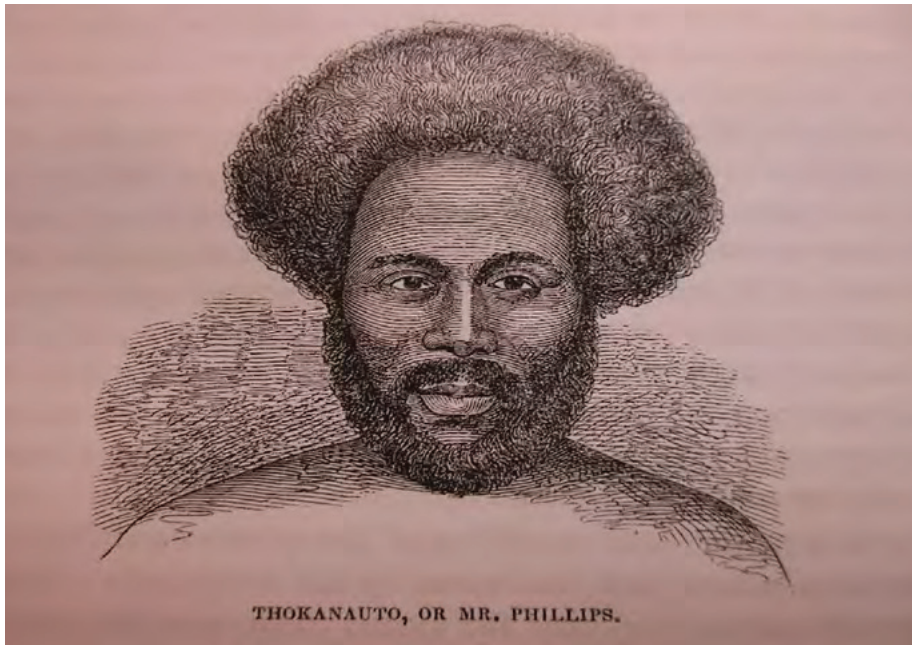


Figure 3:
Woodcut of Cokanauto. From Charles Wilkes, *United States Exploring Expedition*, vol. 3: *Tongataboo, Feejee Group, Honolulu* (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1845), 122.

¹⁹ For Cokanauto as a collector, see Stephen Hooper, *Fiji: Art & Life in the Pacific* (Norwich: Sainsbury Research Unit for the Arts of Africa, Oceania and the Americas, 2016). For languages, see Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, 96; for his ideas, see Wilkes, *United States Exploring Expedition*, 135.

²⁰ The institution of *vasu* was elaborate in early nineteenth-century Fiji. See the account by Thomas Williams, *The Islands and their Inhabitants, Fiji and the Fijians*, vol. 1 (London: Heylin, 1958; Suva, Fiji Museum, 1982) (Suva: Fiji Museum, [1858] 1982), 34–47. Page reference refers to the 1982 edition.

in the succession disputes in Rewa, in which he and the other highborn sons of Tabaiwalu—often of different mothers—vied for paramountcy, as well as in the Bau-Rewa War, have been caught in the historical record. Cokanauto also fathered an illustrious line of leaders, including the politician and current Roko Tui Dreketi, Ro Teimumu Kepa. Scurilously, he was also known for parties, alcohol (which was said to have killed him), and sexual tastes attributed to the “shameless” activities of ships’ crews.²¹

R. A. Derrick and his source, the founder of the Fiji Museum Colman Wall, described Cokanauto as a “whaler” who had been to America and back.²² It appears that Cokanauto—though he reportedly spoke US shipboard slang—had never been further than Tahiti.²³ Although Cokanauto was keen for good relations with ships’ captains, he was not a whaler in the narrow sense of the term. Known to many Europeans and Americans as Mr. Phillips, Cokanauto may have seen himself like his namesake, businessman and entrepreneur Mr. Stephen C. Phillips of Salem, who was a great orchestrator of the *bêche-de-mer* trade and of shipping generally—activities that returned huge profits to backers such as Stephen C. Phillips as well as a wealth of power, through *tabua*, to Fijian chiefs like Cokanauto.

21 David Cargill, *Memoirs of Mrs Margaret Cargill, Wife of the Reverend David Cargill, A. M., including Notices of the Progress of Christianity in Tonga and Feejee* (London: John Mason, 1841), 276.

22 Derrick, *A History of Fiji*, 57; Colman Wall, “Sketches in Fijian History (Part II),” in *Transactions of the Fijian Society* (1918).

23 Wilkes noted that “It was not a little comical to hear a Feejee man talk of ‘New York highbenders,’ ‘Boston dandies,’ ‘Baltimore mobtowns.’” Wilkes, *United States Exploring Expedition*, 111. I would like to thank Nancy Shoemaker for her insights on whether Cokanauto reached America or not.

Further reading:

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Jason Colby

Searching for Gigi: Captivity, Culture, and the Pacific Coast's Embrace of Gray Whales

It was March 1972, and the time had come to release Gigi. A young female gray whale captured off Baja California, she had spent the past year at Sea World in San Diego, affording dozens of scientists their first access to a live baleen whale and thousands of visitors their first glimpse of her species. But she had outgrown her tank, and with the help of Naval researchers, Sea World set her free on 13 March. “In the future,” reflected one journalist, “it may be that present knowledge and treatment of gray whales will be dated BG and AG—before and after Gigi.”¹ At first glance, it seems an overstatement. The species has been under international protection since the 1930s, and scientists in California had begun counting migrating gray whales in the late 1940s.²

Yet Gigi's captivity marked a turning point in human views of gray whales. Following her release, entrepreneurs launched the first whale-watching excursions to the Baja calving lagoons, while Mexico passed legislation to protect that critical habitat. Soon after, researchers reported that gray whales were visiting boats and welcoming human contact—behavior Mexican locals had never witnessed before. What did these cultural changes, both human and cetacean, have to do with Gigi?³ Quite a bit, as it turns out. The display of this young gray whale reshaped human perceptions of the species as well as providing unprecedented opportunities for research on a live baleen whale. In the process, Gigi influenced scientists who played key roles in marine mammal policy and the protection of eastern Pacific gray whales.

1 Bob Corbett, “Gigi's All Heart—In the Cause of Science,” *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 3 March, 1972.

2 On the history of commercial whaling regulation, see D. Graham Burnett, *The Sounding of the Whale: Science and Cetaceans in the Twentieth Century* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2012); and Kurkpatrick Dorsey, *Whales and Nations: Environmental Diplomacy on the High Seas* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 2013).

3 Not much, if one believes the literature. See, for example, Serge Dedina, *Saving the Gray Whale: People, Politics, and Conservation in Baja California* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2000); Steven L. Swartz, *Lagoon Time: A Guide to Gray Whales and the Natural History of San Ignacio Lagoon* (San Diego: The Ocean Foundation, 2014); Dick Russell, *Eye of the Whale: Epic Passage from Baja to Siberia* (Washington, D.C.: Island Press, 2001). An exception to this neglect is Eleanor Coerr and William Evans, *Gigi: A Baby Whale Borrowed for Science and Returned to the Sea* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1980), a short account written for school use.

A century earlier, commercial hunts had nearly wiped them out. In 1857, US whaling skipper Charles Melville Scammon had discovered the breeding lagoons in Baja California, and over the following years he and his competitors decimated the population. “Every navigable lagoon of the region was discovered and explored, and the animals were hunted in every winding and intricate estuary which were their resorting or breeding places,” he later wrote. “None of the species are so constantly and variously pursued, and ere long it may be questioned whether this mammal will not be numbered among the extinct species of the Pacific.”⁴ And the threats continued. In the 1910s and 1920s, the Mexican government allowed Norwegian whalers to harvest hundreds of grays in its waters, straining a population that had likely dropped to fewer than one thousand animals. In 1937, an international agreement banned the hunting of the species, but many scientists feared the “California gray whale” was on the path to extinction.⁵

Yet, after World War II, the population made a remarkable recovery. In the winter of 1946–1947, marine biologist Carl Hubbs and his students at Scripps Institution of Oceanography began counting migrating grays, and they conducted surveys of the Baja lagoons through the 1950s. Meanwhile, human views of cetaceans were changing rapidly, due in large part to modern oceanariums such as Marineland of the Pacific near Los Angeles and Sea World, which opened in San Diego in 1964.⁶ Six months after opening, the marine park participated in an expedition to Baja, where they harpooned a gray whale calf that survived briefly in captivity. “I don’t believe we would have any problems keeping one alive if we could catch it without a harpoon and get it into a tank in three to eight hours,” declared Sea World veterinarian Dave Kenney.⁷

Six years later, he got his chance when his team captured another female calf in Baja. Dubbed “Gigi,” the youngster proved distrustful of Sea World staffers and veterinarians until she met a “Sea Maid” named Sue Bailey. Within days, Bailey was caressing and riding the young gray whale. “I spent all my free time swimming, playing and working with her,” Bailey recalls. “She was my baby.”⁸ And that baby grew quickly. In late May 1971, staffers transferred Gigi to a larger tank, placing her in a public viewing area.

4 Charles M. Scammon, *The Marine Mammals of the Northwestern Coast of North America* (New York: Dover, 1968 [1874]), 259–263, 270, 32–33.

5 Russell, *Eye of the Whale*, 25–26.

6 On the history and culture of Sea World, see Susan G. Davis, *Spectacular Nature: Corporate Culture and the Sea World Experience* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1997).

7 “Gray Whale Captured,” *San Diego Union*, 24 February, 1965; “Captive Whale Meets Press,” *San Diego Union*, 25 February, 1965; “Gray Whale Serves, Dies,” *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 13 April, 1965.

8 Author interview with Susan Nessel, 15 July, 2017.

There, the calf gave thousands of visitors each day their first close-up view of her species. Children, in particular, enjoyed the sight of Bailey riding the whale around the pool. Gigi also made an impression on scientists. Previous research on gray whales had been almost entirely limited to dead specimens. As Kenney put it, “we know a lot about dead gray whales, but no one knows about the living gray whale.”⁹ For the first time, researchers were able to measure the baleen growth, heart rate, respiratory volume, and diving physiology of the species. Among them were marine mammals specialists G. Carleton Ray and William Shevill, who came to Sea World to observe Gigi’s feeding techniques, in the process enjoying their first experience in the water with a live whale.¹⁰

When the time came for Gigi’s release in March 1972, public and scientific anticipation was high. But within a day, technicians lost her radio signal. Over the following days, letters of concern poured in from across the nation. Despite intermittent signals and assistance from NASA, Navy officials admitted in mid-April that they were unable to locate her. “I guess Gigi figured this was her last chance to join the pack,” noted one researcher, “so she took off.”¹¹ But despite her disappearance, Gigi had left her mark. During her year at Sea World, hundreds of thousands of visitors had gotten their first close-up look at a gray whale, and news coverage of her release drew attention to the species at a time when public concern for the fate of the great whales was surging. In the fall of 1972, the US Congress, advised closely by Ray and Shevill, passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act, which President Richard Nixon signed in October.¹² In addition to formally ending US commercial whaling, the law gave unprecedented protections to cetaceans in US waters, including eastern Pacific gray whales. Two years later, the Scripps Institution sponsored a meeting between US and Mexican scientists and officials over protection of the Baja lagoons. All along the coast, it seemed that interest in gray whales was growing. In May 1975, the Canadian environmental organization Greenpeace, on its way to confront Soviet whalers, frolicked with gray whales off Vancouver Island. The encounter, reflected Greenpeace leader Bob Hunter, had the effect of “ ‘converting’ everyone into whale freaks.”¹³

9 Kenney quoted in Bob Corbett, “Gigi’s All Heart—In the Cause of Science,” *San Diego Evening Tribune*, 3 March, 1972.

10 Coerr and Evans, *Gigi*, chapter 8; author interview with G. Carleton Ray, 9 October, 2017.

11 “Scientist Says Gigi Goes North,” *San Diego Union*, 19 April, 1972; Evans quoted in “Big Search See for Missing Gigi,” *San Diego Union*, 23 April, 1972.

12 G. Carleton Ray and Frank M. Potter Jr., “The Making of the Marine Mammal Protection Act of 1972,” *Aquatic Mammals* 37, no. 4 (2011): 520–552.

13 Frank Zelko, *Make It a Green Peace!* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2013), 213.

Meanwhile, Gigi's story continued to loom large at Sea World. The marine park's education department regularly held puppet shows for visiting school groups that detailed the animal's captivity, along with ecological information on gray whales. In the process, Sea World advertised the possibility that Gigi might someday return for a visit. In late 1977, after years of unconfirmed sightings, the Hubbs-Sea World Research Institute received photos taken off Point Loma. A gray whale had approached a small boat so closely that the operator had taken detailed photographs and even touched the animal. After noting the scars caused by the sutures for the radio, researchers confirmed that the animal was Gigi. Once again, the famous gray whale made headlines in Southern California.¹⁴

She also captured the imagination of Sea World employees. In early 1977, a staffer in the education department named Steven Swartz made his first trip to Baja, where he explored the possibility of field research. The following year, he and former Sea Maid Mary Lou Jones launched what would become pioneering studies of gray whale behavior in San Ignacio Lagoon. And it was during their first season, in early 1978, when Swartz and Jones noted a previously unobserved behavior among the gray whales. Beyond merely tolerating the presence of the few whale-watching vessels, some of the animals approached the boats and even allowed physical contact from people.¹⁵ News of the "friendly" whales spread quickly, and by the 1980s they had become a key tourist attraction in Baja.

These developments reflected larger global trends. In 1982, the International Whaling Commission voted for a moratorium on commercial whaling, which took effect four years later. By that time, eastern Pacific gray whales had become symbols not just of Pacific Coast ecology but of shifting human relations with cetaceans. In November 1988, Mexico created the Vizcaíno Biosphere Reserve, expanding protections over the calving lagoons, and over the following years eastern Pacific gray whales continued their miraculous recovery. In 1994, the US government removed the population from the endangered list, making it the only cetacean population to be delisted.

14 Coerr and Evans, *Gigi*, 110.

15 By 1982, Swartz recorded two hundred such encounters. See Dedina, *Saving the Gray Whale*, 18.

What was the place of the Gigis in all of this? Some who knew her well make sweeping claims. “The friendlies didn’t show up until after we released Gigi,” declares former trainer Sue Bailey. Researchers are more skeptical, noting the difficulty of identifying individual gray whales at the time.¹⁶ Yet however uncomfortable it is to acknowledge in the current context of anti-captivity activism, Gigi’s time at Sea World undeniably influenced public and scientific views. All but forgotten today, her captivity played a key role in the transnational embrace of gray whales on the Pacific Coast. Years before whale-watchers raved about Baja’s “friendlies,” thousands were introduced to Sea World’s friendly gray whale. Those encounters reframed public and scientific perceptions of this now-iconic species and influenced scientists who played a pivotal role in writing the US Marine Mammal Protection Act. And who knows? Perhaps she influenced gray whale culture as well.

16 Author interview with Susan Nessel, 15 July, 2017; author interview with Jim Sumich, 13 February, 2018.

North Pacific Whale Worlds

Noell Wilson

Whaling at the Margins: Drift Whales, Ainu Laborers, and the Japanese State on the Nineteenth-Century Okhotsk Coast

When a drift whale beached near Sawagi on the Okhotsk Sea coast of Ezo (modern-day Hokkaido) in December of 1856, Shunoashi, an Indigenous Ainu man who was an official liaison with the Japanese, reported the carcass to the local Tokugawa officials. With wounds 60 square centimeters in size on both the head and tail—in the report’s assessment due to an orca attack, as was common—the dead animal had drifted into the mouth of the Onishi river, some 20 kilometers north of the nearest Japanese, stationed at Saroro.¹ The whale was over eight meters long, larger than most drift whales in the area, so the resident Ainu population and Japanese alike must have been thrilled with the arrival of extra protein for the winter season, even though the three or four days of processing—work dependent on Ainu labor—would occur in temperatures below freezing. Over the next two years, when drift-whale reports traveled from the Okhotsk coast to the Tokugawa Ezochi (the broader maritime area including portions of the Kuril Islands and Sakhalin) capital at Hakodate, Shunoashi’s name appeared multiple times. His visibility, and that of other Ainu laborers, revealed the bureaucratic practice of identifying and quantifying the Ainu as individuals, as the Tokugawa state attempted to repopulate a critical border zone ravaged by disease and overwork in state managed fisheries. During the 1850s and 1860s, recently-instituted Japanese drift-whale policy would accelerate Ainu integration into the Tokugawa political and economic sphere as it tied remote territories to the center.

This new regional perspective from the north side of the island of Hokkaido explores how whaling embedded both Ezochi, and through it, Japan, in the history of the Okhotsk sea region. Several important studies have analyzed early modern whaling practice in the core Tokugawa islands, home to a variety of shore-whaling operations, but the whaling history of the Ezochi area has received much less attention. The few existing studies of Indigenous and Western whaling around Ezo focus on the island’s southern coast, the location of the treaty port at Hakodate, which hosted hundreds of Western whaling vessels over the course of the nineteenth century.

1 Ogawa Shōichirō, “Monbetsu basho shoken kakitsuke I: Ansei 4 nen goyōsho nikki no kiji ochūshin ni” [Monbetsu administrative documents in the late Tokugawa period] *Dōtōdaigaku kiyō shakai fukushi gakubu* 23 (1995): 42–43.

Whaling practices of the Indigenous Ainu, the majority population of Ezochi until the late 1800s, remain a relatively undeveloped field of study, not just because the Ainu left no written records, but also because the Japanese government only officially recognized them as an Indigenous group in 2008. This led to a much needed increase in research funding to analyze their past. But even with this new support, examination of their whaling culture is a politically fraught topic since Kushiro, an eastern Hokkaido port—historically home to a sizable Ainu population—serves as a core base for the government’s “scientific” whaling fleet even today. Highlighting the Indigenous experience of whaling in Hokkaido, before Japanese colonization, further dismantles the dominant cultural narrative that twenty-first-century Hokkaido whaling continues a longstanding tradition of “Japanese” whaling. Ainu, not Japanese, were the primary actors in nineteenth-century Ezo whaling. Research that excavates this agency undermines the Japanese Government’s current position that Hokkaido whaling preserves a distinctly “Japanese” maritime culture.

Politicizing Natural Resource Extraction

Japanese control of Ezo drift-whale processing and distribution politicized a natural resource traded since the 1600s. In the early seventeenth century, as the Tokugawa began to assert control over Ezochi, coastal inhabitants were only required to report drift whales that beached in “Wajin-chi” (Japanese land), the small territory at the southern tip of Ezochi managed by the Matsumae clan. From the nineteenth century, the Tokugawa began to require drift-whale reports for all of Ezo; the rules for drift whales were not formalized, however, until the 1854 era of direct administration in Tokugawa. This standardization included the explicit application of drift-whale policy from the core Tokugawa islands and the execution of these rules not only in Ezo proper, but also on the island of Sakhalin. In the 1850s, drift-whale discovery, processing, and distribution generally worked as follows: coastal Ainu residents sighted a beached whale, reported them to Japanese authorities for inspection by local officials, processed the carcasses, and then loaded oil and salted meat on coastal trading ships for transport to Hakodate. In return, the Japanese officials granted the Ainu one third of the carcass, and in most cases an allotment of rice for the days spent cleaning the whale and boiling the flesh. But beyond detailing the exchange of labor for compensation in kind—adding yet another chapter to the standard narrative of Ainu economic

exploitation—these interactions reveal the important ways that geography and climate shaped political relations where the Okhotsk Sea and Japanese archipelago intersect.

Marine resource extraction, particularly Japanese-managed harvesting of herring with Ainu wage labor, was the core activity at the heart of the Japanese-Ainu economic and political relationship in the nineteenth century. In addition to this species, gathered under an increasingly brutal and coerced labor system from the late 1700s, ocean mammals caught through independent hunting were an important source of subsistence and trade items, including seals, sea otters, sea lions, fur seals, and whales. Among marine mammals, whales—including species today differentiated as porpoises and dolphins—occupied a unique position because of their immense size, which required a group effort to land, if caught at sea, and then to process on shore. Their colossal scale meant that it was not only multiple Ainu settlements (often home to populations in the single digits) that could benefit from the extra protein, oil, and trade products derived from a single carcass. Tokugawa officials, dispatched to the Ezochi hinterland nearly one thousand kilometers from the capital region of Edo, could also easily appropriate a portion to create local sources of whale products for their own use—as they were accustomed to in central Japan—or commercial sale. Whale oil and meat commanded premium prices in Ezochi since the area was roughly a two-week journey from the nearest Japanese shore-whaling operation.

Towards an Ezochi Okhotsk Whale Culture

This essay situates drift-whale policy in the 1850s and 1860s as a specific product of the political climate in Ezochi as the Tokugawa reclaimed control after decades of delegating the region's management to the Matsumae domain. The Tokugawa reassertion of direct administration in 1854 was a reaction to the temporary Russian occupation of Aniwa Bay in southern Sakhalin. The following year, the 1855 Shimoda Treaty established the Kuril boundary with Russia between the islands of Etorofu and Uruppu. By 1856, the Tokugawa controlled southern Sakhalin. Across two years of negotiations, the Japanese secured their Okhotsk arc (the geographical crescent stretching eastward from Sakhalin along the Ezo Okhotsk coast to the Kurils) territorial boundary through diplomacy; what remained was entrenching political and cultural authority on the ground, particularly through Ainu policy. Japanese control of drift-whale process-

ing was part of projecting newly claimed leadership over both Indigenous populations and maritime products on their fragile northern border.

Tokugawa reassertion of control did not hinge exclusively on security concerns with Russia but also on dissatisfaction with Matsumae management of Ezochi between 1821 and 1854, particularly the precipitous decrease in the Ainu population during their tenure. In 1807, the Tokugawa had estimated the Ainu population in Hokkaido at 26,256, but by 1854 that number had fallen 43 percent to 15,171, the result of a small-pox epidemic but also mistreatment of Ainu workers in the Japanese-run fisheries.² During the post-1854 era of renewed Tokugawa administration, two concepts undergirded what the Hakodate Magistrates framed as a new, gentler, constructive policy towards the Ainu population: *buiku* (nurturing) and *hōgō* (protection/guardianship). This philosophy of “benevolent” Japanese superiority was not motivated primarily by altruism, but rather by a practical, urgent need to increase the Ainu population as labor for Japanese fisheries and farming, and to cultivate Ainu cooperation in the face of a possible Russian attack. Seen in this context, Japanese control of drift-whale processing introduced both Japanese law and technology to the Ainu. Implementing this policy along the Okhotsk shoreline more firmly integrated the Ezochi areas most distant from Hakodate into the administrative center.

Drift Whales as Tools of Empire

In 1858, as the Hakodate Magistrates accelerated plans for developing pelagic whaling in Hokkaido, a magistrate’s assistant accompanied Matsuura Takeshiro, long-time Japanese intermediary with the Ainu, to interview Ainu residents about traditional whaling techniques. An Ainu elder recalled that 50 or 60 years before he had hunted whales with poisoned spears, impaling them at sea and then waiting for the dead animals to wash up on shore, which invariably happened the next morning. However, with new Tokugawa policies appropriating two thirds of each drift whale, including those with harpoons protruding from their backs, this tactic must have now seemed only marginally attractive. This shift in the Ainu benefit from drift whales, however, was one small indication of how Japanese appropriation of a seemingly minor task

2 Brett Walker, “The Early Modern Japanese State and Ainu Vaccinations: Redefining the Body Politic 1799–1868,” *Past and Present* 163 (May 1999): 141–42.

such as drift-whale management gradually aligned Ezochi political and economic practice with mainstream Tokugawa culture. Multiple scholars have identified a dominant centripetal force in global whaling, one that integrated gene pools, economic networks, and even biomes, certainly throughout the Pacific basin. The story of drift whales in the late nineteenth-century southern Okhotsk reveals integration, but on a smaller localized scale. The Tokugawa state used drift-whale landings to incorporate both a hinterland and its Indigenous inhabitants more firmly into the Japanese political sphere. In doing so, it further entrenched sovereign authority not only over an expanding terrestrial realm, but also over the surrounding waters and their resources.

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Jakobina Arch

Nineteenth-Century Japanese Whaling and Early Territorial Expansion in the Pacific

Nineteenth-century American whalers saw the wide-open hunting grounds of the Pacific as bounded by a puzzlingly fortress-like Japan. One of the major points made by Commodore Perry in 1854—as he pushed to open Japan’s ports to trade—was that American whalers needed to be able to resupply without being attacked by Japanese people upholding restrictions on the entry of foreigners into their country. In contrast, from the Japanese perspective, whaling was an enterprise bounded by the distance one could reasonably tow a whale carcass back to shore using small open rowboats. The Japanese were initially quite surprised by the increasing numbers of foreign ships coming within sight of their shores, beginning in the late eighteenth century and steadily growing throughout the nineteenth. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, Japan was rapidly changing under the new Meiji regime (1868–1912) and the emergence of a modern Japanese whaling industry went hand-in-hand with the development of a strong, internationally competitive Japan, with slogans such as *fukoku kyōhei* (rich country, strong army) reflecting an expansionist imperial policy that included the military conquest of new territories.

Whaling played an important role in Japanese expansion, whether for the Tokugawa shogunate (1603–1868) or for the Meiji government: it offered not just necessary resources, but also political possibilities for nonmilitary competition within the global imperial context. The transformation of coastal whaling groups from the early seventeenth century into a more modern pelagic whaling industry took place while Japan was wrestling with its place in global imperial politics. The turbulent nineteenth century culminated in a revolutionary shift toward the rapid Westernization of Japan. This in turn led to the growth of Japan as a competitive modern empire. The role of whaling in that transformation shows how Japan’s new attention to the open ocean would culminate in the industrialization and massive expansion of all Japanese fisheries into global waters in the early twentieth century; what William Tsutsui has called Japan’s pelagic empire.¹ The interaction between whalers, whaling grounds, and ocean-based imperial expan-

1 William M. Tsutsui, “The Pelagic Empire: Reconsidering Japanese Expansion,” in *Japan at Nature’s Edge: The Environmental Context of a Global Power*, ed. Ian Jared Miller, Julia Adeney Thomas, and Brett L. Walker (Honolulu: University of Hawai’i Press, 2013), 21–38.

sion in and around Japan in the mid-nineteenth through early twentieth centuries also highlights the complexity of the concept of territory when applied to maritime spaces. Just as new nation-states were solidifying their control over terrestrial boundaries, these same powers were pushing for greater common access to global waters. Japanese imperial development took advantage of the argument for open marine territory even as they pushed to make a space for terrestrial colonial claims in Asia.

The Evolution of Coastal Whaling Groups

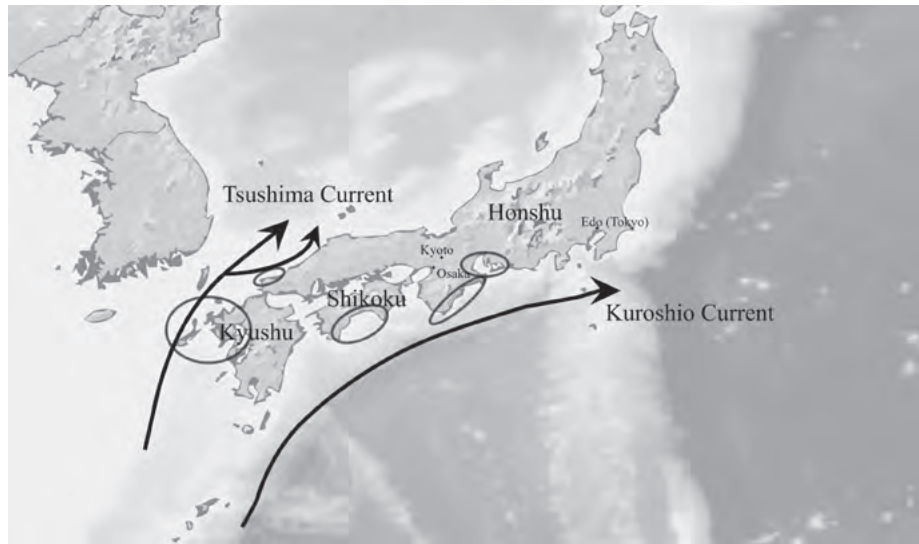


Figure 1: Locations of coastal whaling groups along the Kuroshio and Tsushima currents, from the mid-seventeenth through nineteenth centuries. Map by the author.

The early modern whaling industry in Japan consisted of many whaling groups, where each was its own business and operated out of a specific village location with a good beach for whale processing. Whaling group locations all lay along coastal migration routes for right, humpback, and gray whales in the western half of Japan (Figure 1). These species followed the path of the Kuroshio and Tsushima currents on their way to and from winter feeding and summer breeding grounds. Because these currents come closest to the Japanese islands in the west, there were few whaling groups outside this part of the country. However, under the pressures of competition and changing whale availability, by the early nineteenth century some whaling groups were considering

moving to new grounds. They soon had to contend with the fact that American whaling from the 1830s to 1850s decimated the same whale populations (particularly right whales) they relied upon. With declining catches, most Japanese coastal whaling groups had collapsed by the end of the nineteenth century or shifted to new forms of whaling, adopting foreign techniques and technologies. By the early 1900s, a variety of whaling companies operated with modern harpoon-gun whaling techniques based on the Norwegian model. In 1909, these companies were amalgamated into a single government-supported monopolistic corporation, using the same iron-hulled whaling ships and a system very similar to the pelagic whaling of other modern industrial whaling nations, working out of a much smaller number of ports than before.²

These changes in Japanese whaling were not due to merely economic or resource- and technology-driven decisions. They were also influenced by ongoing political changes. Until the major political reorganization of 1868, coastal whaling was closely entwined with the locally distributed power of the domains, each led by a lord focused on the prosperity of his own territory. Whaling groups were expensive, so their management often had ties to government. Groups sometimes fell under domainal oversight and relied on loans, or sometimes supported regional or domainal income through the taxes and fees they paid. Governments were also invested in territorial control of the nearshore areas used by whaling groups. As the international political situation shifted over the course of the nineteenth century, whaling offered new political opportunities, but only if either the shogunate or, later, the Meiji government could shift away from the highly localized version of whaling pursued by Tokugawa-period groups.

By the 1820s, the work performed by whaling groups included guarding the precious marine resources they claimed for the benefit of the domain. During this period, domains were known as *kuni*: a word that now means country or nation, but its earlier meaning indicates the degree of independence lords had within the shogunal system. As potential rivals for power started to include not just neighboring domains but also ships from outside Japan, a focus on the success of individual domains became much more difficult to maintain, and not coincidentally, whaling groups also started running into more problems staying solvent. As the idea of the *kuni* shifted from individual domains to the nation-state of Japan in the Meiji period, the ways that whales as a natural

2 In fact, from 1901 to 1907, most Japanese whaling ships were purchased or leased directly from Norway. Hiroyuki Watanabe, *Japan's Whaling: The Politics of Culture in Historical Perspective*, trans. Hugh Clarke (Melbourne: Trans Pacific Press, 2009), 13, 26.

resource could support that unit also shifted. The rapid expansion of American whaling into the Pacific and its involvement with Perry's push to open Japan to global trade were part of the pressure that drove Japan towards this political shift. Therefore, pelagic whaling following the American model offered the potential for a new industry along the lines of silk factories or steel mills, to be copied and adapted by Meiji-era imperial planners to help Japan compete on the global stage. Similarly, pelagic whaling with engine-driven and then, after the 1920s, factory ships based on the Norwegian model presented another opportunity to rework the Japanese whaling industry within a competitive global market in an era of nationalism and imperialism. Whaling's early ties to Japan's increasingly militaristic expansion of empire played a role in shaping the Japanese empire's footprint, particularly on the ocean. (Figure 2).



Figure 2:
The pressures of American and Russian whaling shaped the footprint of the Japanese empire. Circles indicate new Japanese whaling locations between 1850 and 1910. Map by the author.

Whaling and Territorial Expansion

The earliest attempts at expansion beyond established Tokugawa-period whaling areas into more colonial spaces came under pressure of Russian expansion around the turn of the nineteenth century. The shogunate was increasingly worried that Russia might gain a foothold in the far north, supplanting the Japanese interests that were expanding into the same area. Various attempts at setting up whaling groups in Ezo (later Hokkaido) failed from the early 1800s onwards. These failures did not seem to diminish the appeal of whaling as a way to stand firm against encroaching empires. The Meiji government continued to back whaling operations based out of Hokkaido, with their last attempt combining the ideas of northern defense—sending out a group of people who might reside in the area and therefore lay claim to the territory—with the notion of expanding existing whaling operations, which would expand the resource base for the Meiji state. However, because this coastal whaling was still reliant on migratory populations of whales that were dying out due to the intense whaling pressure throughout the Pacific in the nineteenth century, by the early 1900s the Hokkaido whalers were forced to cease operations. Government concern about competition with foreign powers, combined with whalers' needs, precipitated a push to find new, more plentiful whaling grounds beyond this first tentative expansion around Hokkaido, including a failed attempt at American-style whaling around the contested Ogasawara/Bonin Islands.

Some whaling expansions had even more direct ties to the broader trends of militaristic Japanese imperial expansion. The waters around Korea became a new whaling ground because they were full of the fin whales that were too fast to be caught by anything but the modern whaling technology developed in Norway at the end of the nineteenth century. Both Russian and Japanese whalers were highly invested in finding ways to make new claims while whales there were still plentiful. Especially after the 1880s, when the Russian whaling fleet began exporting many tons of fin-whale meat from the waters around Korea to Japan, Japanese whalers started planning ways they could enter the competition and, in an era of increasing nationalism, avoid paying another country's company. Imperial Japan first claimed whaling territory on the western side of the Korean peninsula after they gained a concession on the Liaodong peninsula in 1895 upon winning the Sino-Japanese war. Soon after gaining this territory, a Japanese whaling company launched operations in the waters around the Korean and the Liaodong peninsulas, and began shipping whale products back to Kyushu with the support of the

Japanese government. After the Russo-Japanese War in 1905, nearly the entire Russian whaling fleet in the area became spoils of war and was given by the Japanese government to a company based out of Nagasaki.

Meanwhile, other whaling supporters turned their attention to more open waters beyond the Sea of Japan. Fujikawa Sankei, a major fisheries promoter in the transition period between Tokugawa and Meiji Japan, wanted to open up the seas to Japanese use on the model of other nations already commanding marine resources, thus making Japan an empire with power over the seas. The idea of building a stronger nation appears repeatedly in his book on whaling, *Hogeï zushiki*. Fujikawa suggests there should be a focus on marine resources as national resources, no matter how far from the nation's terrestrial holdings they might be. The nearshore whaling of the Tokugawa period, along with other specialized fisheries, pushed the boundaries of Japan out only a few kilometers from shore. People like Fujikawa envisioned a much broader scope for the boundaries of Japanese power, pushing out beyond coastal waters into the deeper ocean, just as "western people, while whaling, stride 10,000 *ri* across the ocean," a stride which had already brought them into contact and competition with Japan.³ He showed a distinct awareness that the strength of modern Japan would come from being able to maximize their use of pelagic and not just coastal marine resources.

Sea Power, Empire, and Japanese Whaling

The steady push from nearby waters to ever more distant, new spaces for marine resource harvests was not unique to whaling, but rather was part and parcel of changing environmental and political relationships throughout Japan, both over the course of the Tokugawa and into the transition to the modern era. Fisheries were one of the major areas of growth for Japan around the turn of the twentieth century. They provided food for a growing population, and offered an opportunity to move some of that growing population out into future territories. They also provided a ready excuse for the presence of naval vessels echoing Perry's call for whalers' protection half a century before, as new markets in foreign ports echoed the earlier opening of treaty ports within Japan.

3 One *ri* was approximately 3.9 kilometers, but the number 10,000 was often used simply to denote incredibly large amounts, so a direct conversion would be misleadingly precise. Fujikawa Sankei, *Hogeï zushiki* (Kobe: Inoue Shinkōdō, 1888), 13a.

For many fisheries, moving further offshore from the Japanese home islands with new technologies such as trawlers also avoided competition with remaining coastal fishermen using older technologies to harvest increasingly stressed nearshore fish populations. While whaling had been at the forefront of nineteenth-century attempts to expand the reach of Japan both politically and economically, the mid-century collapse of whale stocks—under pressure from American whalers—had already put many whaling groups out of business by the time the Norwegian bow-mounted harpoon gun offered a solution in the form of fin and blue whales found in deeper ocean waters. Thus, competition with local coastal whalers was much less of an issue for early whaling corporations than it was in the transition period of other fisheries offshore, and they did not need to push all the way to Antarctica until Japan's pelagic empire was well underway in the 1930s.

While Japan's Antarctic whaling is the major focus today in global whale conversation, modern Japanese whalers did not leap to the far reaches of the Southern Ocean and leave Pacific whales entirely behind. In the context of the ebbs and flows of whaling grounds over the course of the nineteenth century and into Japan's imperial era, Antarctica was just one of the increasingly distant areas into which Japanese whalers ventured to hunt whales. By the start of the nineteenth century, imperial expansion of foreign powers pushed the government to consider supporting whalers' expansion to Japan's problematic northern borders, and then to the southeast. By the end of the century, they were operating to the west around the Korean peninsula, adding new processing stations in Korea and Hokkaido alongside their conquest and development as Japanese territories. Throughout this history, whalers frequently relied on government support to maintain capital-intensive groups or corporations. Whaling's political relevance varied throughout this expansion, but it was never wholly apolitical, and whaling was a continuous and important part of the gradual but not necessarily steady creation of Japan's pelagic empire.

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Akamine Jun

Multiplicities of Japanese Whaling: A Case Study of Baird's-Beaked-Whaling and its Foodways in Chiba Prefecture, Eastern Japan

The main objective of this paper is to raise awareness about coastal whaling along the Japanese archipelago, and to identify whale-meat foodways in Japan in order to illustrate how these foodways have a regional—and not a national—heritage. Though special permit whaling (SPW) conducted in the Antarctic Ocean by Japan has attracted significant attention, there are three types of legitimate commercial activities in Japan: small-type coastal whaling with whaling guns for Baird's beaked and pilot whales, spear-hunting for some species of dolphins and pilot whales, and driving-hunting for some species of dolphins and pilot whales. Minke-whale meat caught through SPW is distributed nationwide, but the meat of cetaceans caught through the three commercial methods is distributed and consumed only in specific regions of Japan. While the driving-hunting practice attracted extensive media attention after the release of the film *The Cove* in 2009, the two other activities are relatively unknown and unstudied.¹

This paper will illustrate the diversity of whaling in Japan to criticize the “super whale” and “reverse super whale” concepts. It will explain the diversity of whale-meat foodways in different regions of Japan and briefly detail this through a case study of Baird's beaked whale (*Berardius bairdii*) whaling in Chiba Prefecture. The habitat of this unique species is limited to the area of the eastern coast of the Japanese archipelago and its meat and blubber are consumed exclusively in these regions.

Beyond a Super Whale Myth

In the early 1990s, Norwegian anthropologist Arne Kalland coined the term “super whale” to describe claims that conveniently combined characteristics of various species of cetaceans into one imaginary creature. He wrote:

1 Coastal whaling is regulated by the central government and is currently authorized in five ports: Abashiri and Hakodate (Hokkaido Prefecture), Ayukawa (Miyagi Prefecture), Wada (Chiba Prefecture), and Taiji (Wakayama Prefecture). As of 2018, the maximum catch per year is 66 Baird's beaked whales; 72 short-finned pilot whales, *Globicephala macrorhynchus*: 36 from northern stocks and 36 from southern stocks; and 20 false killer whales, *Pseudorca crassidens*.

Environmental and animal welfare activists often speak about the whale in the singular. We are told that the whale is the world's largest animal, it has the world's largest brain, it is social and friendly, it sings, it has its own child care system, and it is threatened, etc. It is true that the blue whale is the world's largest animal and that the sperm whale is the world's largest brain, but most of the other assertions are difficult to prove. Those that do hold some truth are rarely true for more than one or two of the 75 different whale species which exist. When one speaks about the whale they are combining all the characteristics found among the various species, such that the whale has them all. But such a whale does not exist; it is a mythical creation, a "super whale."²

Kalland stressed cetacean diversity and their multiple relations to human beings. Super whale is the term used to criticize how anti-whaling campaigners trivialize such diversity.

Japanese whaling protagonists also tend to fall into a similar simplified view. I call this a "reverse super whale" discourse. It is the claim that whaling and eating whale meat is a Japanese "tradition." Such a tradition relates back to inhabitants of the Japanese archipelago who exploited small cetaceans in prehistoric times. In the seventeenth century, many professional whaling parties were established in the western part of the Japanese archipelago. They utilized almost all parts of whales, consumed meat, blubbers, and intestines and used bones and baleens for other industrial purposes, for example as fertilizer, shoehorns, and teabowl saucers; such whalers would also hold memorial services for the hunted whales. After World War II, the Japanese were dependent on whale meat as a source of animal protein.

These claims are all true. According to the Institute of Cetacean Research, 8 families and 40 species of cetaceans appear in the waters around Japan: approximately half of the 85 species that exist globally.³ As is evident from the Mawaki ruins in the Noto Peninsula (Ishikawa Prefecture), the inhabitants of the Japanese Archipelago have been using cetaceans for at least the past 6,000 years. However, it is necessary to appreciate how

2 Arne Kalland, "Super whale: The use of myths and symbols in environmentalism" in *11 Essays on Whales and Man*, ed. Georg Blichfeldt, 2nd ed. (Reinei, Lofoten, Norway: High North Alliance, 1994), 7.

3 Institute of Cetacean Research, *Nihon kinkai ni iru geirui* [Cetaceans around Japan] (Tokyo: The Institute of Cetacean Research, 2007).

various whales were utilized, and that whaling culture complexes developed in many regions of Japan depending on the favorable ecological conditions. For example, the Mawakians dominantly harvested small cetaceans such as common dolphins, *Delphinus delphis*, and Pacific white-sided dolphins, *Lagenorhynchus obliquidens*.

Whale species, ecologies, whaling grounds, whaling techniques, processing techniques, and ways of consumption have greatly changed in relation to the ecological and political economy around whales and whaling. For example, while traditional whaling developed in the western part of Japan in the seventeenth century, modern whaling became popular in the eastern part of Japan only in the early twentieth century. While rich whale-meat foodways developed in the western part of Japan, whale meat harvested by modern whaling was partly used for canned food and fertilizers. The business entrepreneurs that operated in the eastern part of Japan had to create a new market for their own products.

Although certain whaling advocates claim that the Japanese consume the whole whale without any waste, when and how such practices occur should be further clarified. When Japan sent whaling vessels to the Antarctic Ocean in the early 1930s, the aim was to produce whale oil, but they did not intend to use the meat from the Antarctic Ocean (whale meat produced by coastal whaling was distributed at that time). It was only in 1938–39 that the vessels brought back whale meat under orders from the Japanese government, which was in the process of preparing for the impending war.⁴ It can thus be said that the super whale myth and reverse whale myth are alike in that they both stem from non-scientific attitudes toward the diversities of whales and whaling.

Whale-Meat Foodways in Japan

During the 1920s, recipes for home-cooked meals from across Japan were published in *Nippon no Shokuseikatsu Zenshu* (Fifty volumes of the collections of Japanese foodways).⁵ *The Collections* covered all 47 prefectures and one indigenous ethnic minority, the Ainu in Hokkaido. Each volume—based on oral history—contains recipes for everyday cooking, as well as for special occasions, such as the New Year celebration.

4 Jakobina Arch, "Whale meat in early postwar Japan: Natural resources and food culture," *Environmental History* 21 (2016): 467–87.

5 Nobunkyo, ed. *Nippon no shokuseikatsu zenshu* [The collections of Japanese foodways], 50 vols. (Tokyo: Nobunkyo, 1984–1993).

Interestingly, *The Collections* reveal that 26 of the 47 prefectures had at least one kind of whale-meat dish. The Saga prefecture listed 21 varieties of whale dishes, followed by Yamaguchi (15), Fukuoka (13), Nagasaki, and Wakayama (11). These places are where traditional whaling parties (*kujira-gumi*) were active. For example, Taiji, a small coastal town in Wakayama, has been a center of whaling history in Japan and continues to be active in whaling today.

The Collections describes recipes from the era before Japanese whalers ventured into the Antarctic, when whale meat was obtained through coastal whaling. In the early twentieth century, when modern Norwegian whaling practices gained a foothold in Japan, more whale meat was supplied to the market. Through *The Collections*, it is possible to interpret how the Japanese consumed whales when whaling became modernized. It is important to note that this was a period before the refrigerator was commonplace, which is why *The Collections* calls for most of the whale meat and blubber to be salted. Raw meat was limited to whaling regions in winter. People in whaling regions were therefore proficient in dealing with salted meat and blubbers.

Currently, there are no national statistics accounts for whale meat consumption by prefecture. According to the report conducted by Kyodo Senpaku (2008), a company that provides ships for special permit whaling (SPW), the top five prefectures for annual consumption per capita of whale meat produced from SPW were Nagasaki (197 grams), Saga (168 grams), Miyagi (148 grams), Yamaguchi (133 grams), and Fukuoka (120 grams).⁶ The survey does not indicate the species, but minke-whale meat is likely dominant. As all these prefectures are located in Western Japan, the survey suggests that even today, long after they have stopped whaling, whale meat is consumed mostly in Western Japan. As a result, whale meat is fundamentally a regional—rather than national—foodway. This should be the starting point to discuss the complex issue of whaling in Japan.

6 Kyodo Senpaku Kabusikikaisya, *Chosa fukusanbutsu: Todofukenbetsu ryutsuryou (suitei)* [Research byproduct: Distributed amount by prefecture, an estimate] (Tokyo: Kyodo Senpaku Kabusikikaisya, 2008).

Baird's Beaked Whale (*Berardius bairdii*) Whaling in Chiba Prefecture

In the sixteenth century, organized whale hunting methods were developed, followed by the creation of whaling specialist teams, known as *kujira-gumi* (whaling parties). Almost all *kujira-gumi* developed in the western part of the Japanese archipelago. These groups hunted mainly baleen whales such as the North Pacific right whale (*Eubalaena japonica*) gray whale (*Eschrichtius robustus*) humpback whale (*Megaptera novaeangliae*) and sei whale (*Balaenoptera borealis*) and occasionally caught fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*). *Kujira-gumi* consisted of about 400 to 500 crew aboard the ships, and another 150 to 250 workers on land. Although their main product was whale oil for lamps and pesticides, whale meat, which would then be salted, increased in volume as the domestic commodity distribution system developed across the nation.

Among *kujira-gumi* between the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, the *Daigo-gumi* of Awa (current Chiba Prefecture) was an exception in terms of its location, target species, whaling method, and economic activities. First, it was the only *kujira-gumi* established in the eastern part of Japan—facing the Pacific Ocean—during that period. Second, the *Daigo-gumi* exclusively hunted Baird's beaked whales (*Berardius bairdii*) which migrate close to the Boso Peninsula in the summer. Third, they hunted exclusively by spearing, without using the nets other *kujira-gumi* employed, because Baird's beaked whales can swim to a depth of more than 1,000 meters, making it impossible to entangle them in the nets. Finally, while the oil produced from Baird's beaked whales was sold in Edo, within this region the local community exclusively consumed the meat. This is because the Baird's beaked whale is a toothed whale, and its meat was therefore considered to be of lower economic value than that of the baleen whales.⁷ Because the season for the Baird's beaked whale in Awa was during the summer, the meat spoiled easily, thus the consumption of whale meat in dried form, locally called *tare*, developed. As such, the people of Awa have inherited this taste for dried whale meat.

The *Daigo-gumi* stopped their whaling operations in 1869.⁸ Local entrepreneurs then hunted the Baird's beaked whale with the American bomb-lance method. Their whaling

7 Milton M. R. Freeman, et al. *Small-type coastal whaling in Japan: Report of an international workshop*, Occasional Publication Series, no. 27 (Edmonton, AB: Boreal Institute for Northern Studies and Japan Social Sciences Association of Canada, 1988).

8 Takao Kojima, "Hogeibunka niokeru dento: Chibaken awachiho no geishokubunka wo jireini" [Tradition in whaling cultures: A case study of whale meat foodways in Awa region in Chiba Prefecture], *Nihon jyomin bunka kiyō* [Bulletin of studies on common peoples in Japan] 24 (2004): 60.

grounds also extended to the Pacific Ocean from Edo Bay. However, it was not until the introduction of the modern whaling method in Japan during the early twentieth century, and the establishment of new whaling bases in the eastern part of Japan—near what is called “Japan Ground” among Euro-American whalers—that Japanese whalers became successful. The most well-known of these new whaling bases was Ayukawa, located in Miyagi Prefecture. Toyo Suisan (which later developed into Nippon Suisan) established its base for whaling in 1906. This was the beginning of modern whaling in Japan.

In 1907, Tokai Fisheries, a Boso Peninsula company that produced both oil and meat, successfully employed the Norwegian whaling method for Baird’s beaked whales. Meat was consumed locally as dried *tare*. By the end of the 1910s, there were 26 small whaling companies in Chiba Prefecture. The Chiba Prefectural Government eventually merged these 26 companies into two main companies: Tokai Fisheries and Suzuki-gumi with only 12 vessels in total.⁹ Whaling permits increased to 15 in 1940¹⁰ but in 1941, the two companies ultimately merged into one, Tokai Fisheries.¹¹ In 1948, a new company, Gaibo Whaling, joined Baird’s beaked whale harvesting in Wada Town in Chiba Prefecture. As previously mentioned, the season for Baird’s beaked whale was during the summer; in the winter, the two companies hunted minke whales in other waters. In 1969, another company took over Tokai Fisheries, but stopped its whaling operations in 1973, leaving Gaibo Whaling as the only remaining whaling company in Chiba Prefecture.

Aside from meat, Gaibo Whaling produced oil and fertilizer from blubber and the bones of the Baird’s beaked whales they harvested. Fertilizer was used in loquat (*Eriobotrya japonica*) farming nearby, which made the fruit sweeter. Producing oil and fertilizer was so malodorous that the company stopped production in the 1980s. Currently, Gaibo Whaling produces *tare* and canned meat. The company sells meat locally, and ships blubber to areas in northeastern Japan that prefer whale soup. Blubber of Baird’s beaked whales is a substitute for that of fin or sei whales, which were once common.

Tare is a simple product. It is dried with soy sauce, sake, and other seasonings. It used to be processed at home, but nowadays few families process it. Lean meat used to be bought by the kilogram, and in order to process good *tare*, the processors should be

9 Kyoko Komaki, *Buri no nushi to wada no gyogyo* [Yellowtail and fisheries in Wada] (Tokyo: Bunkensya, 1996), 247.

10 Komaki, 257.

11 Hideo Kanari, *Boso no hoge* [Whaling in Boso] (Nagareyama: Ronshobo, 1983), 94.

good at discerning meat—sinewy meat is not suitable for *tare*. The *Obon* holiday, held in mid-August for paying respect to one's ancestors, happens in the middle of the Baird's beaked whale harvesting season, and *tare* is a necessary food item for family reunions in the southern part of Boso Peninsula.

Baird's beaked whale foodways are a local tradition in the southern part of Boso Peninsula in Chiba. Though it has a long history dating from the seventeenth century, Baird's-beaked-whaling has experienced great changes. It began as a passive whaling activity, but in the early twentieth century, when modern whaling was introduced, Baird's-beaked-whaling expanded to the Pacific Ocean. Its main purpose was to produce whale oil until the 1980s and lean meat that was consumed locally. When the catching of larger rorquals was banned, demand for Baird's beaked whale blubber rose in the northern part of Japan. This particular case study is an example of the local nature and multiplicities of Japanese whaling traditions. Each coastal whaling site in Japan has its own distinct stories and traditions. In this sense, neither "super whale" nor "reverse super whale" myths can contribute to solving the complex issue of whaling in Japan. If we want to solve such complex issues, we must first understand the diversity of coastal whaling in Japan.

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Bathsheba Demuth

What is a Whale? Cetacean Value at the Bering Strait, 1848–1900

The seas around the Bering Strait, where western Alaska and eastern Siberia nearly meet, seem barren—ice-choked, desperately cold, sunless for much of the year. However, the North Pacific is the terminus for the world's deep ocean circulation, its depths containing waters that originated in the North Atlantic and have gathered a rich burden of nutrients over centuries of global churn through the deep. At the Strait, the undersea topography creates turbulence, mixing waters old and new, warm and cold. These currents make the waters of the Bering Strait some of the most productive and biologically diverse on the planet. Over two hundred species of phytoplankton and three hundred different species of minute, fatty, swarming zooplankton form the primary form of productive life in the Bering Sea. The bowhead whale, *Balaena mysticetus*, concentrates this krill into their hundred-ton bodies.

Massive as they are, bowhead whales are also prey. As calves, they are at risk of orca attack. Once adults, their primary predators have long been the people living along the Bering Sea: the Yupik, Chukchi, and Iñupiat. Bowhead evolution made them particularly desirable: they are energy condensed, an adult's body weighing up to a hundred tons, forty percent of it pure lipid—more calories per pound of flesh than any other arctic species on land or sea. Those calories were also the lure that drew the industrial revolution—a revolution based on turning energy to human use—into the Bering Strait. Commercial whalers from New England were the unlikely vanguard of this revolution, men laboring to make a wage by transforming whale bodies into commodities. Their rituals of slaughter and profit are a study in the expectations of a growing market. They sailed into a place where whales were not for sale but were instead understood as souls by the Iñupiat, Yupik, and Chukchi who hunted them with expectations of a world constantly reincarnating and never easy to survive. Two kinds of whalers, with two very different kinds of answers to the questions: what is a person, what is a whale, and what is its value? Those divergent answers would shape very different futures for whales, and for humans, in the Bering Strait.

Whales and Worldviews

In 1852, representatives from these two kinds of whale-killers met on the northern coast of far eastern Siberia, a region called Chukotka. In late September, a group of Indigenous hunters found thirty-three worn, unshaven people limping their way southeast across the tundra. They were refugees from the wreck of the *Citizen*, a ship from New Bedford come to join in the fifth season of industrial whaling. From the remnants of their vessel, they had salvaged a few supplies: biscuits, rum, molasses, flour, the cooked remains of their pet pig, and a makeshift tent. Winter was already bearing down from the mountains, and with little food, no furs, and armed only with a few knives, a broken whale lance, and a shovel, they would not last its first weeks. The Native Chukotkans—Yupik, or Chukchi, the record is not clear—led the group back to their settlement, showing, in the words of the ship’s captain Thomas Norton, “a degree of sympathy for us in our destitute and dependent condition wholly unlooked for.”¹

Norton spent the next nine months among people with whom he shared nearly nothing: not language, clothing or attitudes toward cooking, bathing, sexual propriety, religion or ownership. They did not even share an appreciation of whales. Norton and his crew saw that bowheads were “the staff of life,” to the Chukotkans, but found the raw, slippery, chewy fat nearly inedible. Moreover, simply eating whale, with no thoughts of accumulating wealth or property, Norton concluded, was a signal that his hosts were “listless and unprofitable,” restricted to “simply the endurance of life.”²

What Norton could not see, crouched in his tent and waiting for rescue, was how the killing of bowhead whales constituted an entire social world. Across the Bering Strait, whales were part of a universe without a dividing line between object and subject; all things had voices, in Chukchi cosmology and among the Yupik, the animate universe responded to the thoughts of others, making intention and thoughtful action critical to not injuring the minds of other beings. As a result, hunting the moral, sentient whales began long before the migratory arrival of the animals themselves. Hunters and their families had to have the right mental attitude and perform the correct ceremonies. Among the Ifiupiat, women were responsible for welcoming bowheads by clearing away the past year’s meat and or-

1 Lewis Holmes, *The Arctic Whalers or Winter in the Arctic Ocean* (Boston: Thayer and Eldridge, 1861), 84.

2 Holmes, *Arctic Whalers*, 182, 115.

ganizing the boat crews. The Yupik brought in a new season by feeding the whales that fed them, bringing offerings to the sea in an act of blessing for the coming year. In any village, the *umiaks*—the walrus-hide boats captained by a particularly able hunter and a crew of other men—were cleaned, the kits of harpoons, ropes, floats, and spears readied. Without the right preparations, the whales would say to each other, in the stories of some Alaskan Iñupiat, how the humans were not ready to hunt, and the whales would stay far away.

When the whales did come, in the spring in Western Alaska and the spring and autumn along the Chukotka coast, hunting from an *umiak* was not solitary work. Sometimes flanked by kayaks, multiple crews took to the open leads in the sea ice when the spout or rounded back of a whale came into view. Whales have sharp hearing, so hunters moved on muffled feet and with few words. Some captains would wait for the steamy rush of a whale's exhalation before launching the boats, the breath masking the scrape of the hull against the ice. Although approached in silence, bowheads were believed by the Yupik to speak to their pursuers. And the hunters spoke back; Paul Silook, a Yupik hunter, described how the captains would call “out the name of the ceremonies, asking them [*sic*] to go ahead of the whale and stop it.”³

Each boat's captain coordinated the hunt, watching for the vulnerable moment when the dark body surfaced to breathe. If the whale offered up a flank or back, the boats moved in with harpoons poised. These harpoons, with backward-curving barbs, were designed to twist into the wound, anchoring deep in a whale's flesh. Bound by a cord to a sealskin float, each harpoon pinned tons of struggling body to the surface. Even with multiple boats, it could take up to nine hours and dozens of strikes to kill a whale. Once dead, the whale's fins were pinned to its body, or cut away along with the tail, to reduce drag in the water. During the spring hunt, a ramp was chipped into the shore ice to haul the great body free of the water.

At the site of butchering, as the great body came apart, the order of the community was assembled. Cuts and quantities of the kill were allotted according to rank in the *umiak* and to the hunters' performance on the water. A dead whale meant human lives: nearly all the animal can be eaten, even the skin, which when eaten raw prevents scurvy. In a landscape with few or no trees, bowhead fat was fuel to hold back long, dark winters.

3 Smithsonian Institution, Henry Bascom Collins Collection, Unprocessed Box 3, File: Collins 1930.00A, 4–5.

The baleen, which becomes malleable when heated, transformed into sleds and straps. In Chukotka and parts of Alaska, people inhabited the heads of whales, the arches of bowhead jawbones forming the struts of half-subterranean houses. Known through the labor of their deaths, cetaceans were valued as the generative origin of the human world.

Whales were also a part of human politics. By the seventeenth century, the broad cultural commonalities of the Yupik, Chukchi, and Iñupiat were subdivided into small nations with defined territorial spaces, names, particular economic strategies, and, sometimes, political ambitions. *Umiak* captains were often also powerful shamans, or leaders able to command war parties. Others used blubber to cultivate trade relationships, and sometimes to protect, expand or seize control of lucrative trade routes. The capacity to attain and control the flow of biological energy by killing whales created political power. A whole human history, containing centuries of victory and defeat, expansion and retraction, trade and hardship, with all the meanings of alliances and recriminations, linked back to the natural history of cetaceans.

For the people living that history, the value of a whale was part spiritual abstraction and part concrete necessity. The Iñupiat, Yupik, and Chukchi lived in a world that could be counted upon for its continued unpredictability: routine in that summer would follow winter but alive with nonhuman beings and very human politics that could alter the course of any moment. In this world, whale flesh could become all manner of things; whale minds could speak of the future, and in dying, whales made men and women powerful. Bowheads were valuable because in a sentient and stochastic world they responded to the thoughts of humans. They were also, in the experience of their hunters, fairly predictable and infinite in time. Ten to fifteen bowheads were killed every year in Chukotka and between forty-five and sixty in Northwest Alaska. Killing more bowheads was, practically speaking, not thinkable. *Umiaks* were small and tied to the land. Morally, the social relationship between people and whales also put a boundary on destruction: to kill out of greed was understood as offensive to whales—behavior that would keep them from returning. And it was enough. The energy retrieved from the shared bodies of whales animated an entire universe.

Commodifying Whales

Whales animated a different kind of vision for Captain Norton. He was not in the Bering Strait to kill whales for food. Bowheads were hunted to become money. Norton, like most of the whalers in the Bering Strait, came from the Atlantic seaboard of the young United States, where New Bedford, Massachusetts, had become the center of the industry, putting to sea several hundred ships a year. Those ships killed whales to lubricate a mechanizing country: first greasing sewing machines and clocks, then the cotton gin and power looms. Bowhead baleen was used in umbrella spines and corset stays, and above all, the energy stored in whales became light. In the early sunsets and long winters of eastern cities, whale oil lamps lit homes, factory floors, streets, and lighthouses. Energy gathered from distant oceans was an intimate part of domestic and civic life for people who had never seen, smelled, or tasted a whale.

It was those distant demands that sent Norton to sea. He was, by rank, responsible for a successful cruise, but he did not own the *Citizen*. Instead, land-bound investors generally funded the capital-intensive, perilous whaling voyages of the mid-nineteenth century. Captains were hired for their skill at sea, and managing crews recruited with the promise of “strange lands and climes, romance, and fresh experiences” and “a pile of money.”⁴ That money, however, was not a wage or a salary. From the captain down through the specialized layers of mates, blacksmiths, and stewards to the greenest deckhand, payment was a percentage of the cargo’s value, or a “lay,” paid upon the ship’s return to its origin. Captains received up to one-eighth of the net profit, while artisans and boat-steerers received from an eighth to a hundredth, and inexperienced seamen as little as a two-hundredth share. The system gave everyone on a whaling ship “urgent, personal considerations to secure both for themselves and employers the greatest quantity of oil.”⁵

The pressure to make a commodity drove whalers to harvest as many whales as possible, killing their way from the north Atlantic southwards, round Cape Horn into the Pacific, where they hunted north until they reached the Bering Strait in 1848. That this might doom “the poor whale . . . to utter extermination” one captain wrote, was possible; at the very least, “too few will remain to tempt the cupidity of man.”⁶ However, despite writing

4 Walter Nobel Burns, *A Year with a Whaler* (New York: Outing Publishing, 1913), 12, 13.

5 Holmes, *Arctic Whalers*, 271–72.

6 M.E. Bowles, “Some Account of the Whale-Fishery of the N. West Coast and Kamschatka,” *Polynesian*, October 4, 1845.

in their newspapers and logs about extinction, Yankee whalers had little space to conceptualize a future for whales. Although the nouns assigned to whales—bulls, cows, and calves—were probably familiar to most sailors as referents to livestock, cetacean marine lives were a challenge to prevailing theories of private property. Wildness rendered cetaceans salable, alienable commodities only in death. It is in this form that whales most often entered the records of their hunters, becoming tallies of barrels and pounds of baleen. More barrels equaled less time on ship; when the *Francis*' log noted, "we are 9 months out have got nearly 800 bbls," and another hundred cooking, it meant that safe harbor was that much closer.⁷ More barrels meant, simply, more money. A whaler's labor was the link between distant human desires, mediated through a market they fed but did not control, and the oceans they sailed. For a sailor or captain, a whale could only transform into a thing of tangible value—a corset stay in a New York shop, a lamp burning away the dark, a dollar in the pocket—once dead. Oil and baleen transmuted into currency, and the agency that currency represented on shore: every whale flensed, rendered, and rolled barrel-by-barrel into the hold brought the whalers thirty-one and one-half gallons closer to going home with the freedom of money.

The Legacies of Commercial Whaling

Thus, Yankee whalers were in the Arctic because they participated in the exchange of commodities and labor for value. Many of them also believed that this sort of exchange—wages for labor, money for commodities—was the proper order of social life and a progressive force. The many things whalers like Thomas Norton found the Yupik, Iñupiat, and Chukchi to lack, from industriousness to cleanliness to a proper diet, could be solved with exposure to the market. For commerce, as many whalers experienced on the rapidly industrializing eastern US seaboard, made civilized people, who ate well in warm houses, wearing fashionable clothes. Spreading commerce spread civilization, which made the world better by allowing more people more access to commerce.

The market, in short, gave a very different answer to the question of *what is a whale*. It was not a kind of person, but a kind of commodity, with no reason to exist alive. To imagine human life was separable from whale life was a revolutionary concept in the Bering Strait,

7 New Bedford Whaling Museum, Logbook of the *Frances*, ODHS 994, 43

where people and cetaceans had long been understood as reciprocally linked. And revolutions are known to eat their children. In the case of the industrial appetite for whales, the devouring was nearly complete. In 1848, there were probably more than 23,000 bowheads in the Bering Sea. When the industry sputtered to an end sixty years later, perhaps 3,000 remained. How this happened was partly technological, but distinctly ideological. Commercial whalers had to learn how to kill whales so efficiently it rendered their reproductive capacity insufficient, and they needed not to care: human needs had to be so independent of cetacean existence that the latter could perish and the former persist.

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Ryan Tucker Jones

When Environmentalists Crossed the Strait: Subsistence Whalers, Hippies, and the Soviets

When did the modern environmentalist movement and Indigenous peoples part ways? And what were the issues and events that separated them? Any answer to these questions must seriously consider the history of whaling in the Pacific. For, in the early 1980s, difficult questions about environmentalism's emerging relationship to Indigenous whaling came into focus in the North Pacific's Bering Strait. In 1981, the renegade environmentalist organization Sea Shepherd landed zodiacs at the Soviet Chukchi village of Lorino, attempting to prove that the whaling station there was illegally using whale meat to feed fox farms. Two years later, Greenpeace did the same thing. The actions brought international attention to the environmentalists, but no change to whaling there. Instead, the real changes occurred along unexpected lines of conflict. The protests outraged Alaska Natives, who felt called to defend Indigenous whaling and feared the protests would endanger the reestablishment of cross-Strait links with Yupik and Chukchi. For their part, both Sea Shepherd and Greenpeace redefined their stance on Indigenous whaling, though in opposite directions. As in much of the Pacific, then, the Bering Strait and its whales both connected and pushed humans apart.

The Bering Sea coast of Siberia is home to some of the world's largest whale populations, as well as one of the world's longest whaling traditions. Chukchi, Iñupiat, and Yupik people there have killed bowhead and gray whales for millennia. In the late nineteenth century, however, Yankee whalers decimated whale populations—as Bathsheba Demuth describes in this volume. The loss of whales hurt Indigenous subsistence, but some Chukchi in particular benefitted from the American trade. Adopting motorized boats and harpoon guns, they sold whale and other products for firearms, alcohol, and food. This trade continued after the Bolshevik Revolution, even though the Soviets redoubled efforts to prohibit it.

This history confounds simple notions of Indigenous whaling; Chukchi had adopted motorized vehicles of their own volition, and they had contributed at least some small, but significant, part to the destruction of the North Pacific's whales. The next few decades would further muddy these definitions. When the Soviet Union hardened its grip on the Arctic, it began its own industrial whaling venture in the area. The Russians were aware that their

own whaling might harm their Indigenous subjects, and thus made sure to leave some of the meat for local use. When the Soviet Union joined the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 1946, it ensured that the Commission's charter allowed so-called "aboriginal whaling" with industrial technology, a significant expansion of the idea of subsistence hunting. From 1956, Indigenous Siberians used modern diesel catcher boats to increase the take, to up to 194 whales per year. These were now entirely gray whales, as bowhead whale numbers had fallen too low to allow any take. In 1969, the Soviets resumed whaling on behalf of Indigenous Siberians, supposedly to reduce the number of harpooned whales lost and wasted.

Chukchi and Yupik responses, though, were mixed. Some resented the fact that they no longer whaled themselves, in the process losing traditional skills and communal focus. Others welcomed this kind of modernization, happy to have a reliable supply of whale meat deposited on shore every year, along with the full employment that came with the fox farms that began springing up along the Bering Sea coast, fed by excess whale products. This last development was not mentioned in Soviet reports to the IWC. It would, however, directly trigger the madness that would hit the Bering Strait in the early 1980s.

Environmentalists, who had become a standing presence at the IWC by the late 1970s, took note of the increasing catches of gray whales and wondered how they could constitute aboriginal subsistence. They calculated that the average family on the Chukchi Peninsula, to use up the whales, would be required to consume something like 10 tons of whale meat per year. At the time, few environmentalists considered their anti-whaling stance problematic for Indigenous communities. Hints of trouble appeared in 1977, when Greenpeace was unsure how to deal with US support for the continuation of a subsistence quota granted to Alaska Natives.¹ Greenpeace's anti-Soviet whaling campaigns of the 1970s had been wildly successful, bringing environmentalism into the global consciousness and winning them support from First Nations in Canada and the United States. But the Bering Strait would bring some unexamined contradictions to the fore.

1 "Alaska Whales and Whaling," *Alaska Geographic* 5:4 (1978), 142.

Sea Shepherd Lands in Lorino

Paul Watson, who had taken part in Greenpeace's protests of Soviet whalers in the North Pacific in the 1970s but had since formed his own splinter organization, Sea Shepherd, learned of the Siberian hunt while attending the 1980 IWC meeting. Since the Soviets refused to allow international inspectors into Siberia, Watson decided to go there himself, hoping to provoke an international incident. As the Bering Strait was one of the most fiercely guarded borders in the Cold War world, this was a very bold decision.

The fact that this voyage would enter Soviet territory was only one key difference from the earlier anti-whaling campaigns. Watson's voyage also appeared aimed, potentially, against subsistence whalers like the Chukchi. This latter aspect almost immediately provoked tensions when the Sea Shepherd crew arrived in Nome, Alaska, to ready for their trip across the Strait. There, Native whalers had been involved in their own controversy since the IWC's 1977 attempt to shut down their subsistence bowhead hunt. Because of their historical ties across the Strait, they took Sea Shepherd's mission as a challenge to all subsistence hunting. Watson arranged a meeting with Native whaling leaders to soothe tensions, but despite a promising start, this only increased the divide between them. During the conversations, Watson took issue with one Native whaler's claim to respect whales: "Maybe, maybe not . . . But I do know that if you are sincere about your respect for the whale then you are obligated to respect us, for we are protectors and defenders of whales."² Watson's words crystallized two thrusts of environmentalists' attitudes towards whales. They prioritized the animals' survival over humans' uses of whales and claimed to understand the creatures better than any other humans could. These were ideas crafted to combat modern industrial whalers' practices and ideas, but in the Bering Strait, they met a very different set of values and uses.

Sea Shepherd left Nome on 9 August 1981 and landed its zodiacs at the Siberian village of Lorino later that day, taking the Soviets by surprise. On shore, they observed a small "Mongolian" village and a mink farm. Watson described the scene: "Piles of fresh whale meat littered the area with some very un-aboriginal-type women employed with hacking the hunks of meat into smaller pieces with some mean-looking flensing knives. We were close enough to see their blondish hair and back with bandanas and to notice some of them had

2 Paul Watson, *Ocean Warrior: My Battle to End the Illegal Slaughter on the High Seas* (Toronto: Key Porter Books, 1996). 66–68.

blue eyes. So much for the aboriginal justification for the hunt.”³ Interestingly, Watson’s words suggest he was not at this time opposed on principle to Indigenous whaling.

As soon as the locals realized that these were not Soviet scientists, they apparently called the military, which soon arrived in helicopters. When the environmentalists retreated, film in hand, the Soviets hurried out in a military ship to intercept them and demand surrender. At the crucial moment, when it seemed the Soviets might fire, Watson reported that a gray whale suddenly surfaced between the ships. The Soviets retreated (Watson thanked the whale) and the Sea Shepherd was free. A scattering of media outlets picked up the story and then it dropped from consciousness.

Greenpeace across the Strait

Feeling that Sea Shepherd had failed to draw sufficient attention to illegal whaling, in 1983 Greenpeace decided to repeat Watson’s daring incursion. Like Sea Shepherd, the Greenpeace activists managed to land in Lorino undetected. They spotted the mink farm, and while the camera operator rolled video from offshore, they handed out leaflets in Russian explaining their purpose there. One “Eskimo . . . tore up a leaflet.”⁴ After about a half hour, the military arrived. They told Chris Cook, leader of the expedition, to bring the other members ashore. Cook motioned for them to land, while at the same time shouting in English for them to leave and hurry back to Nome with their footage. Cook and several others were arrested and flown by helicopter to a detention center.

Meanwhile, the *Rainbow Warrior* had escaped, and dictated its story over the wires to the international press. It soon ran on major news stations around the country and world. The media presence grew when they learned seven protesters were imprisoned in Siberia and threatened with 20 years imprisonment.⁵ When the protestors were released after just seven days, their mission to all appearances seemed a roaring success.

However, Greenpeace’s reception in Nome was nearly as hostile as it had been in Siberia. They had stepped straight into the volatile politics of Alaska while trying to make a point

3 Quoted in David Day, *The Whale War* (London: Grafton, 1992), 74.

4 Richard Mauer, “On Board the Rainbow Warrior: Seven Tell Tale of Siberian Captivity,” *Christian Science Monitor*, July 26, 1983.

5 Rick Dawson, “The Russian Grey Whale Campaign, July 1983,” (personal collection of the author), np.

about the Soviet Union. One of the basic problems was that they did not recognize the connections that existed across the Bering Strait, connections which were experiencing a revival at that very moment. Jenny Alow, who was originally from Gambell but was now living at Nome, and who was well-connected with other Arctic Indigenous activists, sent an angry letter to *Rainbow Warrior*, accusing it of “jeopardizing efforts to re-establish contact between the Chukchis of Siberia and Eskimos in Western Alaska.” Alona feared that with such a brazen violation of Soviet sovereignty, they would mistrust American intentions. “Don’t you consider the local people or what they might say[?]” Alona asked, “we want to share stories [with the Chukchis], laugh, and regain our ties to them.”⁶ Greenpeace representatives claimed, “The Soviets could not possibly see any connection between the Eskimos of Alaska and an international group based in England.”⁷ But of course the Soviets had not seen Greenpeace as this, but rather as closely connected to the American government.

Greenpeace’s protest against whaling was ill defined enough that it seemed to present a threat to Alaskans’ rights to do the same. Letters to the editor of the *Nome Nugget* reveal the scale of the suspicion: As one reader wrote, Greenpeace “made an illegal entry in the Soviet Union hell-bent-for-leather to stop commercial whaling. They tell us they aren’t against subsistence whaling—at least not for now. Yet they have very little concept of what subsistence involves.”⁸ My interviews with former Greenpeacers suggest that this was true—they had not given subsistence whaling much, if any, thought. As one crewmember, Nancy Higgins admitted after the campaign, “I understand [the importance of whaling to them] much more than I did. . . . We have to respect human rights as well as the rights of whales. I don’t know what the answer is in terms of the whales, but I do know that the whale is very important for those people to live.”⁹ While the environmentalists had succeeded in drawing global attention to the Soviet fur farms, they had opened up real rifts with Native Alaskans.

Ironically, even as the Sea Shepherd and Greenpeace campaigns succeeded in documenting the use of whale meat for mink food, the IWC was again re-defining aboriginal subsistence whaling in ways that might make these revelations irrelevant. In 1980, an IWC Working Group significantly broadened its definition of aboriginal subsistence whaling

6 *Nome Nugget*, July 28, 1983.

7 *Nome Nugget*, July 28, 1983.

8 *Nome Nugget*, July 28, 1983.

9 *Nome Nugget*, July 28, 1983.

as “for the purposes of aboriginal consumption carried out by or on behalf of aboriginal, indigenous or native people . . . [for] meeting their nutritional, subsistence or cultural requirements. This term includes trade in items which are by-products of subsistence catches.”¹⁰ Both aspects of Soviet whaling—the use of modernized, non-Indigenous whaling boats and the use of whale meat to feed minks—might fit these broader parameters. As a result, the IWC did not sanction the Soviets, even after the environmentalists’ actions.

Bering Strait Fallout

Even if these twin campaigns failed in their ultimate aims, they left an impact. Greenpeace was spurred by its unforeseen conflicts with Alaska Natives to soften its opposition to subsistence whaling. Greenpeace declined to oppose the Makah’s 1996 resumption of the grey whale hunt. Watson, on the other hand, organized the main protest. His stance hardening, he would later write, “The aboriginal hunter barter a part of his soul with every spent bullet.”¹¹ Soon, Greenpeace and Sea Shepherd were clashing openly over Greenpeace’s support for subsistence whaling on Alaska’s St. Lawrence Island. That year Greenpeace activists used two of their zodiacs—famous as anti-whaling protest vessels—to help a Yupik crew tow a dead bowhead whale to shore. Thus, in 1997, Watson declared Greenpeace pirate whalers and announced that he considered their boats acceptable targets for sinking. This rift has not yet healed.

Outcomes in the Bering Strait were perhaps just as important. Despite the fears, the environmentalists did not derail relations across the Strait. Though no one knew it at the time, the Soviet Union was not long for the world. When it disintegrated in 1991, the Soviets stopped whaling in the Bering Sea. Moscow also ended subsidies to Chukotka, and a real humanitarian crisis emerged. Chukchi and Iñupiat fell back on whaling to feed themselves, but most had forgotten the necessary skills after thirty years of relying on Russian support. In their stead arrived Alaska Natives, who traveled across the Strait to re-teach their long-lost brethren to kill whales and so avert starvation. The ancient links across the Bering Strait, which the environmentalists had inadvertently helped reveal and even reinforce, continued to operate through the same whales that had always crossed and re-crossed those narrow waters.

10 Quoted in Ray Gambell, “International Management of Whales and Whaling: An Historical Review of the Regulation of Commercial and Aboriginal Subsistence Whaling,” *Arctic* 46, no. 2 (June, 1993): 97–107, here 104.

11 Watson, *Ocean Warrior*, 43.

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Post-Colonial Whale Worlds

Adam Paterson and Chris Wilson

Ngarrindjeri Whaling Narratives and Reconciliation at Encounter Bay, South Australia

Sealers and whalers were amongst the first newcomers to interact with Aboriginal South Australians. Beginning from around 1803, crews made up of primarily European and American men visited the southern coastline of South Australia and occasionally stayed for several years, establishing permanent settlements on the uninhabited offshore islands. Company records, ledgers, ship logs, and occasionally personal journals and letters provide tantalizing glimpses of the lives of Aboriginal people living in proximity to these seasonal settlements. Little was made of these records until the publication of Rebe Taylor's book *Unearthed*, which documents the abduction of Aboriginal women by sealers and whalers, and their confinement on the islands along Australia's southern coastline. Most of the women whose lives were unearthed by Taylor had come from Tasmania, although some were Ngarrindjeri, a people who lived along the southern Fleurieu Peninsula, Coorong, Lower Murray River, and Lakes region of Southern Australia.

Our work seeks to document Ngarrindjeri contributions to the whaling industry and reflect on colonization in South Australia and its legacy, for Ngarrindjeri and other Australians. We frame our work within the context of reconciliation, a movement aiming to promote and facilitate respect, trust, and positive relationships between the wider Australian community and Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples. We recognize that writing and disseminating Aboriginal histories has potential to facilitate understanding between Aboriginal and other Australians, contributing symbolically to reconciliation. We also see our work as reconciliation in practice, where Indigenous (Wilson) and non-Indigenous (Paterson) approach the research from different cultural and disciplinary perspectives. Wilson is a descendant of Sustie Wilson, a Ngarrindjeri whaler, and brings Ngarrindjeri perspectives to the work, while Paterson has previously researched aspects of South Australian colonial whaling and brings a knowledge of the industry and its archive. This paper is the first report of our collaboration and we hope to further explore this unique and culturally significant component of our shared history through archaeological investigations with the Ngarrindjeri community.

Many Ngarrindjeri continue to live in and around their traditional lands, while others live further afield and return to *ruwe* (country) and family periodically. Ngarrindjeri people often trace their family histories through European and Ngarrindjeri ancestors. The first unions between Ngarrindjeri and newcomers occurred near the sealing and whaling grounds in the early 1800s. At that time, Ngarrindjeri named the newcomers *Kringkari*, the Ngarrindjeri word for a pink layer of skin revealed by burial practices—an appropriate name for pink-skinned men arriving from Karta (Kangaroo Island), the largest offshore island and a resting place for the souls of the deceased before passing to the spirit world. The newcomers did not behave with appropriate custom—as ancestors might—and unrest and mistrust grew.

When the explorer Captain Charles Sturt traveled in 1829 charting the Murray River, Australia's only major inland river, he noted that the Ngarrindjeri were wary and rarely seen, despite the many signal fires visible in the area. Learning from earlier interactions with *Kringkari*, and perhaps suffering from cultural and social upheaval after decimation by smallpox, they avoided Sturt and his party. Whalers and sealers continued to visit the mainland coast, sometimes establishing seasonal bay-whaling camps and sometimes more permanent settlements. The largest of these was made up of around 20 sealers and whalers on Kangaroo Island. Though the histories of the Kangaroo Islanders have been researched and discussed at some length, the relationships between whalers and Ngarrindjeri at the mainland stations at Encounter Bay are less well known.

Initial Meetings at Encounter Bay

Many of the men and women who formed these relationships remain nameless, and are mentioned in passing by missionaries or doctors who described the overall setting and note the prevalence of white whalers living with Ngarrindjeri women during the whaling season. An exception to these largely anonymous accounts was the relationship between John Driscoll, a whaler, and Popalbe, a Ngarrindjeri woman. Popalbe is named in colonial records because she was questioned in relation to Driscoll's death, allegedly at the hands of her Ngarrindjeri husband, Reppindjeri. According to Popalbe the two men had reached an agreement permitting Driscoll to have intimate relationships with herself and another of Reppindjeri's wives. However, at some point while traveling overland, Driscoll—who was extremely drunk after consuming most of a bottle of rum—overstepped the agreed

terms. Angered by the transgression, Reppindjeri struck him across the face. Driscoll retaliated, swinging the empty rum bottle, though he was overpowered by Reppindjeri who killed him with a blow to the head. Reppindjeri was held in chains on the bark *South Australian* anchored in Encounter Bay, and his condition was recorded in entries in the log by the first mate for several months.

He was never tried, despite the case receiving considerable attention. Reppindjeri's wives were key witnesses and William Wyatt, Protector of Aborigines, was at pains to point out that a trial would be unfair if their testimony was inadmissible. A stumbling block for the colonial authorities was the requirement under British law for witnesses to believe in a Christian God and be sworn in. Reppindjeri, however, relieved them of the burden of reconciling the two worldviews by escaping while being brought overland to Adelaide.

H. E. Mayer, a Lutheran missionary living at Encounter Bay, was deeply concerned by the relationships between Ngarrindjeri women and the whalers. Morally, they did not fit with his Christian values, which he was charged with imparting to the Ngarrindjeri. In addition, he could see the physical harm the whalers were causing the women, as venereal disease ran rife. The colonial surgeon Dr. Wark was also distressed by the spread of disease and in 1840 reported that more than half of the Ngarrindjeri women at Encounter Bay were suffering from syphilis and miscarriage had become commonplace.

While these new relationships and the diseases they brought to the Ngarrindjeri were devastating, the newcomers also brought with them goods of interest to Ngarrindjeri. Whaling stations in South Australia were well supplied with rum, which managers could purchase duty-free and supply as part of the whalers' rations. However, alcohol was not the only prospect that appealed to Ngarrindjeri; some sought employment at the whaling stations where they could earn more than with the missionaries. Mayer believed that the whaler Tammuruwe Nunkauere preferred whaling because he could purchase clothes and dress as the Europeans did. Ngarrindjeri whalers were reported to be among the best whalers in the early years of the colony, and in some years a whole boat's crew was gathered from Ngarrindjeri.

There were several hundred Ngarrindjeri at Encounter Bay during the whaling season, though only a few found employment at the station regularly. Many others harvested the meat from the discarded whale carcasses. Ngarrindjeri had gathered to harvest the bodies

of stranded whales before *Kringkari* arrived in their lands. Runners would be sent inland telling others of the arrival of *Kondoli* (Whale), a powerful *Ngatji* (totem), which was a time for ceremony and trade. The relationship between Ngarrindjeri and their *Ngatji* is very strong, described as being of the same flesh, or closer than the bond between husband and wife. According to Ngarrindjeri creation stories, *Kondoli* was a large and strong man who had the ability to make fire; jealous men speared him in the back of his neck and flames leaped out. *Kondoli* fled to the nearby water to quench his burning wound and became the whale. His wound can still be seen in the spout from the whale's blowhole.

European accounts of Ngarrindjeri eating whale meat were generally critical. They described Ngarrindjeri as ants swarming over the carcass and the meat itself as being “food for blacks, sharks, dogs, and pigs.”¹ Their accounts demonstrate ignorance about Ngarrindjeri custom, which required that ceremonies be performed before whale meat was eaten. The fat was used to bind pigment, the ribs to form shelters, and ear bones to carry water. Ngarrindjeri probably viewed the European practice of discarding 30 or more whale carcasses each year as wasteful, disrespectful, and if the proper ceremonies were not conducted, potentially dangerous. It is not known if Ngarrindjeri tried to continue their ceremonies and practices around the consumption of the whale meat, though if they did not, those whose *Ngatji* was *Kondoli* would have been especially aggrieved.

Ngarrindjeri were adaptable and often sought to find the benefit in the changes brought by the newcomers and their hunts. A man, named Charlie Warner by the whalers and described in a newspaper article as a “Whale Enchanter,” chose to live near the station where he received rations for working as a “watcher” or lookout. According to the reporter, a Ngarrindjeri whaler named Sustie Wilson had explained that Warner had special powers and could sing or chant whales to shore. While the reporter may have recorded the conversations with Sustie faithfully, it is likely that without detailed knowledge of Ngarrindjeri culture and customs, something was lost in translation. To Ngarrindjeri, the “singing” or “chanting” of whales represents knowledge of whale behavior learned through song and held by special people, often elders. From this point of view, Warner was most likely especially knowledgeable about seasonal patterns and local conditions—such as tides and other environmental conditions—as well as whale behavior. It is because of this knowledge that Warner had an uncanny knack of predicting when whales would come

1 *South Australian Register*, 6 September 1879.

into the bays and recognizing when they were agitated and likely to dive or strand, making him an exceptionally talented lookout.

Rewriting the Ngarrindjeri History of Whaling

In developing our narratives of Ngarrindjeri whalers, we actively sought to center Ngarrindjeri in our accounts to identify as many Ngarrindjeri whalers as we could, and to promote their stories and the role that they played in the industry—a role that was obscured by discursive practices that changed as the mode of colonization changed. Europeans, who brought their own cultural biases to their observations, wrote the accounts of whaling and Ngarrindjeri reactions to it. The political and social will to incorporate Aboriginal people into the new colonial society was greatest in the first few decades of the colony, and it was anticipated that this would be achieved through religious instruction and employment. In these early years, newspapers reported enthusiastically on the skill of the Ngarrindjeri whalers. By the 1860s, however, their work was rarely reported. Most histories of South Australian whaling suggest that the industry had ceased at this time and the stations do not appear in the newspapers; however, the letter-books of the “Protector of Aborigines” record around 20 men working at the Encounter Bay station in 1860. It is likely that a marginal industry existed employing Aboriginal men, who had been disenfranchised through the alienation of their land and dissuaded from working in more mainstream industries through lack of payment or other unfair conditions that disadvantaged them over newcomers.

The discursive construction of the work done by the Ngarrindjeri whalers in the later stages of the industry—where it was only noted in Protectors’ records—reflected official attitudes toward Aboriginal Australians, which had changed from optimistic assimilation to, at best, paternalistic care in the 1860s. Another example of the achievements of Ngarrindjeri whalers being overlooked was the white whaler James Long’s omission of the Aboriginal whalers from his 1890s recollections of the industry at Encounter Bay. Long did remember Ngarrindjeri in other ways, for the eating of the meat—for which they were derided—and for camping nearby. Given the clarity of his recollections of almost all aspects of the industry, it is easy to construe Long’s amnesia as racially motivated, an act that was perhaps made easier by the confinement of most Aboriginal people to missions by the 1890s. Long’s recollections contrast with the memories of Sustie Wilson, the

only Ngarrindjeri whaler whose testimony is recorded in the historical archive through a newspaper article. Sustie was interviewed in 1930 when he was reported to be about one hundred years old. Sustie told of the skill of Ngarrindjeri harpooners, of the “power” of Charlie Warner, and described rowing twelve miles (19 kilometers) back to shore after being towed to sea by a whale.

Reconciliation through Meaningful Histories

Recognizing the ways in which narratives of Ngarrindjeri whalers have been variously constructed, and indeed forgotten, are important aspects of this history and need to be shared widely in Australia, a country still coming to terms with the injustices of colonialism. For Ngarrindjeri—as for many Aboriginal peoples from the so-called settled south of Australia—disruption caused by colonization was particularly harsh. Histories such as these provide a bridge to the present and a useful contextual lens for understanding current practices. It also provides opportunities to highlight the strength, creativity, and perseverance of Ngarrindjeri in the past and the present. It is important to recognize that the stories that are told today about Ngarrindjeri and their role in the development of South Australia can easily be colored by past bias. Meaningful engagement with Ngarrindjeri histories and promotion of Ngarrindjeri points of view about shared histories are crucial to improving relationships between Ngarrindjeri and other Australians today.

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Jonathan Clapperton

Whales and Whaling in Puget Sound Coast Salish History and Culture

Sometime in the 1920s, Joe Young of the Puyallup Indian Tribe told anthropologist Arthur Ballard a story of two seal- and porpoise-hunting brothers. They gave their sister food to share with her family, but she hid it, thinking her husband—a powerful canoe builder “far stronger than any shaman”—too proud to accept the meat; instead, he felt slighted. In retaliation, he carved a wooden seal and released it in the water. When the two brothers speared the seal, it animated and towed them far away from their village on Puget Sound. One brother died, while the other encountered an old man “as big as a tree” who claimed he was their grandfather and subsequently lured a hundred-foot-long whale to the beach. Young narrated: “The old man drew [the whale] in to land and when on the bank it stayed there. It was not dead but under the spell of the old man.”¹ This ability to direct a whale to shore was a spiritual power only the most skilled whalers possessed. The old man led the lost hunter to the whale, wherein he stored a large supply of dried salmon, entered the whale, and returned the surviving brother to his village on the Sound where the whale beached itself. The story ends with the community learning how to butcher and use the whale.²

Young’s story sheds light on the presence, importance, and history of whales (including porpoise and orca) and whaling to the Puget Sound Coast Salish (or Puget Salish). It is commonly accepted that whales and whaling were integral to only select few Indigenous communities in present-day British Columbia, Washington State, Oregon, and California—notably the Makah, the Nuu-chah-nulth, and the Quileute.³ However, as this essay highlights, using evidence from oral traditions, archaeological findings, contemporary (i.e., historic) accounts, and anthropological observations, whales and whaling were important in Puget Salish history and culture too.

1 Arthur Ballard, “Some Tales of the Southern Puget Sound Salish,” *University of Washington publications in Anthropology* 2, no. 3 (December, 1927): 77–80.

2 Ballard, “Some Tales,” 80.

3 For some examples of those who created and perpetuated this discourse see: George Gibbs, *Indian Tribes of Washington Territory* (Fairfield, WA: Ye Galleon Press, 1967); Leo Frachtenberg, “Abnormal Types of Speech in Quileute,” *International Journal of American Linguistics* 1, no. 4 (December, 1920): 296; Leo J. Frachtenberg, “Eschatology of the Quileute Indians,” *American Anthropologist* 22, no. 4 (October–December 1920): 330–40; Leo J. Frachtenberg, “The Ceremonial Societies of the Quileute Indians,” *American Anthropologist* 23, no. 3 (July–September, 1921): 320–52; Erna Gunther, “The Indian Background of Washington History,” *The Pacific Northwest Quarterly* 41, no. 3 (July, 1950): 192; and Michael Harkin, “Whales, Chiefs, and Giants: An Exploration into Nuu-Chah-Nulth Political Thought,” *Ethnology* 37, no. 4 (Autumn, 1998): 317.

Indicators of a Whaling Culture

Young's rendition of "The Two Brothers' Journey to the North" is one of many oral traditions that record the presence of whales and the practice of whaling in Puget Sound; cultural outsiders have long recorded these. Perhaps amateur ethnographer George Gibbs, who was told a story by Alm-cot-ti (of the Nisqually) in the mid-1850s, penned the earliest. In this story, four seal-hunter S'Homamish brothers harpooned a wooden decoy that towed them far away from home. Eventually, while riding a whale home, they were thrown off and became orcas. Thereafter, the transformed brothers assisted their brethren by abstaining from wrecking their canoes and by driving seals ashore. It ends with their grieving mother transforming into a rock on the eastern end of Vashon Island, where she can "still be seen in proof of the tale," thus showing the importance of the story as having ongoing relevance and as firmly rooted in a specific place.⁴ A different oral tradition within Puget Sound tells of Mink's indignation at those who doubt his whaling ability. The story revolves around Mink's demonstration of that ability and his bringing it to the village to share. Numerous similar accounts exist.⁵ Collectively, they represent a diverse repository of stories (often characterized as myths or legends) which show an intimate connection between the Puget Salish and whales: whales assisted people, people turned into whales and vice versa, whales were a regular presence in Puget Sound, and people possessed the knowledge and proper protocols for capturing and butchering whales.

Place names appear in these stories and reflect the importance of whales and whaling in Puget Sound, including inland bodies of water and terrestrial space. For example, *Stex* (the Stuck River) means "to plow through" or "to push through." Its naming recalls a story wherein whales once lived in an inland lake at the present-day town of Sumner, which extended down the Duwamish Valley to the Renton junction. One day the whales became frantic, swam ashore, plowed their way through the land and escaped into Puget Sound, leaving in their wake a channel that created the Stuck

4 Ella E. Clark, "George Gibbs' Account of Indian Mythology in Oregon and Washington Territories," *Oregon Historical Quarterly* 56, no. 4 (December, 1955): 160–61.

5 See for examples: Ballard, "Some Tales of the Southern Puget Sound Salish," 77–80; Francy Calhoun, "Four Puget Sound Folktales," *The American Journal of Folklore* 59, no. 231 (January–March, 1946): 42–43; "The Seal-Hunting Brothers," told at Tulalip in 1966, in Vi Hilbert, ed., *Haboo: Native America Stories from Puget Sound* (Seattle: University of Washington Press, 1985), 75–86; and Hermann Haeberlin, "Mythology of Puget Sound," *The Journal of American Folklore* 37, no. 145/6 (July–December, 1924): 420.

River and drained the lake.⁶ Another place, *Tso'4kobed*, is a creek at Redondo. In mythic times *Tso'4kobed* connected Puget Sound with Steel's Lake (*Gishwa'dis*, which means, "where there are whales"). Whales would swim this passage to the lake but stopped after a young man blocked the channel using a sunken raft laden with stones.⁷

Though much archaeological work remains to be done in the Puget Sound area, and many sites have been disturbed or destroyed by American settlements, physical evidence from artifacts suggests the Puget Salish utilized whales or at least valued and possessed whale products. For instance, archaeologists found two harpoon blades that could be used to hunt seal and whale at the *Qwu?gwes* site on Mud Bay; one of these was a large, green, slate blade unlike anything found to date elsewhere on the Pacific Northwest Coast.⁸ Through bone analysis, false killer whale remains were found to have been processed at *Qwu?gwes*.⁹ A D-adze made of whalebone, cherry bark, and stone was found elsewhere in Puget Sound.¹⁰

Firsthand, settler-colonial observations of Puget Salish capturing and processing whales, though rare—no doubt a result of the relative paucity of newcomer records for Puget Sound prior to the mid-nineteenth century—also exist. For example, an American settler to the Olympia area remembered a large whale arriving in the southern Sound in the early 1850s, and the local Indigenous people killing it:

What was called a sulphur-bottom whale, probably ninety feet in length, floundered up the bay [at Olympia] one morning in the early '50s, and on reaching the shallow water was unable to swim out to sea again and was stranded as the tide went out. This was a rich find for the Indians. They cut off great chunks of the meat from the sides of the whale, and when this part was cut into portions the Indians climbed right into the location made famous by Jonah, the insides of the immense fish being considered a special delicacy.¹¹

6 J. P. Harrington, Field Notes, University of Washington, Microfilm A6952, Reel 30, "Notes and Writings Collected from Others," 368–69.

7 Harrington, "Notes and Writings," 264.

8 Dale Croes and Scott Williams, "Bifacially Flaked 'Harpoon' Blade," in Dale R. Croes, Rhonda Foster, Larry Ross et. al., *Qwu?gwes: The Qwu?gwes Archaeological Site and Fish Trap (45TN240), and Tested Homestead (45TN396)*, MMS Eleven-Year South Puget Sound Community College Summer Field School Investigations with the Squaxin Island Tribe, Final Report (Unpublished mss., 2013), 519; and Dale Croes, "Ground Slate 'Harpoon' Blade," in Croes, Foster, Ross et. al., *Qwu?gwes*, 519–20.

9 Rebecca Wigen, "Vertebrate Fauna," in Croes, Foster, Ross et. al., *Qwu?gwes*, 127.

10 D-adze, Burke Museum Inventory, Object #4747.

11 Mrs. George E. Blankenship, ed., *Early History of Thurston County, Washington, Together with Biographies and Reminiscences of those Identified with Pioneer Days* (Olympia, WA: 1914), 113.

In another instance, an entry in the journal of the Hudson's Bay Company fur trade post at Fort Nisqually records that on 7 April 1849, a large party of "Soquamish" (Suquamish) killed a whale "down the beach."¹²

Finally, observations made by anthropologists based upon their work with Indigenous informants indicate the Puget Salish possessed the knowledge, tools, and motivation to catch whales. T. T. Waterman left the most complete record in this regard, though even this is not particularly extensive. He was shown tools for fishing on Puget Sound that were also used for "hunting otter and porpoise." He described these as an "ordinary" two-pronged spear, with a long line attaching a wooden float carved in the form of a duck (hence, the multiple stories recounted above of the brothers spearing a wooden decoy). When a porpoise was struck, the duck was thrown overboard and the hunter "let the porpoise run away with it."¹³ A spear, which was heavier than that used for salmon, called a *ca'sab-1d*, or "porpoise implement," was also utilized. Finally, Waterman noted that the Puget Salish possessed specialized language and protocols for dividing up the product of a successful cetacean catch, one that is remarkably like that of other Pacific-Northwest whaling cultures.¹⁴

Anthropologist William Elmendorf also recorded numerous instances of whaling in the oral tradition of the Twana peoples. He wrote that the Klallam kept a vigilant watch for whales, with canoes prepared for launch upon sighting one, in Hood Canal, a fjord that forms one of the four main basins of Puget Sound. Elmendorf's informants recounted whaling occurring within living memory. Some recalled a party of "stout women" involved in the whale hunt, one of whom was pulled overboard, resulting in their canoe being towed a considerable distance; once the whale was caught, it was butchered, the meat divided, and much of it sold.¹⁵ Elmendorf also learned about the existence of a whaling-affiliated secret-society initiation that occurred at Kallam Bay circa 1870.

Catching a small number of whales was a boon for Indigenous communities. Elmendorf wrote that while whaling may have been a rare occurrence among the Twana, it

12 Victor J. Farrar, "The Nisqually Journal," *The Washington Historical Quarterly* 10, no. 3 (July, 1919): 210.

13 T. T. Waterman, *Notes on the Ethnology of the Indians of Puget Sound* (New York: Museum of the American Indian Heye Foundation, 1973), 58–59.

14 Waterman., *Ethnology*, 60–61.

15 W. W. Elmendorf, *Twana Narratives: Native Historical Accounts of a Coast Salish Culture* (Seattle and London: University of Washington Press, 1993), 42–43.

was nonetheless valued; people expressed that they were “crazy” about eating it.¹⁶ Quantitative studies have found that even those peoples typically regarded as “whaling cultures” took a relatively small number of whales, yet whaling still constituted an economically and socially rewarding activity. Thus, while tribes reputed as “whalers” may have made more extensive use of whales than tribes in Puget Sound, the former required neither large numbers nor an annual catch to justify their importance.

Rethinking Indigenous Whaling Histories

Despite his evidence suggesting otherwise, Elmendorf confidently asserted that the Skokomish did not hunt whales except for a single historical instance.¹⁷ Similarly, Marian Smith, whose work on the southern Puget Salish in the 1940s remains foundational, inaccurately claimed: “Whales have not entered Puget Sound waters for a long time.” She based her opinion upon one story an Indigenous informant recounted to her of whales and sharks battling in Puget Sound in the distant past, after which whales left.¹⁸ Elmendorf and Smith are certainly not alone in rejecting the idea that whales or whaling were significant to the Coast Salish. Yet the brief foray into the subject presented here reveals quite the opposite: whales and whaling formed an important component of the Puget Salish’s history and culture. Ultimately, “new whaling histories” need to critically assess past accounts bifurcating Indigenous peoples who lived adjacent to saltwater frequented by whales—whether in the Pacific Northwest or elsewhere—into either “whalers” or “non-whalers.”¹⁹

16 Elmendorf, *Twana Narratives*, 44.

17 W. W. Elmendorf, *The Structure of Twana Culture, with Comparative Notes on the Structure of Yurok Culture* by A. L. Kroeber (Pullman: Washington State University, 1960), 107–8.

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19 The author extends his gratitude to Ryan Tucker Jones and Angela Wanhalla for organizing the workshop from which this paper originated and editing this volume of *Perspectives*, as well as the workshop’s participants for their thoughtful commentary. Funding for part of this paper’s research was generously provided by a grant from the Robin Rigby Trust, which is administered through the the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research at Saint Mary’s University in Halifax, Canada.

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Billie Lythberg and Wayne Ngata (Te Aitanga a Hauiti)

Te Aitanga a Hauiti and Paikea: Whale People in the Modern Whaling Era

In Aotearoa New Zealand, whales are revered by Māori in *whakapapa* (ties of kinship and affinity) and through carvings, songs, and oratory. Māori relationships with whales span deep ancestral time to the present, and the commercial whaling era is a mere blip in this *longue durée*. Here, we introduce a whale-riding ancestor called Paikea and his instantiation as a late nineteenth-century *tekoteko* (gable figure) now in the collection of the American Museum of Natural History in New York. We describe the relationship between Paikea and a gift made to him by his descendants from the tribal group Te Aitanga a Hauiti, of Ūawa on the east coast of the North Island, as an example of what it means to be whale people in the “modern whaling” period.

Paikea is an ancestor of many *iwi* (tribal groups) of the eastern seaboard of Aotearoa New Zealand. The Paikea story is known in other parts of the Pacific and provides an explanation for how this particular ancestor reached Aotearoa from the ancestral and spiritual homeland of Hawaiki. There are several versions of the story, but it is commonly accepted that he was the sole survivor of a marine disaster and through his endeavors reached shore at a place called Ahuahu. This was achieved through the mobilization of his marine ancestors, his family of whales, who helped him reach Aotearoa. Paikea is described as riding on the back of a whale, or transforming into a whale, and is referred to accordingly as *he tahito*, *he tipua*, *he taniwha*, *he tohorā*, *he tangata*, *he tekoteko*—an ancient being, an extraordinary being, a denizen of the deep, a whale, a man, a sentinel for his people. *Paikea* is also the Māori name for southern humpback whales.



Ūawa and Te Aitanga a Hauiti rohe (tribal area), North Island, Aotearoa—New Zealand. Courtesy of Kaaterina Ker-ekere, KEdesign © 2019.

The Paikea narrative underpins a certain type of relationship with whales, one of *kaitiakitanga*—care or stewardship. This is conceptualized in *whakapapa* terms, whereby whales are identified as ancestors and kin. The *kaitiaki* relationship underpins voyaging knowledge contained in oral histories. Whales guide *waka* (canoes/vessels) to land, through dangerous seas and channels, and are called upon to smooth rough waters for safe passage. Ocean-going *waka hourua* are double-hulled to replicate the physical qualities of a pair of whales cresting waves in tandem. *Tere tohorā, tere tangata*—where whales journey, people follow—is a *whakataukī* (proverb) that encapsulates the essence of this synergy.

Yet Māori also had a visceral relationship with whales, not only harvesting drift whales but also forcing the beaching of individuals or pods when it was possible to do so. Whales were a gift from Tangaroa, the guardian of the sea and progenitor of fish. They offered many important resources, all identified in Te Reo Rangatira (the Māori language), and examined and understood by Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge systems). These included meat (*kiko*), which could be eaten fresh or dried for future use; milk (*waiū*), if the whale happened to be a mother still suckling her calf; oils (*hinu*) for polish, scent and *rongoā* (healing); baleen (*hihi*), sinews (*uaua*), and blubber (*ngako*). Whale bones (*parāoa*), with their characteristic grain, were harvested for weaponry and adornment, and the creamy, slightly translucent ivory of their teeth (*rei*) was reserved for high-status *taonga* (treasure).

During the commercial whaling period that interrupted centuries of Indigenous whale harvesting practices, many Māori embraced both new ways of whaling and the whalers who brought them to Aotearoa. They boarded whaling ships and traveled the world, created *whakapapa* bonds with whalers through marriage and bloodlines, and joined European and American crews in the flensing of whales in such quantities that, for example, by 1840, right whales had been practically eliminated from the waters of the Southern Hemisphere. They also hosted onshore whaling stations from 1820, including one at Māhia, south of Ūawa—a *tapu* (sacred) site associated with whales and whale beachings. In 1837, Māhia became the principal whaling station in the mid-eastern section of the North Island, conflating *whakapapa* and more viscerally-based whaling traditions for local Māori, and committing Māhia and its people to the commercial whaling period after generations of Indigenous relationships with, and harvesting of, whales.

The timing of the death of the last whale in Aotearoa New Zealand for commercial purposes, at 4:00 p.m. on 21 December 1964, is noted with specificity on government websites, drawing a bold line under such practices. For a short time thereafter, the flesh of beached whales continued to be harvested by locals. One of this paper's authors, Wayne Ngata, recalls his father traveling to Gisborne following a stranding there in 1969 and bringing home whale meat, which he enjoyed as a delicacy (though the younger members of his family did not). Hunting whales in New Zealand waters was finally made illegal in 1978.

Paikea the *Tekoteko* in Ūawa and New York

In the late nineteenth century, a carved meetinghouse was erected in Ūawa. At this time, sporadic whaling was still taking place south of Ūawa in Māhia and Tūranga (Gisborne) as a seasonal activity. To the north of Ūawa, shore whaling remained an important occupation for the people of Te Whānau ā Apanui until the mid-1920s.

The *whare whakairo* (carved ancestral house) was named after a charismatic leader of Te Aitanga a Hauiti, Te Kani a Takirau (ca. 1790s–1856), a descendant of Paikea. He is said to have carried a whalebone *mere* (a striking weapon and oratory aid), and the whalebone *heru* (standing comb) he wore in his hair is now in the collection of the British Museum. Paikea stood at the apex of the Te Kani a Takirau *whare*: a naturalistic carving of a man atop a figurative face, or *koruru*. Carved from a single piece of wood, he stands 164 cm tall. Paikea is well proportioned, facing forwards, his hands—each with five fingers—clasped across his lower abdomen. His legs are foreshortened; he was made to be looked up to. At the top of his head, a projection suggests a topknot of hair. His face is carved and painted with a distinctive *moko* (facial tattoo), and his name is written across his chest in elegant script, leaving no doubt about his identity.

Atop the *whare* of Te Kani a Takirau, Paikea commanded a view across the windswept and driftwood-strewn beaches of Ūawa, past the bay's spectacular cliffs and out to sea, to the great ocean he had traversed from Hawaiki. He looked out at this view for about 20 years before he was taken from Te Kani a Takirau to join the collection of Major General Robley in the United Kingdom, a man known for his interest in Māori *moko* and his collection of not only artefacts but also preserved Māori heads.

Robley was a regular petitioner of the American Museum of Natural History (AMNH), who purchased Paikea from him in 1908, along with a whalebone *patu*, several cloaks, canoe prows, and other fine examples of Māori carving. Records associated with this acquisition are scant, and we do not know the circumstances that led to the dismantling of Te Kani a Takirau and the removal of Paikea by Robley. We do know that at some point before 1907, Paikea was shipped to England, before being sold and shipped to New York where he has remained ever since.

Visits and Gifts

In April 2013, Paikea the *tekoteko* was visited by a group of his Te Aitanga a Hauiti descendants, delegates of the tribe's arts management group, Toi Hauiti, who were eager to reconnect with the ancestor who had once graced Te Kani a Takirau. To instantiate their reconnection after an absence of more than one hundred years, Toi Hauiti presented a *taonga* to Paikea: a *rei puta* pendant carved from a sperm whale's tooth. The tooth itself had come from Māhia, the sacred site temporarily dedicated to shore whaling.



Whakakau, a named *rei puta* (whale tooth pendant) carved by Lance Ngata (2012). Photo courtesy of Lance Ngata.

Since commercial whaling activities ceased in 1964, Aotearoa New Zealand has been a staunch advocate of whale conservation. The Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 regulates cultural access to and use of whales that continue to beach; Māori are now usually allowed only their teeth and bones, precluding their respectful use of the entirety of this precious resource. Meanwhile, international conventions restrict the movement of *taonga* made from whalebone and teeth across borders, circumventing the gifting of prestigious items within and beyond kin groups.

This was the case with Paikea's pendant. It was rejected by the Museum due to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES), an international treaty drawn up in 1973 to ensure that international trade

in specimens of vulnerable wild animals and plants, such as whale bones and teeth, does not threaten their survival.¹ In addition to not being able to stay with Paikea, it could not stay in the United States. It was instead delivered into the hands of another of Paikea's descendants, who was visiting New York for talks concerning the United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous People, and carried home to Ūawa.

It is a testament to the goodwill of Toi Hauiti, and their genuine interest in long-term relationships with the museums caring for their *taonga* and ancestors such as Paikea, that this incident was handled with sensitivity and grace. However, to begin to frame this event and the intention of a future return, Wayne Ngata offered the following *whakatauki* (proverbial saying/teaching): *He taonga tuku noa tē hoki mai ai*—A gift given freely, not to be returned.

We might infer from this not only that the refusal of the whale tooth pendant was a slight, but also that the circumstances that lead to Paikea's acquisition by the American Museum of Natural History in 1908 did not tally with such a sentiment.

Some 14,000 kilometers, two flights, a full day and night of travel, and thousands of dollars per person separate Ūawa and the AMNH. The logistics required to return the *taonga* would include multiple airfares in order to bring an adequate group to New York to make good the gift (both for Paikea as the recipient and for Toi Hauiti as donors), not to mention time away from jobs, school, and family. The return would also require considerable research, paperwork, and fees in order to identify and satisfy the requirements of not only CITES, but several other acts and conventions enacted to constrain precisely the procurement and movement of an item made from whale tooth.

In 2015, an opportunity arose to revisit New York as part of a documentary series being made for the Māori TV broadcaster in Aotearoa. A storyline was developed that featured the return of the *taonga* for an episode of ARTEFACT focused on Māori ancestors and blue water navigation.² Resources became available for both the research required to secure permissions for the *taonga* to travel and for Toi Hauiti to travel with it.

1 "What is CITES?," Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, accessed 4 February 2019, <https://www.cites.org/eng/disc/what.php>.

2 "Star Travel," ARTEFACT, Māori Television, accessed 4 February 2019, <https://www.maoritelevision.com/shows/artefact/star-travel>.

To determine which acts would apply to the *taonga*, we needed to ascertain with absolute certainty the history of the tooth itself and its association with Māhia. Toi Hauiti member Lance Ngata told us that he had carved the *taonga* in 2012 from a whale tooth given to him by his tutor, master carver Clive Fugill. The whale was a mature *parāoa* that beached on the Māhia Peninsula in the late 1960s. This allowed us to trace the tooth back to a sole sperm whale bull that had beached on Māhia on 1 May 1967. Its records were surprisingly detailed; the whale was 55 feet long, it is number 385 in the NZ Whale Stranding Database, and the coordinates of its stranding were S 39°5'2", E 177°52'19".

Thereafter, the paperwork amassed to travel with Paikea's pendant included: a "Permit to Export" from the Management Authority of the Department of Conservation, New Zealand, to satisfy the Trade in Endangered Species Act 1989 and CITES; an email from the U.S. Fisheries and Wildlife Service advising the inspection process required at the U.S. border and other required documentation; a "Declaration for Importation or Exportation of Fish or Wildlife" from the U.S. Fisheries and Wildlife Service; a "Marine Mammals Protection Act 1978 Permit to Hold, Import and Export" from the New Zealand Department of Conservation, granting the right to export the tooth and including a photograph of the pendant so no substitution could be made; a letter from the United States Department of Commerce National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, acknowledging receipt of an affidavit and supporting documentation from Wayne Ngata to establish that the whale had died and the tooth had been procured before the effective date of the U.S. Marine Mammals Protection Act (21 December 1972), and that the tooth had been held in a secure environment since 1967 and had not been involved in commerce. As a condition of this import permit, the tooth was not allowed to enter into commerce in the United States; therefore, it must never be sold. Finally, a cover letter from the Senior Museum Registrar of the AMNH outlined the importation process and associated inspection at the U.S. border, listed the permits attached, and confirmed that the pendant would be accepted by the AMNH into its collection as a gift to Paikea.

After months of paperwork and international collaboration, the *taonga* was finally able to return to Paikea in July 2017. In New York, flanked by members of his extended family—all of them descendants of Paikea—Wayne Ngata addressed their ancestor, collapsing the distance of four years since their last reunion, and introducing him to other members of his kin. The pendant was once again placed around his neck, but this time with the certainty that it would never be taken off.

Whale People Today

Being whale people in the modern whaling era requires the maintenance of relationships with whales that exceed and transcend the short-term aberration that was economic whaling and the skillful navigation of national and international laws introduced to address their subsequent economic extinction. The many Fijian *tabua* (smoked whale tooth valuables) confiscated each year by NZ Customs are further examples of the impact CITES is having on the movement of the ancestral valuables of Indigenous peoples. More than 90 percent of specimens seized at New Zealand's border under CITES are destroyed, but after a request from Fiji authorities in the early 1990s, *tabua* have been collected and stored by the Department of Conservation. On 29 May 2017, just two months before the pendant was returned to Paikea, 146 *tabua* were returned to Fiji by NZ Customs in the first repatriation of its kind.



Descendant Mikaia Leach with Paikea, 2017. Photo courtesy of Greenstone TV.

For Toi Hauiti, their relationship with Paikea the *tekoteko* in New York and the people that care for him there has been strengthened by the return of the whale tooth pendant. The *rei puta* is a materialization of the living relationship between Paikea and his kin. It is a demonstration of Toi Hauiti's curatorial approach to their *taonga* in museums far from home and a prompt for further conversations about Paikea's rights, as an ancestor and a living face of Te Aitanga a Hauiti, to receive guests and retain gifts that are his due, even if these are not easily accommodated by international treaties.

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Joshua L. Reid

Whale Peoples and Pacific Worlds

Earlier histories of Pacific whaling appeared as romanticized, straightforward narratives. Manly white hunters nobly opened up vast swaths of the Pacific Ocean and the lands and islands washed by these waters to the Western world as they pursued dangerous prey that they transformed into lucrative commodities. Recently, the history of Pacific whaling has undergone a renaissance as scholars have applied new avenues of analysis and brought it into conversation with a broader array of historical fields. Historians critically note the role of whaling in the expansion of European and US empires—and global capital—in the Pacific. Additionally, they examine the consequences that whalers and whaling brought to Pacific lands, waters, peoples, and species. Diseases decimated Indigenous populations across the ocean, drawing survivors into increasingly more exploitative relationships that further pressured local resources. And sea mammal populations, particularly whales, experienced succeeding collapses as one fishery became overhunted and hunters moved on to the next. But in many ways, historical examinations of Pacific whaling have remained one-dimensional. Active European and Euro-American whalers and polities—the usual historical agents—executed their wills on the passive Pacific, whose peoples and species could do little more than play the role of victims.

The articles in this volume explore a different narrative, charting new histories of Pacific whaling. They reveal that a broader array of sources, such as local newspapers, old collections of whale recipes, oral histories, and culturally specific material items can uncover a more inclusive history of who whaled, where, and why. They demonstrate a more diverse set of whaling economies that did far more than simply transform whales into oil and baleen. Instead, they reveal that many nations and peoples beyond the usual historical actors used whaling to claim and control marine and terrestrial spaces, to establish and enforce boundaries, and to exercise power. All the articles push back against the notion of a passive Pacific, specifically when it comes to the peoples of this ocean and its marine environment. Together, these articles illustrate that whaling was much broader than the killing and commodification of whales. Excitingly, they help substantiate the emerging field of Pacific worlds.

In broadening whaling narratives beyond the straightforward but challenging task of transforming whales into commodities, these new whaling histories demonstrate that Pacific peoples “lived with whales,” to adapt a conceptually useful phrase from Nancy Shoemaker.¹ Demuth’s examination of a moment of cross-cultural encounter in the Arctic of 1852 (in this volume) poses two questions that help us consider how hunters “live” with whales: *what is a whale, and what is its value?* Together, these invoke a third, related question: *why whale?*

Answers to these questions are, of course, historically rooted in specific places and times and reflect the worldviews of particular societies. For Indigenous peoples, there were often many reasons to whale. The mid-nineteenth-century Fijian chief Cokanauto whaled in order to get closer to *tabua*, sperm whale teeth that were markers of prestige. This mirrors whalers’ symbolic use and valuing of whale teeth, a different kind of consumption than that of other marine commodities. Ngarrindjeri whalers sought access to cash and goods that would have increased their status in Aboriginal societies, while simultaneously laboring at nearby whaling stations so they could maintain ancestral connections to *Kondoli* (whales) in a changing settler-colonial world of nineteenth-century Australia. Indigenous Arctic peoples invested cetaceans with agency, seeing whales as giving themselves to their communities for subsistence purposes and to make them wealthy and powerful as whale commodities proliferated throughout local, regional, and global exchange networks. These Indigenous peoples recognized that this only occurred when harpooners had practiced the right ritual preparations that demonstrated that they respected the gift of whales. According to Māori authorities and some Coast Salish leaders, the reciprocal respect they gained from whales meant that they could call leviathans ashore. Among their own societies, Indigenous whalers distributed meat, blubber, and bone throughout villages, thereby affirming and augmenting their status as respected authority figures.

Because whaling meant something more than the killing and commodification of whales, Indigenous whaling peoples such as the Iñupiat, Ngarrindjeri, and Kāi Tahu—along with the Makahs of the most northwestern point of the contiguous United States—can be more accurately described as “whale people.”² Seeking to define what

1 Nancy Shoemaker, *Living with Whales: Documents and Oral Histories of Native New England Whaling History* (Amherst: University of Massachusetts Press, 2014).

2 Information about the Makahs of Washington State is from Joshua L. Reid, *The Sea Is My Country: The Maritime World of the Makahs* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2015).

this means, several of the authors here interrogate this classification and together map out three related commonalities of whale peoples. The first commonality is that they are in *relations* with whales. Many Indigenous peoples recognize varying degrees of relations that others define as kin-based or political, definitions which often overlap from an Indigenous perspective. Elsewhere, Athabascan Dian Million engages with Indigenous relationality, explaining that “the meaning of Indigenous as it is defined by all those cultures who identify themselves as such has always been in their relationship to a ‘land,’ that place they were in relationship to without anthropocentric bias, relationships that disciplined action and cohered *Indigenous* persons and societies.”³ For whale peoples, these relations included marine waters and whales themselves and were expressed in various ways, demonstrating that what was relevant for one people was not as critical for others. Paikea, the whale-riding ancestor from Hawaiiki, the original Māori homeland, reflects relationality literally through whakapapa (genealogy) that connects the past to the present and the future.

Other whale peoples illustrate that relationality with whales included both men and women. For example, the work of Māori women was central to the success of nineteenth-century shore-whaling stations in New Zealand. Similarly, Iñupiat, Chukchi, and Yupik wives supported effective umiak captains by calling the whale and sending off the crew with their prayers. The Makah wife of a whaler often helped in the ritual preparations of harpooners, and remained solitary and still during a hunt because it was believed that a whale would mimic her actions. In these Indigenous societies, whaling helped to bind together families, as each gender assumed responsibility over various aspects of the hunt, welcoming the whale ashore, and dividing the catch. Nearly all Indigenous whaling societies see whales as another people. This endows leviathans with agency, just like any other people, and explains why many Indigenous whalers speak of whales as giving themselves to harpooners. Even some non-Natives—particularly those observing a gray whale calf in captivity and others gray whales in the lagoons of Baja California in the late twentieth century—also think of whales as individuals endowed with agency.

Because whale peoples are in relations with whales, they have a host of ritual practices, beliefs, and ceremonies related to whaling. These mark a second key character-

3 Dian Million, *Therapeutic Nations: Healing in an Age of Indigenous Human Rights* (Tucson: The University of Arizona Press, 2013), 116.

istic of whale peoples. Often done to honor the whale, these practices reflect values of stewardship and responsibility for these beings in which they are in relation. For instance, before the 1999 hunt, the Makah crew engaged in over 1,000 hours of ritual preparation, which was in addition to a similar amount of time spent on physical preparation. Additionally, ceremonies highlight the importance that this relationship plays in the social life of whale people. In the mid-nineteenth century, Makah harpooners performed mock whale hunts as part of the engagement ceremony when they sought a marriage partner. A ritual like this demonstrated the whaling prowess of the potential groom and his ability to care for his family and people. But it also illustrated just one of the ways that whaling infused many aspects of their lives. Ngarrindjeri and Native Hawaiians, among others, also observed ceremonial practices respecting whales.

The relations that whale peoples have with whales stretch long into the past and remain relevant today and into the future, representing a third characteristic shared by whale peoples. Archaeology often affirms these historical roots. The finds at Ozette, a Makah village just south of Cape Flattery, reveal that this tribal nation has been whaling for more than 2,000 years. This is why whales figure prominently in the creation stories of whale peoples. After a great flood brought people to Cape Flattery, they transformed this into their homeland and became the Q^widiččaʔa-tš (“kwi-dihch-chuh-aht”)—the People of the Cape—by establishing villages where they could harvest whales. Swooping down from his nest high in the mountains and casting lightning snakes to stun whales, Thunderbird taught them how to whale, a practice that defined their identity and made the waters around Cape Flattery into Makah marine space. For Kāi Tahu, whales appear in voyaging traditions and in stories about the creation of Aotearoa’s southern landscape. Similarly, Tikigaq villagers at Point Hope, Alaska, tell about a whale that died and created the headland where their community is located.

Indigenous knowledge pertaining to these sea mammals and whaling reflects the substantial length of time that a community has been a whale people. Makahs studied and learned the behaviors of several types of whales that they regularly hunted. This included whale anatomy—they had to know where and when to strike so that harpoons and lances would work best—and navigation of marine waters so they could safely hunt and return home. The only way Makahs and other whale peoples could accumulate this knowledge was through generations of being in relations with whales. Because this relationship is historical, it has changed over time, as whale peoples embraced new technologies and opportunities to hunt whales or maintain their rela-

tions with whales. For instance, when iron became increasingly available to Makahs in the early nineteenth century, whalers began making harpoon heads and lances from this metal. In 1855, the People of the Cape used the treaty-making process in order to reserve for themselves and their descendants the right to hunt whales. By the 1860s, they tried using firearms to hunt whales, but found that they were not as effective as traditional gear. By 1905, they were regularly hiring steam-powered tugboats to help them tow their catch back to villages. None of these innovations diluted the customary practice of whaling or made the hunters any less Makah—instead, these adaptations helped them maintain their distinct identity as the People of the Cape amid the changing settler-colonial world. Many of the articles in this edition attest to similar historical strategies pursued by Native Hawaiians, Taukei of Fiji, Ngarrindjeri of present-day South Australia, Kāi Tahu of Aotearoa, Ainu peoples of Japan, and Arctic communities.

The new whaling histories in this volume also help us better understand the plurality of Pacific worlds, an emerging field in history. These whaling histories underscore that the meaning of a “Pacific world” varied, from the shores of Indigenous Australia, Aotearoa, the South Pacific, the Salish Sea, northern Japan, and the Arctic, to the Europeans and Euro-Americans who sought to exercise some measure of control over the Pacific. Furthermore, they illustrate how a Pacific-worlds analysis uncovers the connections between the local and the global, as this ocean basin is better understood historically as a complex assemblage of different regions. This should come as no surprise when we remember the difference in scale that a Pacific-centered analysis offers. Despite the staggering scale of this ocean, however, this lens of analysis appears useful, particularly when we choose to focus on the threads or networks—such as whaling or whales—that knit together the various Pacific worlds.

These histories also highlight the centrality of the Pacific. Older whaling histories take a traditional (world-systems) approach, framing the Pacific as the periphery to particular centers of capital and power. If we think about whaling from the perspective of the local peoples and powers in the Pacific, many different sites in this ocean resemble central hubs for various networks of peoples, valued items of exchange and commerce, ideas and technologies, and diseases, to name a few. Moreover, these new histories emphasize the importance of and opportunities presented by mobility across and among various Pacific worlds. Whaling gave numerous individuals, including Indigenous peoples, the opportunity to explore the larger world for myriad purposes.

Finally, many of these new histories on Pacific whaling confirm that Pacific worlds were first and foremost Indigenous spaces—and they remain so today in many places. This is evident in the way that Paterson and Wilson (in this volume) approach their examination of Ngarrindjeri whalers through the frame of reconciliation rooted in Indigenous perspectives and epistemologies, not those of the settler colonial nation-state. Similarly, by visiting their ancestor at New York’s American Museum of Natural History, Māori efforts to “heed the call of Paikea” also illustrate this. Makahs articulated the persistence of Indigenous Pacific worlds most dramatically by harpooning a gray whale in 1999.

By taking a broader and more inclusive view, these new histories of whaling in the Pacific illustrate the potential for what some scholars might have once written off as a specialized and antiquated corner of historiography. New methodologies, theoretical approaches, and analytical perspectives instead point to many of the rich possibilities that Pacific whaling histories have to offer.

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About the Authors

Jakobina Arch

Jakobina is an assistant professor at Whitman College, Washington, United States, where she teaches courses in environmental and East Asian history. Her ongoing re-search focuses on the marine environmental history of Japan, particularly in the early modern period.

Jonathan Clapperton

Jonathan is an adjunct professor in the Department of History at the University of Victoria, and an associate faculty member in the College of Interdisciplinary Studies at Royal Roads University, Canada. He specializes in Indigenous history and culture in the North American West, and has served as an expert witness and historical re-searcher for numerous Indigenous communities on issues relating to treaty rights, land claims, and industrial resource development.

Jason Colby

Jason Colby is Professor of History and Department Chair at the University of British Columbia (Canada). He focuses on international relations and environmental history, particularly the shared environmental histories of the US and Canadian Salish Sea. He is author of *Orca: How We Came to Know and Love the Ocean's Greatest Predator* (Oxford University Press, 2018).

Bathsheba Demuth

Bathsheba is an assistant professor at the Institute at Brown for Environment and Society at Brown University, United States. She specializes in human–nature interactions, particularly the environmental histories of the Russian and North American Arctic.

Ryan Tucker Jones

Ryan is an associate professor at the University of Oregon, United States. His early work specialized on human–environment interactions in early modern history. His current focus is on whaling practices in the Pacific and Soviet Russia.

Akamine Jun

Jun is a professor at the Hitotsubashi University in Tokyo, Japan. He specializes in ethnography and anthropology, with research interests including oral histories, supply chain studies, the ethnography of food, and comparative ethnography.

Susan A. Lebo

Susan is the Archaeology Branch Chief for the Hawai'i State Historic Preservation Division. She has worked extensively on archaeological projects on the Continental United States and in the Pacific. Her current research focus is whaling history in the Pacific region.

Vicki Luker

Vicki lectures in Pacific and Asian history at the College of Asia and the Pacific at the Australian National University. Her research interests include culture, gender, sexual-ity, Pacific and Māori history, and postcolonial studies.

Billie Lythberg

Billie is a senior research fellow at The University of Auckland, New Zealand. Her work lies at the intersection of economics, anthropology, and history, with research interests including Oceanic culture, theories of value, sustainability, and environmen-tal management.

Wayne Ngata

Wayne has recently left his roles as Raukura/Chief Advisor Te Ao Māori at the Ministry of Education and Board Chair of the Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission), New Zealand. He has extensive teaching experience, with particular scholarly expertise in Māori literature.

Adam Paterson

Adam is a curator at the South Australian Maritime Museum, where he also conducts research and creates online content. He has developed diverse, interactive, and digi-tally-accompanied exhibits, including an augmented reality app.

Joshua L. Reid

Joshua is the director of the Center for the Study of the Pacific Northwest at the Uni-versity of Washington, United States, where he is also an associate professor in the Department of History and the Department of American Indian Studies. His research areas focus on the American and Canadian Wests and the indigenous Pacific.

Nancy Shoemaker

Nancy is a history professor at the University of Connecticut, United States. She specializes in environmental history, American Indian history, and maritime history. She is currently working on a history of soap.

Kate Stevens

Kate is a history lecturer at the University of Waikato, New Zealand. She specializes in colonial histories of cultural and economic exchange in the Pacific world, including New Zealand. Her research focuses on the intersections between race, gender, and colonial law and economics across both the British and French empires.

Lissa Wadewitz

Lissa is an associate professor at Linfield College in Oregon, United States, where she teaches courses in US Western, environmental, and Native American history. Her current research focuses on the history of Pacific whaling.

Angela Wanhalla

Angela is an associate professor at the University of Otago, New Zealand. She has worked extensively on written- and oral-history projects, with a focus on the colonial history of New Zealand and issues of gender, race, emotions, and intimacy.

Chris Wilson

Chris is a senior lecturer at the College of Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences, at Flinders University, Adelaide, Australia. He specializes in archaeology (particularly of South Australia), repatriation, and Indigenous peoples and culture.

Noell Wilson

Noell is an associate professor of history and international studies at the University of Mississippi, United States, where she teaches Japanese history. Her current research explores the cultural and economic integration of Japan and Korea into the North Pacific region in the mid-nineteenth century.