

“I am the whale”: Human/Whale Entanglement in Kaikoura, New Zealand

by
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Abstract

Kaikoura is balanced on the edge of land and sea and it is the creatures of both that make the community. I explore the entanglement of two creatures in particular, whales and humans, in this small New Zealand town where whale watching has become part of everyday life. But 'watching' can be planned or unexpected, up close or at a distance; it can mean guardianship or tourism or something in between, and in Kaikoura, watching whale watchers watch whales is as much a shared community practice as watching the whales themselves. In this place, the naturalcultural encounters of whales and humans construct diverse experiences, a plurality of identities and a community that is as linked to whales as it is to humans. It is with this everyday living with whales that my stories and those of my participants are concerned.

Keywords: Multispecies Ethnography; natureculture; whale watching; community; tourism; Kaikoura

Dedication

*I dedicate this thesis to the whales of Kaikoura,
for their entanglement in my work and life, and
to my family and friends who support me in my
travels and always welcome me home.*

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank all of my participants, particularly the owners, staff, and volunteers of The Dusky Lodge. The Dusky family was not only invaluable to this ethnography but also gave me a home for nine months, endless personal support, and lasting friendships.

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I would like to acknowledge and give my respect to Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura, the many Kaikoura *hapū*'s and the Ngāi Tahu *iwi*.

I would lastly like to thank the non-human creatures involved in this thesis, whose everyday lives entangled with my life and those of my participants.

Table of Contents

Approval.....	ii
Partial Copyright Licence	iii
Abstract.....	iv
Dedication	v
Acknowledgements	vi
Table of Contents.....	vii
List of Figures.....	ix
Preface.....	x
1. Introduction	1
Physical Geography	2
The Pakeha Arrival.....	3
Whaling Past and Present.....	4
Maori Whales	6
The Rise of Whale Watching	8
Whale Business	10
Kaikoura’s Identity.....	12
2. How To Understand Whale Watching.....	16
Ethical Agency: The Background of Multispecies Ethnography	17
Multispecies Ethnography and Natureculture	19
Place	21
Place-Identity	24
Community.....	25
On the Ground, By the Sea.	27
3. Living On The Coast: Everyday Encounters.....	31
The Nonhuman ‘Other’: Anthropology’s Colonial Past	31
Challenges to Colonial Categorization.....	32
Marine Mammals in Kaikoura	34
Body Performance.....	36
My Body and the Whale	37
Fishing and Ocean Ethics.....	41
In the Water.....	45
4. The Politics of Whales.....	48
Defining Maori Research.....	48
Connectedness and Maori Cultural Definitions	49
Maori Settlement	51
Maori Creation.....	52
Stories of Kaikoura and the Whales	56
Maori Claims	57
Critiques of Maori Claims	58
Brown Colour Crime	59
Pakeha and Maori Conflict	63

5. Whale Watching, A Natureculture; Identity and Community Formation.....	65
Tourism: Histories and Environmental Adaptations	68
Whale Watching as a Natureculture	73
The Boat	74
Is it 'Us' vs. 'Them'?	75
The Tourist.....	76
Variations of Backpackers	79
Backpackers.....	79
Transformed Backpackers.....	80
Group Backpackers.....	81
Flashpackers.....	83
The Travellers	84
Traveller Whale Watching	86
Scavengers	87
The Whale Watching Paradox: Travellers' Dilemma.....	88
6. Conclusion.....	90
"I Am the Whale"	92
References.....	94

List of Figures

Figure 1. The Kaikoura Coast from Mount Fyffe.....	3
Figure 2. Kaikoura’s Peninsula Walk Track.....	5
Figure 3. The Cover of the 2004 edition of the Lonely Planet Guidebook.....	10
Figure 4. Kaikoura’s main street bicycle rack.....	12
Figure 5. Sperm Whale Weathervane.....	14
Figure 6. The Kaikoura Boundary: along the coast from the Conway to the Clarence River.....	23
Figure 7. The main section of town on the coast of the Kaikoura Peninsula.....	24
Figure 8. Kaikoura Town Map with Marine Mammal Tour Companies	35
Figure 9. Humpback whale tail slapping.....	39
Figure 10. The hostel cleaners as unscheduled whale watchers.....	41
Figure 11. The fish and the waka.....	55
Figure 12. A sign marking the coastal usage ban (Rāhui).....	59
Figure 13. Resident Sperm Whale Tutu	66
Figure 14. Tail of Resident Sperm Whale Tutu.....	67
Figure 15. Looking for Wales.....	91

Preface

I had been seriously writing and re-engaging with my graduate school work—with the goal of my thesis constantly in the back of my mind—for about three weeks when I saw a picture that reaffirmed to me why I was writing and what I wanted to write about. For nearly two years I had been thinking about whales, reading their stories, studying their history, and working with anthropological literature that would help me represent my ideas, but what re-prioritized me and motivated me to write was, to my surprise, a porpoise. A photo circulated my social media of a porpoise out of water surrounded by men with what appeared to be a tear from its eye, and a comment underneath explaining that the men are rescue volunteers and are not there to harm. I looked at the photo and tried to critique it. I tried to write about how it was anthropomorphizing the creature, projecting human emotion and heroism only to create a dualism between the natural-animal-object and social-human-subject; and perhaps this is the case, but I believe there is more to it than that. First, I felt enmeshed with a nonhuman creature through a representation based primarily on empathy. Second, the written comment situated the life and death of this creature in the social and political world, in an on-going history where humans and marine mammals have become entangled. I was reminded of a quote that influenced the direction of my thesis when I first began my Master's program; Donna Haraway wrote about the foolishness of human exceptionalism, “we know that becoming is always becoming with—in a contact zone where the outcome, where who is in the world, is at stake” (Haraway, 2008, p. 244). Underlying my work is a challenge and a hope to advocate for mutuality and respect, to negotiate and witness what Serres (1995) called a natural contract, a gathering together of nature and culture that is based on reciprocity rather than separation.

1. Introduction

When I first arrived in Kaikoura I felt that it was a space made meaningful by the entanglements of whales and humans. On my first whale watch tour I was informed that many of the whales are residents but that there are occasional transient individuals that may be spotted, and I immediately thought how a similar statement could be made of the humans in Kaikoura. I wondered how this classification could have meaning beyond the scientific tracking of non-human animal species, how the idea of permanent resident whales could be part of the town and of the community and how passing through could reflect more than travel plans. In this introduction, I will place Kaikoura in space and time and establish the diverse voices that engage in the meaning making of whale-human entanglement. In doing so, I can present the stories of whale-human encounters as I lived them—as tenuous relationships that were crucial to the fabric of everyday life in Kaikoura.

In this thesis, I ask how we understand the entanglement of whales and humans in one small New Zealand town, where whale watching has become both a spectacle and a part of everyday life, in a place where ‘watching’ has come to carry many different connotations: to plan to watch, to watch out for, or to be watchful of. And where the alliterated and tongue-tied pastime of watching whale watchers watch whales is as much a shared community practice as watching the whales themselves. In this place, it is the encounters of whales and humans that demonstrate the connectedness of nature and culture, made evident through the diverse experiences, plurality of identities, and community that is as linked to whales as it is to humans. It is to this everyday ‘living with’ (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010, p. 552) whales that my stories and those of my participants are concerned.

Physical Geography

Kaikoura is a community balanced on the edge of land and sea. Geologically speaking, the town is uniquely located on the East coast of New Zealand's South island poised on the Hope Fault, where two plates (The Australian and the Pacific) meet and force geological changes on both land and sea. On land, the mountains rise up over two kilometres high just twelve kilometres from the coast. In the sea, only one kilometre offshore the seafloor plunges to depths of over one kilometre for up to sixty kilometres; this is known as the Kaikoura Canyon and it is the reason human and marine species can meet (Perkins & Cloke, 2005). The depth combined with the blending of the southerly warm and northerly cold currents create an underwater environment rich in nutrients that support the diverse and abundant marine life that has become identified with Kaikoura (Perkins & Cloke, 2005). The unique sea and landscape mean that whales can be seen close to shore all year round creating an intimate link between the coast of Kaikoura and the people of the land throughout their estimated 900-year occupation. I start with a history of Kaikoura, which demonstrates the importance of the physical land and seascapes in this community over time, paying particular attention to the ways humans and non-human animals lived in the physical geography and encountered one another through time.



Figure 1. The Kaikoura Coast from Mount Fyffe

Note. On the left is the North coast, home to the main town street. On the right is South Bay, the south coast where the main marina is located. Photo printed with permission.

The Pakeha Arrival

Like many other places in New Zealand, Kaikoura was greatly changed by the British navigator James Cook. Although not the first European to explore New Zealand,¹ Cook created an as yet unbroken link between Europe and New Zealand (King, 2003). In 1769, Cook sailed for six months around the coast of New Zealand, landing and documenting Maori culture and creating lasting and mostly peaceful relations with the local people (King, 2003). He spent 328 days in New Zealand over four visits between 1773-1774 and is still considered a hero to many in New Zealand, being recognized in place names like Mount Cook (also known as *Aoraki* in Maori), New Zealand's highest peak, or Cook's Strait, the strait separating the North and South island. The literal

¹ Dutch East India Company commander Abel Tasman sailed along the West coast of New Zealand in 1642, but due to an altercation between Maori and Dutch crewmembers at Murderer's Bay, now Golden Bay, Tasman left without setting foot on land

representations of James Cook are not all that remain of his legacy. Cook's reports spoke very positively of the Maori people, unlike the reports of past explorers, and due to his more thorough exploration, his reports contained descriptions of the country's resources, specifically timber, flax, seals, and whales. This very quickly piqued British interest in New Zealand resources and began a history of extractive industries in the 18th and 19th centuries (King, 2003).

Whaling Past and Present

Whaling in New Zealand was conducted first by the British and later the French and American, peaking in the 1830's. The seas were reported by Cook to be at their best in early May each year as Humpback, Southern Right, Minke, and Sperm whales migrated from the Antarctic. The largest port for ocean whaling was Kororareka at the Bay of Islands on the North Island where crews exceeded 1000 men, and Maori locals gathered to sell vegetables, pigs, and prostitution (King, 2003). The industry also took the form of shore whaling, which involved Maori locals more directly as they were often working alongside the European crew.

In Kaikoura the rich history of whaling is memorialized in the form of Fyffe House. Considered one of Kaikoura's tourist attractions, Fyffe House is located on the peninsula walk, a four-hour walk recommended to visitors in most tourist guidebooks (Figure 2). It is the last structure of the Waiouka Fishery, a whaling station established in 1842 by Robert Fyfe to intercept the migration of Southern Right, Humpback, and Sperm whales (Tierney et al., 2007). The house itself is built with whale materials, from a whalebone fence to a whale bone vertebrae foundation and was originally used as a place to barrel whale oil, the most sought after commodity in the whaling era. Shore whaling stations such as the one at Fyffe House began losing business as electricity and gas were more readily available and whale oil was no longer a necessity, but whaling itself continued well into the 20th century. In Kaikoura, between 1895 and 1913, only nine whales were taken by the Waiouka Fishery. It was not until 1920 that new equipment allowed for higher returns, making possible their yearly catch of 20 Humpback whales and the first Sperm whale for 60 years. However, a combination of poor financial returns, gear damage, and labour disputes led to the final closure of the station after the 1922 season (Tierney et al., 2007). Then in 1982, the International Whaling Commission (IWC) voted

for a moratorium on all whaling for commercial purposes based on the depletion of whale species and other correlated ecological changes (Kalland, 2009).

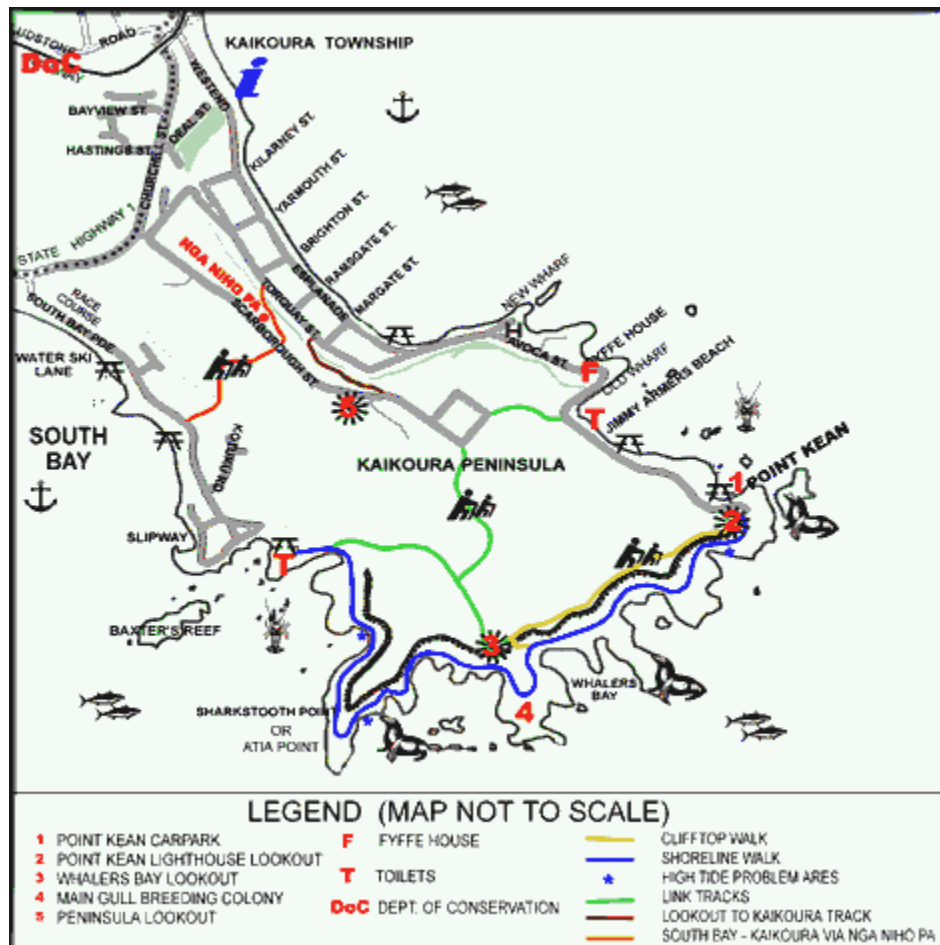


Figure 2. Kaikoura's Peninsula Walk Track.

Note. Virtual Kaikoura. Peninsula Walkways. The red 'F' marks the location of Fyffe house and the blue and green/black line show the Peninsula walk track.

Commercially, Kaikoura stopped whaling before it became illegal, but there were still independent fishers who used the area and could hunt whales. This is understandable considering Kaikoura had been used as a Maori fishing village for 800–1000 years, harvesting fin and shellfish from the sea and shore. The *kaimoana* (seafood) was and still is regarded as *taonga* (treasure) from the sea. European settlers also used the Kaikoura coast for recreational and subsistence fishing, establishing *pāua* (a large edible sea snail known in North America as Abalone) and rock lobster fisheries in the mid 1900's (Tierney et al., 2007). Even after the 1920 decline of the whaling

industry, individuals still hunted whales, often targeting the Southern Right whales because they swim close to shore due to the Kaikoura Canyon and they float when harpooned, making the processing much easier than of other whales. The rapid decline of this species and the pressure from international anti-whaling groups contributed to the halting of independent fishers and the end of the whaling era; the last whale killed in Kaikoura was in 1964.

Maori Whales

During the whaling era, Kaikoura's population grew and the town became an assemblage of resource extraction workers, both Pakeha, referring to European settlers, and Maori peoples of Polynesian descent (King, 2003). It was in this period that these cultural identifiers 'Pakeha' and 'Maori' came into use; up to this point in history indigenous people were simply called 'New Zealanders' as there had been no intense and prolonged contact between cultural groups.

In other words, the history of European whaling is also a history of Maori-Pakeha relations and the beginning of resource-based community development. As whale watching and other extractive industries grew in the 1800's there was increased contact between European settlers and indigenous populations and by 1858 settlers outnumbered indigenous peoples 59,000 to 56,000 (King, 2003). With increased contact came increased recognition of difference and struggles for power and control, culminating in the 1840 Treaty of Waitangi that transferred power over New Zealand to the British Crown (King, 2003). In this treaty, written by British representatives with input by indigenous leaders, indigenous populations used the word '*maori*,' meaning 'ordinary people,' to refer to themselves. Non-indigenous people began using '*maori*' to refer to all indigenous people regardless of *iwi*, or tribe, or family groups even though these people were and continue to be diverse culturally and geographically (Smith, 2012, p. 6). Similarly, '*pakeha*' came originally from the pre-European word '*pakepakeha*,' meaning light-skinned beings, and from the use of '*rungateeda pakehaa*' in the Treaty of Waitangi to mean 'European Gentlemen' (King, 2003). It grew to refer to any European settler and has carried negative stereotypes of self-centredness or materialism (King, 2003). Both words, '*maori*' and '*pakeha*', are the products of colonial 'othering' in a resource based community development effort (Amoamo & Thompson, 2010; Smith, 2009; White,

2007); they do however have historical significance and are still employed in present day New Zealand, although Maori is more common than Pakeha.

The whaling industry may have been critical about beginning a resource-based community and defining Maori-Pakeha relations; however, whales were not unknown to Kaikoura before European settlement and the whaling era. The geography of this place, the Kaikoura canyon, and the migration route meant that whales were linked to the development of this community from the beginning, and although whaling is often discussed as the event that catapulted Kaikoura to rapid growth, it was not the first instance of whales affecting humans. Without taking into consideration the Maori perspective, it would be easy to assume that whales were only important as a commodity in Kaikoura in the whaling and tourism industry; in fact, links between these two industries have been made (Einarsson, 1993; Bowden, 2004). However, whales were present in Maori histories, particularly in Kaikoura, before these industries.

Maori settlement began more than 900 years ago; in Kaikoura it began with two small tribes (also called *hapu*, meaning a smaller or closely related group) called the Waitaha and the Kati Mamoe, who occupied the coastline due to the vast array of marine resources (King, 2003). Much later, a *hapu* called Ngāti Kuri, who belonged to the Ngāi Tahu *iwi* (a larger group that is composed of multiple *hapu*) arrived to fight and win the rights to Kaikoura land (Levy, 1949). Ngāti Kuri is regarded as the historically dominant *hapu*, and still holds *mana whenua* status (rights to territory), but Kaikoura's Māori population (14.3% of the total New Zealand population) includes other Māori groups such as those that came from the North Island in search of work in the 1940s and 1950s (Poharama et al., 1998, p. 10).

Whales and other marine creatures were tied to indigenous narratives of the Kaikoura territory, even in the early Ngāti Kuri settlement. A member of the Kaikoura council wrote, "*Te Tai o Marokura* [the seas around Kaikoura] lies within the realm of Tangaroa, the god of waters and is an integral part of Ngāti Kuri history and cultural identity" (Tierney et al., 2007, p. 23). Whales are connected to Maori tradition in numerous ways: they are traditionally regarded as a sign of plenty and a source of food, they have spiritual significance as *taniwha* (mythical sea creatures), they are considered guardians to particular individuals or tribes and can be called upon in time of need, and

most importantly they act as '*taonga*' or prized possessions for the Maori people (Poharama et al., 1998, p. 26). Whether it be in myth or in local policy, whales are connected to Maori histories. It is therefore understandable that Maori groups continue to be involved with whales through tourism.

The Rise of Whale Watching

After the moratorium on whaling, Kaikoura underwent a dramatic shift. In the 1980's and into the 1990's, charter fishing overtook whaling as the most effective and financially beneficial industry. This changed the uses of the coast as fishing moved off shore allowing shoreline marine species to replenish. Consequently, an opportunity arose to re-engage with the abundance of marine mammals close to shore in a new way. By 1987, a small seal swimming company began, followed soon after by whale and dolphin watching tours in 1988 (Tierney et al., 2007); however, all three were closely monitored and regulated. Ngāi Tahu resident elders became involved with the development of local businesses out of concern for local Maori people because of the rise of drug addiction, unemployment, and the high levels of under education (Perkins & Cloke, 2005, p. 909). The philosophy of the Ngāi Tahu *iwi* is one of guardianship and protection of natural resources, and so these principles guided the development of an Ngāti Kuri owned whale watch company in Kaikoura (Perkins & Cloke, 2005).

Currently in Kaikoura there is only one boat-based whale watching company. This is not due to lack of interest or economic value, but because of two regulatory acts. The first applies to New Zealand in general; it is called the Marine Mammals Protection Act put in place in 1978 and has been upheld via the Marine Mammals Protection Regulations since 1992 (Tierney et al., 2007). These regulations stipulate general protection rules for marine mammals and do not apply solely to tourism; for example, one must have a permit to view whales commercially, vessels must approach a whale from a direction that is parallel to and slightly to the rear of the whale, no more than three vessels are allowed within 300 metres of a whale and must have low-wake speed, vessels must make no sudden movements or changes of direction, must maintain a minimum approach distance of 50 metres (200 for whales with calves), must keep out of path, and no swimming with the whales is permitted. Very similar rules apply to dolphin

and seal tours, the differences being that the boats can get closer to the animals and swimming is permitted.

The second means of regulation applies to Kaikoura specifically and is carried out by *Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura* (The Kaikōura Coastal Marine Guardians), who act as a town council made up of community members referred to as *kaitiaki* (the guardians) who recognise the need to care and take responsibility for the natural environment (Tierney et al., 2007, p. 3). These guardians are members of the community and users of the coast; they work in tandem with The Department of Conservation (DoC) and are supported by the ministry for the environment, DoC, and the ministry for fisheries among others. The vision of the Guardians is to promote awareness to members of the wider Kaikoura community that they are all the *kaitiaki* of the Kaikoura marine area (Tierney et al., 2007, p. 3). The Guardians Council has a direct impact on community bylaws, including those pertaining to whale watching. For example, the Council enforces the standard marine mammal regulations, but they also work with the department of conservation to limit the number of permits allowed for boat based whale watching tours to one. In terms of the broader community, the council has promoted and passed regulation on fishing restrictions, customary rights of the Ngāi Tahu, protection of biodiversity, and the recreational uses of coastal areas. For example, The Guardians have been active in the implementation of Rāhui, a compulsory closure of coastal areas that restrict any and all use of a specified area so that nothing can be taken from the water, not even seaweed.

Despite regulations and restrictions, marine mammal tourism has been the major draw for over 1.5 million tourists in 2002 (Grzelewski, 2002). Whale watching specifically is featured in most travel guidebooks (Lonely Planet; Figure 3) and Kaikoura is acknowledged internationally as the world's best site to view Sperm whales (Perkins & Cloke, 2005, p. 909). Restrictions limit the number of people allowed on the actual tours—Whale Watch is limited to 65,000 per annum (Perkins & Cloke, 2005)—yet whale watching was regularly cited by participants as the most important tourist activity in Kaikoura. One seasonal hostel employee felt that “most of those businesses wouldn't be there without the whales,” referring to the many restaurants, hostels, and shops on Kaikoura's main street. Another longer term resident told me that “Kaikoura is small, real small, if it wasn't for the Canyon and Highway 1, this could have been Cheviot.” The

joke here is that Cheviot is an hour North of Kaikoura on Highway 1 and they are both on the major tourist route that connects Christchurch, a major city, with Picton, the location of the ferry terminus bridging the two islands. Cheviot is much less known to tourists and is considered by most Kaikoura residents as a pit stop on the way to Christchurch. As evident in the quote, Kaikoura's popularity and economic success is based on the constant flow of both humans and whales.

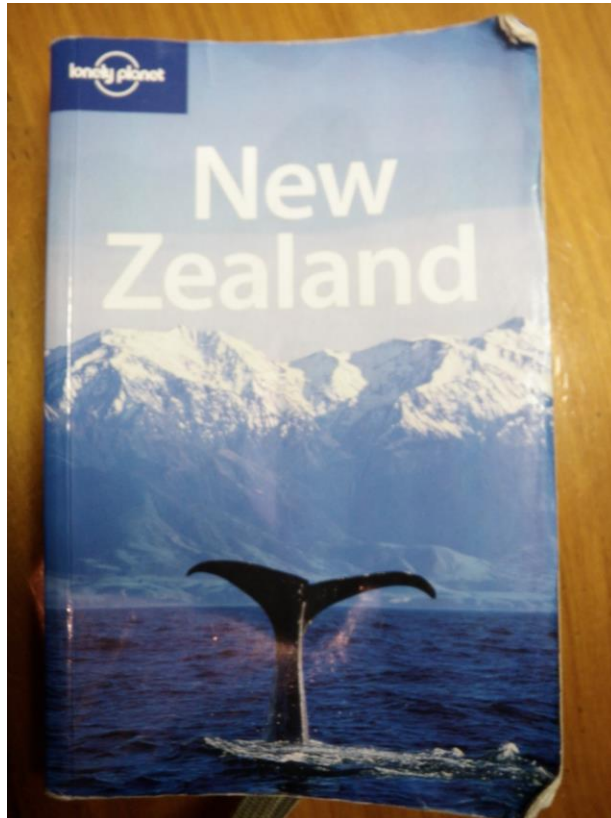


Figure 3. *The Cover of the 2004 edition of the Lonely Planet Guidebook.*

Note. Photo by David Wall in (Smitz et al., 2004).

Whale Business

Although the regulations surrounding whales are strict and not all visitors can physically participate in the tours, many businesses in Kaikoura still benefit economically from their association with whales. It is the abundance of 'whale businesses' that make whale watching seem such an integral part of Kaikoura upon first visit. Some businesses benefit directly; for example, there is the boat based whale watch tour, one

helicopter and one airplane based whale watching tour (again only one operator holds permits for each). There is a café in the Whale Watch tour building called Fluke's and a connected gift shop. There are also hostels that promote themselves and benefit economically based on their proximity to the Whale Watch building. I also learned that one of the major bus tour companies to pass through Kaikoura increases sales by mentioning whale watching. The town is mentioned in the stop schedule with whale watching listed as a 'must see.' For those businesses directly connected to whale watching, the boom in tourism has had considerable economic impact when one considers that the 3,900 resident population of Kaikoura swells with over 1.5 million visitors per year. By 2002, tourism accounted for roughly 30% of the local economy (Horn & Simmons, 2002). Indirectly there are businesses whose name or theme relates to whales and potentially attracts the attention of the whale watching tourists. The Whaler, for example, is a pub and restaurant on the main street, the roof of what used to be a gallery and is now a pizza shop features a large whale's tail, the side of a jewellery store has a whale painted on the side, a bicycle rack on the main street is shaped as a whale (Figure 4), and all of the souvenir shops features whales in some form.



Figure 4. Kaikoura's main street bicycle rack.

Note. Photo by author.

Kaikoura's Identity

The following quote summarizes the importance of the whale watching industry; in many places, whale-watching provides valuable, sometimes crucial income to a community, with the creation of new jobs and businesses. It helps foster an appreciation of the importance on marine conservation, and provides a ready platform for research. Whale watching offers communities a sense of identity and considerable pride. In a number of places, it does all of the above, literally transforming a community. (Hoyt, 2001, p. 3)

I have mentioned the economic benefit and conservation as it relates to whale watching specifically. The community identity, although inclusive of whale watching, has a broader association and deserves more in-depth analysis.

Briefly, Kaikoura is a community of marine creatures. Along with whale watching tours there are also dolphin, seal, and albatross tours. Association with these tours is also evident in the town, for example the Dolphin Encounter Café, Green Dolphin Restaurant, The Dolphin Lodge, the drama club building has dolphins painted along shed, the Lazy Shag Hostel (a shag is a seabird also known as a cormorant), Albatross Hostel, and The White Morph Restaurant (a sea bird). There are many combinations as well; for example the hostel I lived in for nine months, the Dusky Lodge (which used to be called Moby Dick's), is named after a dolphin but has rooms named after dolphins, whales, and birds. There are also businesses that reference marine life in general such as the Craypot Restaurant, The Pāua factory jewellery store, The Pāua Barn Restaurant, Fishtank Lodge, The Lobster Inn, and many motels featuring the word 'sea' or 'ocean' in the title.

One seasonal resident told me that, although marine life is represented everywhere in Kaikoura, it is still the whales that bring people there and it is the whales that capture its identity: "whales are just part of life here." Another participant who had lived in Kaikoura for many years told me that marine mammals are associated with Kaikoura in general but it is the charisma of the whale that captures the town's identity. I came to realize that the history of the whales and their representations in the business realm as well as everyday local life (Figure 5) meant that they were an integral part of the community formation. I argue that these narratives indicate that the community identity is linked particularly to whales. By looking at how the community is centralized around whales, I will entangle human and whale, land and water, and all the diverse voices in this place.



Figure 5. Sperm Whale Weathervane.

Note. Photo by author.

Community will be defined in Chapter 2 as I discuss how to describe Kaikoura as a place, drawing on literature from the geography of place-identity. The rest of the chapter will combine a discussion of Kaikoura community identity with current anthropological literature on the inclusion of nonhuman animal species in ethnographic fieldwork to develop a methodology that can be inclusive of whales and marine life.

In Chapter 3, I focus on the shared space of humans and whales and their close encounters at or near the sea. By looking at the ways the human body is linked to the sea, I aim to disrupt the nature-culture boundary and the non-human animal ‘othering’ which has historically resulted from that separation. I will then broaden the space of encounter from the body to political histories and focus on Maori lives and histories in Chapter 4, looking at the ways identity and indigeneity are questioned as the whale watching industry rises. In Chapter 5, I will shift the gaze to tourism and the complex identities of Kaikoura visitors as they are defined and redefined through the community.

Kaikoura is home to a diverse group of human actors; business people who benefit from marine life, tourists who view or interact with the marine life, local residents of Maori and/or Pakeha ancestry, travellers just passing through, seasonal employees, and many more. The coast is used in different ways by different people. Throughout these chapters I will explore how the entanglements of humans and whales on land and in the sea shape the community and people who live in and pass through Kaikoura.

2. How To Understand Whale Watching

There is a long history of anthropologists who viewed nonhuman animals as a window from which to study humans. Evans-Pritchard's "Interest in Cattle" (1940) and Geertz's "Balinese cockfight" (1973), for example, were among those who presented nonhuman animals as symbols, food, or just part of the landscape (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010; Mullin, 2010). Both anthropologists used nonhuman animals in their research in profound ways, be it to understand social order or ethnography or the anthropologists' position; however, neither gave the relationship between species enough attention, choosing instead to focus on the human and distinctly human behaviours. Current anthropology has recognized the need for a shift away from this paradigm; multispecies ethnographers in particular argue that other beings are "good to live with" rather than just good to think with (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010, p. 552). Nonhuman animals as 'good to live with' is an ontological premise that has inspired vastly different authors to challenge traditional knowledge in their disciplines, often challenging categories like species (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010; Lowe, 2010), actors (Thorne & Whatmore, 2000; Perkins & Cloke, 2005; Kohn, 2007; Tsing, 2010), and bodies (Haraway, 2008; Hayward, 2010).

I will engage with the re-conception of 'actor' and agency in multispecies ethnography and then explore how this challenge frees us to rethink the whale-human interaction both conceptually and ethnographically. Whale watching does more than just challenge theoretic categories and collapse the dualism between species; it is representative of the association of humans and whales that is part of everyday life in Kaikoura and integral to the construction of place and community. Two theoretical anchors, multispecies ethnography and community, will be explored in this chapter in relation to my ethnographic experience. The former theorizes the place of nonhuman actors in cultural phenomena while the latter delves into the meaning making processes of those actors in a shared yet dynamic space. Together these anchors allow me to look at the ways a diverse range of actors (both human and nonhuman) participates in shared practices predicated on the physical landscape of Kaikoura.

Ethical Agency: The Background of Multispecies Ethnography

“Something . . . must be wrong somewhere, if the only way to understand our own creative involvement in the world is by first taking ourselves out of it” (Ingold, 1995, p. 58).

Whale watching is a complicated phenomenon that is so often reduced to an exploitative act of commodified cetacean performance where the whales are viewed as passive objects in the environment apart from the human spectators (Perkins & Cloke, 2005). In this scenario, individual humans have the power and the agency, and the non-human animals are denied a role as actors and participants. There are anthropologists who write against this trend and it is their theories on which I draw for my understanding of whale watching. I will provide an alternative to individualistic and human-centred agencies by defining an ethical agency (Whatmore, 1996) that is relational, corporeal, and environmentally embedded.

First is the importance of ‘becoming,’ most famously argued by Latour (1999) through his re-conceptualization of nonhuman actors as part of networks or collectives that are dynamically influencing one another in the social world (Whatmore, 2002, p. 161).² This is an important concept for two reasons. The first is temporality: Actors are not pure static forms but dynamic and ongoing. The second is the process of de-individuation (Deleuze & Guattari, 1987; Biehl & Locke, 2010). ‘Becoming’ as a de-individualized process means that there is a network of creative agents that make up the world of living things (Hamilton & Placas 2010, p. 257) so non-humans need not be dependent upon human mediation or translation in order to be enmeshed with human lives (Thorne & Whatmore, 2000). ‘Becoming’ forms the backbone of an alternative, ethical agency.

In the literature of nonhuman agency, relationality relies on the concept of hybridity, which compels us to realize that “not only does ‘humanity’ always already dwell among badly analyzed composites [like nature or the non-human] but that ‘we’ ourselves

²A critique of Latour’s agency was that it did not presuppose intentionality and was therefore not equally attributed to human and nonhuman subjects. The idea of ‘becoming’ however, has remained important.

are badly analyzed composites” (Ansell-Pearson, 1997, p. 7). The hybrid concept disrupts the pure distinction between culture and nature and human and nonhuman, blurring boundaries between human, animal, and, as with Haraway’s cyborg,³ machine (Haraway, 1992; Whatmore, 1996). Relational interactions are not those between two pure forms but are between hybrid composites, which are simply beings connected with other beings. But how do these composites form? Must they be capable of linguistic communication in order to form or are they made without self-knowledge? Neither seems adequate in describing human connections and reliance on other living beings (Whatmore, 1996). Another factor must be introduced in understanding ethical agency, the corporeal.

Latour (1993) conceptualized hybrids as networks or collectives, coming together and splitting apart through everyday practices of the body (Whatmore, 1996). With contributions from feminist theory, the body becomes more than a passive container or object but a “living assemblage of biological materials and processes which both register and orient our senses of the world” (Whatmore, 1996, p. 43). The body is inscribed with political and social orderings, and it is this politic of embodiment that negotiates hybridity (Grosz, 1989), placing other living creatures in the everyday practices of corporeal life. In this way, connection to other species is not necessarily intentional or verbally negotiated but part of our political and corporeal lives and deaths.⁴

To summarize, humans and other living creatures are not distinct beings but are connected through the everyday acts of living, breathing, eating, etc. We are continually mixing and changing, dependent upon broad social processes and environmental factors. Agency must therefore be re-understood not as an intentional individual act, but through the ways actors (including non-human beings) are observed, defined, listened to, and otherwise enacted (Mol, 1999). By widening the scope to acting and *enacting* we can move towards a more ethical understanding of what it means to live in the world with other living beings. Humans are environmentally embedded hybrids and thus connected

³ The cyborg theory is here simplified. Haraway destabilizes gender, race, sexuality and class hierarchies in her complex theory and I mention it here only to place the concept of the hybrid in the history of her work.

⁴ For further examples of ethical agency see Whatmore’s (2002) explanation of Mad Cow Disease.

with the lives and deaths of other living beings as well as the broader social world. This social agency is at the heart of multispecies ethnography.

Multispecies Ethnography and Natureculture

With a social agency in mind the question of how to ethnographically study these processes becomes prominent. Multispecies ethnography locates species encounters in the border zones where different species meet and generate “mutual ecologies and co-produced niches” (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010, p. 546; Fuentes, 2010). It is a movement within anthropology that aims to challenge traditional anthropocentric concepts and broaden the scope of ethnographic inquiry to include other species; in other words it offers a methodological framework in which social agency can be written about ethnographically. Stemming from the premise that human beings are linked to other living creatures, the space of study, defining the parameters of where these linkages exist in the world, becomes an important ethnographic task.

Firstly, multispecies ethnographers tackle the nature/culture dualism. I will refer primarily to Haraway’s (2003; 2008) work on the presumed ontological distinction between nature/nonhuman and culture/human in this paper (Hamilton & Placas, 2010). Haraway recognized that this binary is constructed and always changing and that a precise definition is therefore impossible. However, since it is constructed it can also be deconstructed in order to re-imagine the spaces of species encounter. To disrupt the nature/culture binary, Haraway (2003; 2008) places species encounters in what she called ‘naturecultures.’ Potter and Hawkins (2009) wrote,

Enlightenment logic positioned the thinking human subject at the centre of the world, the master not only of reason but of agency too. Culture, the realm of human meaning and creativity, was set out as distinct from nature, the domain of non-human (or at least, non-human authored) matter and life. Ethical-political theory, as well as political institutions, developed along these philosophic lines. However in the multiple milieux of everyday life, humans and non-humans have always been caught up with each other in ways that make a nature/culture binary impossible to sustain—something that many non-western cultures have long acknowledged. (p. 39)

Naturecultures are everywhere, they are the constant disruption of a binary that has separated humans from the rest of the living world, and it is in these spaces of encounter, where humans and non-humans are 'caught up' together, that multispecies ethnographers situate their research.

Secondly for multispecies ethnographers, after *where* is understood comes the question of *how* to write about the different species that are both actors and participants, shaping the environment and social world in which they live (Fuentes, 2010). Haraway (2008) answers this question with her work on companion species, defined as radically different species that, through shared history and purpose, evolved together and ultimately impacted each other to produce a permanent linkage and connection. In a natureculture, non-human animals are not relegated to the realm of evolution and ecological crisis while humans are designated to history. Instead, companion species actors become who they are through grappling with each other over time, where everyday politics are at work.

Much like with the ethical agency developed by Whatmore (2002), humans in naturecultures "are just another knot in the worldwide web of interspecies dependences" (Rossini, 2008, p. 309). The theories of multispecies ethnography aim to break down relationships between human and nonhuman species that are based on dualisms like powerless/powerful and instead demonstrate coexistence with respect and mutuality (Haraway, 2008) in on-going, co-produced spaces (Fuentes, 2010).

Although this research is central to my own understanding of species encounter and the second chapter of this thesis, I found that Haraway's species encounters in naturecultures were too often focused on touch, eye contact, or close bodily interaction, and although she asserts this is not necessary, virtual or representation based companion species are not theorized (Snyder, 2008; Haraway, 2008). Whales are very unlike humans physically so eye contact is very difficult and rare; moreover, there are restrictions against getting too close to a surfacing whale so close contact is impossible. As Kohn (2007) argued, by focusing only on the body anthropologists may assume that that is all we have in common with nonhuman creatures, ignoring the evidence of multispecies entanglement in distinctly human constructs.

Moreover, the concept of natureculture is not without theoretical problems outside of its difficult ethnographic application. Most prominent is the reliance on nature/culture dichotomies in the word 'natureculture'. Although the concept focuses on spaces where imagined distinctions between nature/culture, us/them, and powerful/powerless are merged and blended, where individuals are "simultaneously actors and participants sharing and shaping mutual ecologies" (Fuentes, 2010, p. 600), the word itself seems to call upon the very dichotomy it seeks to avoid for ease of understanding. In other words, why not use a new word entirely and avoid reinforcing the binary? Candea (2010, p. 243) writes of anthropological dichotomies concerning nonhuman animals, that they become more complex as they are debated and although the camps can be drawn in more unexpected ways, initial distinctions and dichotomies often remain. In the case of 'natureculture', it may still rely on words that imply distinction, but so did the participants whose stories contribute to this thesis and its descriptions of entangled and mutually impacted spaces. It is thus very difficult to frame a discussion of entangled spaces without bumping into existing dichotomies and the words which represent them.

What I have attempted, with the case of Kaikoura whales, is to call upon another theoretical foundation that expanded the human-whale encounter from the moment of physical proximity to moments of virtual encounter, narrative, or representations in spaces on land and in the sea. This allowed me to better examine the ways participants understood their entanglement with whales and to make use of their language and framing. For this I included theories from a connected discipline, geography. Specifically, I utilized the geographical theories of place and community to bring Kaikoura's physical location and human involvement and connectedness with the local environment to the fore.

Place

In my introduction, I described Kaikoura in time and space, on a map, with a picture, and with words. I did this to orient the reader, but there is much more to Kaikoura than space devoid of meaning; it is a place. Place is more than just the physical setting; it is also the range of human activity and social life that exist within its boundaries (Stedman, 2003); it is a pause in space, a moment where meaning can be

made (Cresswell, 2004; Tuan, 1977). There are three factors in the definition of place that have guided my inquiry. First, there must be geographical fixity (Gieryn, 2000). Kaikoura is bounded by physical territorial lines, extending from Waiau toa (Clarence River) south to Tutae Putaputa (Conway River), and it is these boundaries that were my field site (Figure 6), although most of my participants were situated near the peninsula (Figure 7). Second, the place must have physical or material form. In Kaikoura the physical form manifests as the Kaikoura Canyon, the mountain range and the rugged coast. Thirdly, place must draw upon cultural definitions that have meanings, values, and social contexts that are historical and symbolic and can socially construct place-identity (Gieryn, 2000; Goodrich & Sampson, 2009, p. 903). Historically, the range of activities in Kaikoura has centralized around whales, from whaling (Kalland 2009) to whale watching (Perkins & Cloke, 2005) and the associations made familiar by literary and media representations (The Official King James Bible Online, 2011, Genesis 1:21 & Jonah 1:17; Melville, 1967; Ihimaera, 2003). Kaikoura is a place because it is a “meaningful location” (Cresswell, 2004, p. 7) according to these three criteria, but as Cresswell (2004) argued it also has a place-identity.

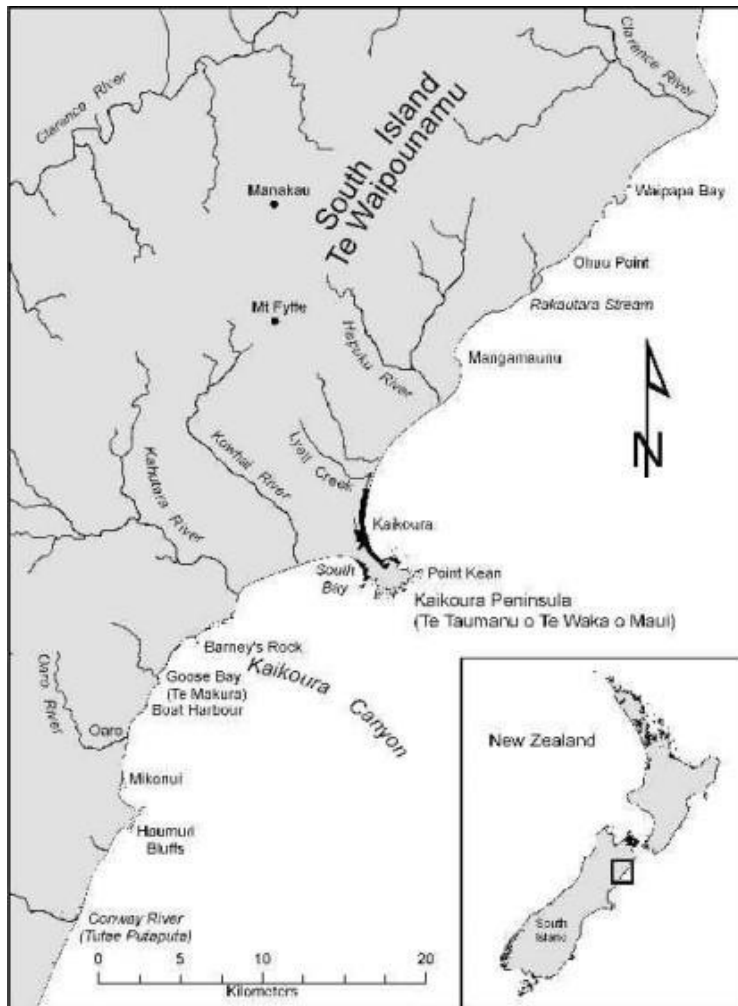


Figure 6. The Kaikoura Boundary: along the coast from the Conway to the Clarence River.

Note. (Tierney et al., 2007, p.4)



Figure 7. ***The main section of town on the coast of the Kaikoura Peninsula.***

Note. Photo printed with permission from anonymous

Place-Identity

“A place-based identity results when powerful meanings of the landscape influence people to the extent that their behaviours and self-identity (their sense of themselves), or their collective group belonging, become equated with a particular locale through process, project and performance” (Carter, Dyer, & Sharma, 2007, p. 757). It will be affected by social and political forces, structures of power, and the dynamic flow of actors (Carter et al., 2007, p. 757; Cresswell, 2004) and should be understood as performed rather than naturalized. For example, Kaikoura’s place-identity is not just the landscape but how it is filtered through power structures in town, through Maori histories, and through the tourist industry.

The danger with place-identity theory, according to Stedman (2003), is that the physical space can be overlooked even with a critical social constructionist understanding of place. The physical environment does not *determine* human behaviour

and identity forming processes, but without it as a basis, these processes would not exist. He also suggested that there are co-constructions that should be taken into consideration; just as physical environments influence meanings, so do meanings influence the perception of physical environments. With this in mind, theories in place must create a balance between the physical and the social, the landscape and the meaning-making processes and performances.

Community

Goodrich & Sampson (2009) argued that the balance between physical and social aspects of place-identity are best conceptualized through the concept of community because, in a community, individuals engage in social integration to make meaning from a collective set of values that is tied to the physical space. It is a relational process:

Community provides a mechanism by which individuals are able to culturally (re)produce identity and belonging. Identity might be individualized in its interpretation, but it draws on a collective set of values, behaviors [sic], and actions that are embedded in shared community practices. We argue that communities carry with them a specificity that binds them to particular locales, while locales provide a set of parameters or boundaries to the possibilities of what can be symbolically drawn upon. In this way, identity is still culturally constructed and reproduced but it is done within the bounds of a particularized landscape, with particularized attributes. (Goodrich & Sampson, 2009, p. 913)

It is this definition that will be most useful in understanding Kaikoura because it allows for the processes of meaning making to be both shared and individual and allows for dynamism and flexibility without being homogenizing. In the case of Kaikoura, it is a town that makes meaning with the marine mammal population and has constructed an identity based around the physical (Kaikoura canyon) and environmental (marine life) landscape that sets it apart from other communities in New Zealand that may also benefit from tourism. However there is a diverse range of voices and identities in this community, indicating that a shared place-identity is still made individual through the social integration of human and nonhuman residents and transients.

Here the two theoretical positions that I have outlined come together. Using multispecies ethnography, I am able to incorporate other living creatures without making them passive objects. Humans and whales can be understood through the ways they act and are enacted, through their on-going connections, shared spaces, histories, and practices. Theories of community place this messy entanglement in time and space relying not only on close encounters at sea but on the diverse range of voices that engage in whale watching in different ways throughout the town. Every person in the community grapples with the natureculture politics differently just as every person makes different meaning from the collective values in the place-identity. These two positions frame the ethnographic experience I had without constriction or imposition and allow me to implicate whales in everyday life.

Earlier in my writing process, I worked with various authors writing about affect and affect theory, generally defined as potential or intensity; “Affect broadly refers to states of being, rather than to their manifestation or interpretation as emotions” (Hemmings 2005, p.551). Also, according to Hemmings (2005), affect is a relational process, “...said to place the individual in a circuit of feeling and response, rather than opposition to others” (p.552). However, the affect itself is often discussed as autonomous, or outside the everyday realm which did not correspond with the many everyday examples of whale enthusiasm throughout the town that I witnessed. Also, I found that theories of affect would lead to seeing whales as triggers for abstract emotional potential and not actors and participants in their own right. A second theoretical position which could have been included in this thesis is emotional geography. Mick Smith (2009) uses road kill to debate the emotional geography of humans and nonhumans, arguing that nonhuman emotion cannot be simplified to either pure mechanical operation or anthropomorphic representation but is rather an emotion to itself regardless of our understanding of it. He writes, “while it may be difficult to put into words what the animal feels, or to enter animal’s ‘world’, emotions are precisely what offer the possibility of bridging this gap” (Smith, 2009, p.29). The aim of this emotional geography is to trace the world of emotions and the way they are caught up in, “the production of new, transformed, geographies, and New World Orders, that affect us all, albeit in very different ways” (Smith, Davidson, Cameron & Bondi, 2009, p.3). While this theory attempts what I also strive for- the inclusion of overlooked relationships and feelings, it foregrounds emotional moments between nonhumans and humans

where I was more drawn to the broad range of whale/human relationships outside any direct contact.

Although both of these perspectives offer insight into nonhuman worlds and the collision of creatures, I feel that the theories I have worked with offer a more accurate representation of how whales and humans are entangled. The emotion of anxiety, waiting for the whale, or the awe and desire of seeing one appear are of course part of the whale watch process. And with better access to the tours themselves (Whale Watch would not allow me special access to the boat tours) I may have been able to witness and study these emotions closer. With community and natureculture, I was able to trace whale/human encounter throughout the town, beyond the whale watch boat tour, into the everyday acts of entanglement.

On the Ground, By the Sea.

So I went to the sea to find out for myself what all that was really about—to wash out of me the anger and the weariness . . . I called it re-search, which to me meant to look again for the source of the knowledge, the knowledge that had been obliterated by too many ideas, too much reading and talking, and not enough listening and silence. (McIntyre ,1982, p. 7)

Call me Ishmael. Some years ago—never mind how long precisely—having little or no money in my purse, and nothing particular to interest me on shore, I thought I would sail about a little and see the watery part of the world. It is a way I have of driving off the spleen and regulating the circulation. Whenever I find myself growing grim about the mouth; whenever it is a damp, drizzly November in my soul; whenever I find myself involuntarily pausing before coffin warehouses, and bringing up the rear of every funeral I meet; and especially whenever my hypos get such an upper hand of me, that it requires a strong moral principle to prevent me from deliberately stepping into the street, and methodically knocking people's hats off—then, I account it high time to get to sea as soon as I can. This is my substitute for pistol and ball. With a philosophical flourish Cato throws himself upon his sword; I quietly take to the ship. There is nothing surprising in this. If they but knew it, almost all men in their degree, some time or other,

cherish very nearly the same feelings towards the ocean with me. (Mellville, 1967, p. 12 *Loomings*)

During my pre-fieldwork studies, I learned the dangers of having too many preset theories, the trap of mining for data rather than keeping flexible and taking cues from participants (Castaneda, 2006). Ethnography is a process of doing, so techniques like Tedlock's (1991) observant participation are crucial because the researcher's critical participation is recognized as a site of knowledge production, which is as important as the act of writing up one's research. Castaneda (2006) offered a theoretical framework that collapses any separation between theory and methodology. He argued that separation of theory reinforces data mining, or viewing participation as a resource to be extracted. With his framework, theory will be informed by methodology, constructed, and flexible. This framework allows the researcher to engage with participants in an ethical way that takes their narratives at face value (Castaneda, 2006).

On the ground, this framework allowed me to follow the lead of participants in Kaikoura and weave together a network of spaces surrounding one central theme. Formal interviews were conducted at first, but I soon found that my best conversations took place casually while walking around the physical landscape, near the sea. I spoke with participants on the beach, in the water, in the local pub, at hostels or during the marine mammal tours, spaces that did not suit formal recorded interviews. The place we were in was my usual starting point for questioning; from there, my participants spoke about their experiences, identities, and stories with whales. I worked at the largest hostel in Kaikoura and due to the size of the town and differentiation between tourists and travellers (which will make up the discussion of Chapter Five), most longer term visitors knew who I was and what my project was about, at least vaguely. I also had consent from the hostel owner and management to engage with guests and conduct interviews on site, extracts of which contain both real names and pseudonyms as indicated by each individual on consent forms. I had originally intended on blogging about the project and connecting with participants this way, but most people I met had limited access to the internet so this method was quickly discarded.

Considering my research was ethnographic and narrative driven, an early concern was how to define and interpret 'experience;' was it retrospective and derived

through narrative and cultural or political structures (Dejarlais, 1977) or was it sensorial and in the moment (Mattingly, 1998)? Throop (2003) recounted the importance of experience as a concept in anthropology and its simultaneous lack of definition and reliance on common sense, leading it to often be a taken-for-granted construct. He engaged with a 'complemental model of experience,' which is "grounded in the *organization of attention* according to the dynamic structuring of what is foregrounded and backgrounded in awareness" (2003, p. 234). In other words, experience is not purely sensorial and immediate, nor is it only external and retrospective; rather, there is "a spectrum of possible articulations of experience" (2003, p. 235) that flows between temporal position and experience structuring, including political, cultural, and environmental factors.

Similarly, I define 'identity' along the same lines. I believe it is most suitable to understand identity as a practice rather than as an external, floating concept (Abu-Lughod, 1991) and as a construct with the capability of plurality and flexibility and interaction with social processes and power structures (Sökefeld, 1999). As Sökefeld (2001) wrote, "There are no pure identities. What was taken as constant, consistent, and singular identities before emerges now as temporary subject positions made of three conditions: difference, plurality, and intersectionality" (p. 535). Moreover, as Leve (2011) argued, identity theory must be critical of the conditions that effect identity claims without discrediting the claims themselves.

As Scott (1992) said, "it is not individuals who *have* experience, but subjects who are constituted *through* experience" (p. 35), meaning the conditions of the experience; and as Leve (2011) added, identity and its connections with social processes are of key importance to the anthropologist. Throop (2003) suggested the need for different types of methodologies to access these conditions without doubting the informant, hence my inclusion of narratives, observation, interview, and photography. During the writing processes, I realized that this was an appropriate ethnographic style for my research since, as my theoretical framework asserts, multispecies encounters are embedded in social processes and the environment, they are on-going and diversely interpreted by individuals in a community. Keeping in mind that,

ethnographies are attempts to portray an everyday reality that easily outdoes and overpowers any effort to capture it, to write it down—even with the use of realist narratives that convincingly create the impression of cultural transparency by rendering social differences measurably real. (Jackson, 2005, p. 23)

I would position myself as a subjective observer and participant, as someone part of, rather than outside of, the story. As such, I encountered gatekeepers and other obstacles in the field, leading to the absence or limitation of some community voices. Whale watch guides, for example, could not participate in formal interviews and many local residents did not agree to be included in this thesis. However, I have still included these positions peripherally and have brought as much of their stories in as possible. Therefore, I present here the stories and experiences of whale-human encounters as I lived them, as on-going and diverse, individual and collective, environmentally embedded, and crucial to the fabric of everyday life in Kaikoura (Perkins & Cloke, 2005, p.904).

3. Living On The Coast: Everyday Encounters

Water may not have intentionality, but its effects can be felt everywhere. This is a paraphrased statement made by Hayward (2010, p. 578) in a call for readers to see more than their reflection in the water and begin to see the water gazing back. In literature, the question of what was in the water led to the creation of one of the most famous fictional whales. In *Moby Dick*, Melville wrote, “Consider the subtleness of the sea; how its most dreaded creatures glide under water, unapparent for the most part, and treacherously hidden beneath the loveliest tints of azure” (Melville, 1967, p. 235). The potential for the creatures of the sea to become part of how we understand ourselves and the world around us is great but perhaps hidden behind the enormous difference: the leviathan, the dreaded monster. Perhaps the difference has been translated into the sensational so often that nonhuman animals are only understood as ‘like us’ or ‘not like us’ (Mullin, 1999, p. 212; Davis, 1997). As Haraway wrote, “We polish an animal mirror to look for ourselves” (Haraway, 1991, p. 21). Do we only understand ourselves in relation to animal ‘others’ or are there ways to redefine the relationship and the encounter? In this chapter, I will explore the historical roots of the nonhuman ‘other’ and aim to reorient the body at the centre of natureculture. I use Kaikoura as an example of the way the body and bodily performances are linked with the sea and the coast, intimately entangling humans and whales in shared spaces.

The Nonhuman ‘Other’: Anthropology’s Colonial Past

The sentiment, that other animals exist for us to understand ourselves, stems from anthropology’s colonial past. Douglas once proposed that every understanding of nature or the nonhuman animal world is “a mask and support for a certain kind of society” (Douglas, as cited in Evernden, 1993, p. 187). Although her words are premised on a separation of nature from culture, the notion that dominant ideas about nature can be linked to particular historical moments is an important one, so I begin by tracing nonhuman and human ‘othering’ to colonial era culture. Thomas (1983) argued that in

early 16th century England the lingering mind-set of Medieval Europe was that nonhuman life forms existed only for the purpose of human exploitation. This view began to shift and by the 18th century, there was a popular understanding of nature as something to be appreciated from afar and conserved, something *natural*. Often land was set aside as reserves, heralded as the “last bastions of nature” (Adams, 2004, p. 208; Curry-Lindahl, 1964). Isolation was encouraged and humans were seen as increasingly out-of-place in nature (Adams, 2004; Gurevitch, 1992; Mullin, 1999). In both of these historical moments, nature was objectified, either directly as a commodity or as a vulnerable other that relies on human separation (Evernden, 1993). Not surprisingly, and as Douglas would predict, this view of nature as an ‘other’ existed in the same timeline as Europe’s rise of colonialism.

As European colonialists encountered other lands for the first time, divisions were made between civilization and savagery that closely resembled the separation of humans from nature. The people of the ‘discovered’ lands were often associated with animality, as “possessed and wrongfully usurped by wild beasts . . . or by brutish savages, which by reason of their godless ignorance, and blasphemous idolatry, are worse than those of beasts” (Thomas, 1983, p. 42). Even as Darwin’s theories of evolution became known, the separation between humans and other animals was maintained and those humans considered ‘primitive’ were considered closer to animals than more ‘civilized’ humans (Mullin, 1999).

Challenges to Colonial Categorization

Haraway (1989) argued that definitions of nature, like definitions of human, are not neutral but are constructed in political and historical contexts. In the colonial era, both humans and nature were being similarly defined as static categories with strong oppositional ‘others’; however, critics soon challenged the problematic classifications of humans. In poststructural anthropology, for example, self as a product of power became a dominant argument that lead to self-reflexivity and the critique rather than reinforcement of hierarchy and unequal power relations (Sökefeld, 1999; Scott, 1991). The self was argued to be fluid and interconnected to broad social, political, and historical forces and not defined by any oppositional human ‘other’ (Sökefeld, 1999; Abu-

Lughod, 1991). When it came to nonhuman animals and nature, however, the colonial past lingered and the 'other' nature remained defined by its opposition to the human.

To better understand groups of people, anthropologists continued to think about animals by classifying them, viewing them as commodities, symbols, or stand-in humans (Mullin, 1999); the oppositional separation of culture from nature remained unquestioned. By the 19th century, nature was often imagined as something wild and untouched, something authentic and ideal (Cronon, 2007). As Cronon explained, this idea of nature is fictional but that does not mean it is not exercised and invoked strategically, often disguising the role of human impact, labour, and colonial history. Conservation movements became even more popular and humans were continually removed from nature in order to invoke morality and obligation without having to dismantle the human-nature distinction. As an example of this shift, I turn to whales. In the colonial era, whales were resources to be exploited, and in the post colonial era they were classified as 'wild' and 'untamed,' a spectacular representation of nature (Davis, 1977). In both eras, difference and 'otherness' were still at the forefront of nature-culture discussion.

In anthropology, this problematic classification was addressed as dualisms came under considerable attack. Much like how distinctions between groups of people were argued to be based on false dichotomies (Ferguson, 1990; Wolf, 1982), the nature-culture boundary was questioned for its assumed stasis and generalizations (Haraway, 1989). Writers like Haraway (1989) began theorizing about natureculture, the tenuous spaces between dualisms, and the human separation from nature was dismantled for its archaic colonial principles (Latour, 2004). Increasingly, ethnographic study of the flexibility of nature-culture boundaries began to blur the line between species and move the study into the body (Mullin, 1999; Lundin, 1999, p. 73). Lundin (1999) provided an example with her study of xenotransplantation where nonhuman animal organs, cells, and tissues are transplanted into human bodies. In an effort to combat colonial era classifications and human exceptionalism, bodies in the study became sites of entanglements, challenging species distinction and demonstrating the sensorial and relational aspects of natureculture (Jackson, 1983; Shilling, 1993).

In Kaikoura, stories and experiences of the body and bodily performances can demonstrate the entanglements of natureculture, the moments where whales and humans share spaces like the sea and the coast and where distinctions between 'like us' and 'not like us' becomes less important. I begin with more detailed descriptions of these shared spaces that become stages for natureculture encounters.

Marine Mammals in Kaikoura

Both whales and the people who live in and pass through Kaikoura share the coast with a variety of marine mammals. Dusky or Hector's dolphins can be spotted offshore along the coast year round, although they move closer to shore in late summer and early autumn. Similarly, seals live on the coast year round and tend to congregate at the seal colony at the tip of the Peninsula (Figure 1). Orca and Pilot whales⁵ can also be seen offshore along the coast while South Bay and the South Bay Wharf act as the most common areas of human-whale encounters. You need sand, sun, and sea for a global beach, a beach as an attraction (Löfgren, 1999, p. 40), but South Bay beach is covered in pebbles, rocks, and sandflies, not golden sand. Perhaps this is why most people come to the beach to surfcast fish or watch for marine life rather than swim or lie on the beach. Whatever the reason, it is here that all three of the marine mammal tour companies, Whale Watch, Seal Swim, and Dolphin Encounter, have boats that leave from the South Bay Wharf in search for their target animals. As depicted in the Kaikoura Town Map (Figure 8), each mammal is represented by a distinct tour company, which has a store front on the main coastal street, easily found by anyone walking along the town's main street.

⁵ Both of these species are classified as oceanic dolphin in the Delphinidae family. I have included them in my discussion of whales for two reasons. First, my participants most often assumed they were whales, due to their common name and second it is part of my effort to combat the imperial tendency of formal species classification.

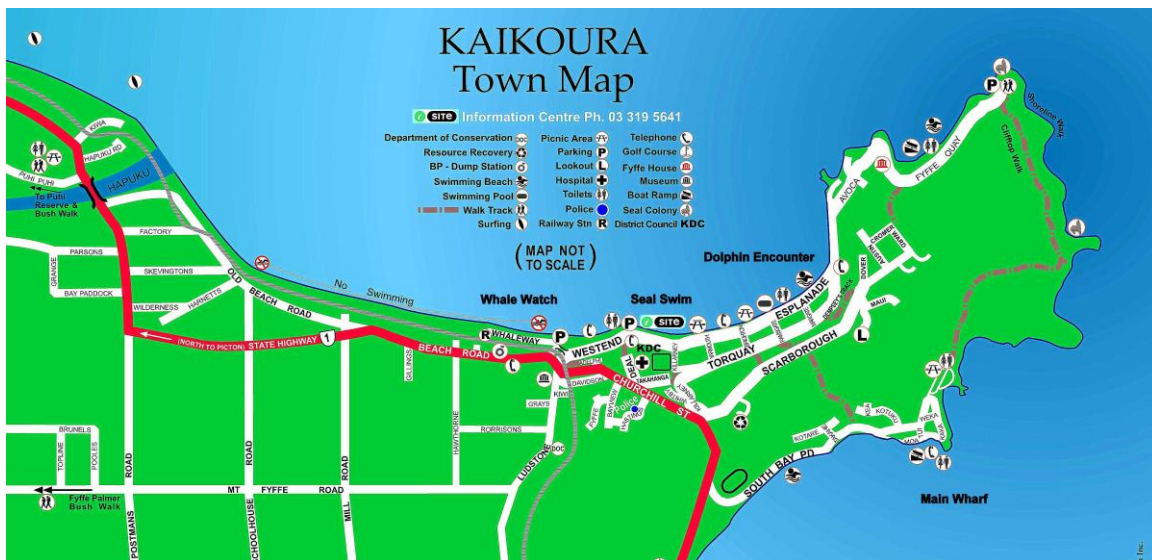


Figure 8. Kaikoura Town Map with Marine Mammal Tour Companies

Note. (Virtual Kaikoura, 2012)

These businesses have proclaimed success rates to the people of Kaikoura; Whale Watch information literature claims that “We have an impressive 95% success rate in sighting whales which means we guarantee an 80% refund if your tour does not see a whale.” Dolphin Encounter claims something similar. At Seal Swim, they told us they change their tour schedule depending on the season to ensure seals can be seen, and tourist information about the seal colony on the peninsula advises, “return back up via the same cliff track, as tides or seals along the shoreline may prevent you from returning to the carpark” (Department of Conservation, 2010). Visitors are also warned to avoid close contact with the many seals on shore. The promise of consistent appearances even led one guest of the hostel I lived in to ask the manager, “if I go to the seal colony today, how many seals will I see?” The reputations of these businesses rely on successful sightings (Perkins & Cloke, 2005) so their track record combined with convenient main street accessibility makes them a first choice if sightings of a particular creature are desired. These guarantees point to the use of the coast in Kaikoura. Humans and marine mammals both use the sea around the coast regularly so encounters, both anticipated and accidental, are common.

Body Performance

Andrew and I had gone out fishing one afternoon in early autumn hoping to use the leftover mussels from the night before as bait. Andrew had arrived to Kaikoura with his brother in October looking for work but likely to move on soon. They both ended up staying in Kaikoura and working at the hostel for nearly nine months. In that time both he and his brother found work in town and were living for free at the hostel as cleaners like I was. Originally from Cork, Ireland, Andrew was an avid fisher and had begun collecting fishing gear from travellers as they were packing for their trip home, leaving possessions behind or selling them at very low costs. The leftover mussels, which to my eyes were compost at best, were bait to him. To his disappointment they did not stay hooked for long, so we spent a couple of hours feeding the fish off the new pier. It was a warm day with few tourists around so we decided to go to the old pier along the Peninsula, where the Rāhui (restricted coastal use zone) was in effect, to sit by the water in the sun and gaze out to the horizon looking for signs of whales. We had been sitting for 10 minutes or so when part of the coast beside us began shifting and rolling. Wrapped in seaweed and half buried in rocks was a rather large male Fur seal, disguised on the beach and just waking up. He very clumsily slipped into the water, half watching us watch him, and half negotiating the bumpy terrain until he eased into the water and swam around the corner. I got up and negotiated the same terrain to see if I could see him around the corner. Andrew and I laughed at the contradiction of his awkward walk and his graceful swim and then decided to go back to the hostel. Watching me, Andrew laughed as I tried to get back to the pier, slipping over seaweed and stumbling over loose rocks. I was quickly reprimanded for judging the seal when I too was very clumsy on shore. In moments like these, my body mirrored the seal and we both shared the coastal space in much the same way. I observed and enacted his performance in an unexpected encounter and, partially due to Andrew's humour and mockery, our species difference became less important than our similarities.

Performance is “represented, staged and regulated and as well as resulting from unconsidered habits and practices reflecting an immanent potential for new possibilities” (Perkins & Cloke, 2005, p. 906); it can be unpredicted and unscheduled, like my encounter with the seal on the beach. I share this story for two reasons. First, it alludes to the way space is shared along the Kaikoura coast; a creature that compels humans to

pay for boat tours or wait hopefully at the colony can also stumble into humans and perform in unexpected ways. Second, this encounter situates natureculture encounters in the body and in the body performances of human and non-human creatures alike.

My Body and the Whale

“On the beach you learn about bodies, your own and others” (Löfgren, 1999, p. 44).

Perkins and Cloke (2005) argued that although whales are commoditized in the whale watching industry, they are not completely controlled and their performances have as much or more power over the whale watchers than vice versa. The everyday lives of whales have direct impact on whale businesses, whale watching tour companies, and occasionally spontaneous whale watchers. In the following story, the bodies of humans and whales were involved in performances that place the body in natureculture on the Kaikoura coast. I recount the conversation that took place between me and my participants here, and although it is not verbatim, it is a careful account sourced from my field notes.

On April 7th 2011, seven of the cleaners at the Dusky Lodge hostel set out to go surfcast fishing at South Bay (Figure 1). To become a Dusky Lodge cleaner, an individual had to contact the management or show up to the hostel when more help was needed and then simply join the cleaning routine: start work at 9am, clean either the floors, bathrooms, bedrooms, or kitchens, and fold the laundry. As a team, we usually completed this process by noon and had the rest of the day to ourselves. In return we stayed in the hostel for free, all of us (sometimes up to 12) sleeping in a 12 bed dorm on the lowest level. Turnover was quite high, but since I arrived in late September there were a few who stayed long term: myself; the managers; the two Irish brothers, Andrew and Damian; the Malaysian travellers, Emily, Bee, and Daniel; and a group of German travellers in their early twenties who met in Kaikoura and were now travelling together. On this day, in early April, I, Andrew, Damian, and Kerstin, one of the German women, got in the car to meet Markus, Michael, and Pia. Our fishing gear was scattered around the hostel so we were later leaving than the other car and on the way I decided to get something to eat.

At this point I was struggling to maintain the vegan diet I had kept for over two years. Travelling makes eating a different experience, at times there is far less luxury, and grocery shopping is done according to bargains and special offers. Also, working in a hostel means there is a lot of food left over by people either accidentally or because they are leaving for flights and do not need it anymore. In any case, sticking to vegetarianism was simple but I began eating what was cheap and available, regardless of my vegan restrictions. On this day, I decided to pull over at the convenience store on the way to the beach for a milkshake. They were priced lower that day and I had not had one of my own in months.

After about a 10 minute detour we were on our way, milkshake in hand. I was telling Kerstin how I find fishing boring and we had begun a debate its morality and animal cruelty when her phone buzzed with a message from one of the other cleaners who had arrived at the beach before us. "There's a whale" she exclaimed, and Andrew took the next turn towards South Bay. As soon as the water was visible from the car, we rolled down the windows and gazed out to the ocean. People had gathered on the beach and we could see our friends in the distance, cameras in hand pointing out towards the open water.

We ran towards the other cleaners and they began recounting the whale performance, how it was a humpback (they thought) and it had breached a few times, jumping fully out of the water and slapping down again. It had moved further out to sea since they first saw it but they were hoping for more activity. My heart sunk, I felt like I had missed an opportunity to see a whale in a new way, in a much desired way. To make myself feel better I asked Damian about whale behaviour; having studied whales, he had some answers. He explained that breaching could be a form of communication or it could be because they were itchy. As he talked the whale, which we could now see was a humpback, began slapping its tail on the water, raising it fully upright and bringing it down with a loud thump. The cameras reappeared (Figure 9), and we sat in silence in order to hear the tail meet the water.



Figure 9. Humpback whale tail slapping.

Note. Photo by author.

As we watched, boats began to approach the whale. First kayaks rented from the South Bay Wharf, and then Dolphin, Whale, and Seal encounter boats. All were careful to adhere to distance regulations, but from the beach, we all noted how it felt a bit crowded. The whale began to move further away from us, further out to sea, and the boats followed. We sat on the beach and watched the boats for a couple hours. Andrew and Markus began fishing while the rest of us talked about what we saw. I lamented my milkshake and stared at the open sea, hoping to see a breach. The whale disappeared around the peninsula, followed by the whale watch boats; the kayaks and other boats had dispersed. We decided to head back to the hostel; I convinced Andrew to drive to the lookout, the highest point on the peninsula, to try and spot the whale again. We were unsuccessful and joined the others back at the hostel.

The unpredictability of whale performance is one indication that they cannot be and are not completely commoditized and made passive by the whale watch tourism industry (Perkins & Cloke, 2005). Moreover, moments like these demonstrate how everyday encounters can occur between species that are very different and connections can be made at very intimate levels. In my case, the regret I felt for stopping on the way

to the beach took months to fade and I associated that regret with my physical body, my eating habits, and my ethical code towards animals in the food industry. It would be easy to dismiss these associations as my human projections onto the whale, but the whale did play a part. Its unscheduled presence and its everyday practices⁶ impacted me and affected my own body performances. The whales' performance also affected our immediate bodily performances, as all seven of us sat on the beach, gazing out to where the splashing last occurred (Figure 10); we were transformed from fishers to watchers in one moment. Although not knowing the meaning of the whale's body performance, it seemed clear that the presence of boats affected its movement and bodily practice. Body performances at the sea changed with encounter, were not kept distinct, and represented the collision of species in natureculture. I now move from the watching of marine life to its consumption. In doing so, I present the body as a space where categories of 'other' nonhuman species are (re)constructed.

⁶ performance as "represented, staged and regulated and as well as resulting from unconsidered habits and practices reflecting an immanent potential for new possibilities" (Perkins & Cloke, 2005, p. 906).



Figure 10. *The hostel cleaners as unscheduled whale watchers.*

Note. Printed with permission from Kerstin Held.

Fishing and Ocean Ethics

South bay is a popular place for surfcast fishing because it tends to be more sheltered, the view is very impressive and it is outside the restricted *Rāhui*. Fishing locations are also dictated by the desired catch; for example, whitebait fishermen position themselves at river mouths. Colin had lived in Kaikoura on and off for over two years and was working at the hostel when I first arrived. He used to return to the hostel after an afternoon of fishing and share his catch with the entire staff, demonstrating how to clean and prepare different species such as pāua or whitebait. This used to be difficult for me to participate in as I had an aversion to fishing. Growing up in Ontario, Canada, I only went fishing in small lakes for sport, and it seemed to me to be a pastime where other animals were harmed for amusement. In an attempt to acknowledge my position on this matter in my research, I relayed my concern to Colin and he encouraged me to talk with locals and longer term residents about how they understand fishing; I even began volunteering at a small fish and chip shop in town.

Phil, an avid free diver and surfer who had lived in Kaikoura for many years working in various restaurants in town, caught all of the seafood for his personal consumption by hand and would not pay for it in stores. This seemed to be a common sentiment among many longer term residents as they pieced together the equipment needed to safely retrieve fin and shell fish. Monika, another longer term resident who had been living in Kaikoura for two years and was a manager at the Dusky Lodge, also told me, “it is stupid to pay for fish and not just use the sea.” She also explained that people she knew who shared this view were knowledgeable about the fishing restrictions and regulations that I saw as I participated in fishing trips; longer term residents carried with them or knew information on the minimum measurements for different species, catch limits, and fishing seasons.

I had many discussions with regular customers at the fish shop about how fishing practices correlated to more general appreciation or use of the sea. Locals and long term residents who caught their own fish were often attributed characteristics of guardians or subsistence fishers; this process took very different forms depending on the speaker and the position in town and will be discussed in Chapter 5. In the following conversation, Monika and I discussed life in Kaikoura on a drive to Christchurch. Originally from the Czech Republic, Monika came to New Zealand for a change in lifestyle and was articulate on matters of cultural difference. However, after many hours a week behind the front desk of the Dusky Lodge she often shied away from topics of tourism and town events in personal conversation, having repeated them hundreds of times to curious tourists. She remained a valuable informant and friend during this research and consistently opened my eyes to diverse opinions that exist in hidden pockets of the town. Without her, I would not have had such deep access into life in the Dusky Lodge.

- Monika So what’s it going to be?
- Sarah I think in the end it’s going to be more a portrait of what it’s like to live here where there’s whale watching, honestly.
- Monika Well, whale watching is how it all started.
- Sarah Yea, well—
- Monika If there wouldn’t have been whale watching, people wouldn’t have opened hostels. Tourist buses wouldn’t be coming here like there

would have just been crayfish. Like if there's wouldn't have been whale watching people would have just got a crayfish on the way in and . . . it could have been just like cheviot.

Sarah I think that's the case for a lot of tourists here, and seasonal, and locals, they come here for this one thing and then it can become about all the other things to do here or just about the charm of the town, it's so relaxed. People get stuck here. And it's really funny because they are, it's just like me but it does seem to happen to everybody I talk to—unless they're like the hard core tourists who are on the buses or like they only have two weeks in New Zealand so they're super scheduled.

Monika Most people, I think, are really attracted by the atmosphere of this town, even after they whale watch. I don't know though, when you are here long term Kaikoura is really small [laughs] unless you have your house and you settle down, really family oriented and like a farmer or a fisherman. It can be boring, even locals will tell you. It's like fish and go home and eat, you know.

Monika differentiated between people who lived in Kaikoura, including seasonal and longer term residents, from people who visited short term and used the sea to create characteristics of each group. Kaikoura is known for its seafood, especially crayfish as Kaikoura translates to meal of crayfish, and visitors would take these from the sea on their way through, even if there were no whale watching. Those who can settle in Kaikoura, despite its size, are those who use the sea everyday as part of their family lives. In this passage, subsistence fishing is assumed to be the lifestyle of a resident. In later conversations, we discussed residents who seemed to be taking too much from the sea, despite regulations. This type of infraction was taken very seriously as it was “not what we do here in Kaikoura.” Monika told me,

People in Kaikoura take only what they need. I see three pāua but I only take one because I just want one for dinner. It is there for us to use, but only as we need. If you take too much there won't be anything left (personal communication, December 21, 2011).

Often the tendency to take too much was associated with tourists or people who did not care about Kaikoura. A regular at the fish and chips shop once told me, “they go out and they take and take but they don’t even know what they’ve got, if it’s a rig [type of small shark] or what, you should know.” He referred to himself as a guardian, one who uses the sea but simultaneously protects it and watches over marine life.

How a person used the sea seemed to define how they lived in Kaikoura and their consumption of sea life linked with other relationships with the sea. In this way, the way they included marine life into their bodies, through consumption, signalled not just the importance of non-human creatures in human life but also the industry, politics, and social factors that impact that relationship. Whatmore (2002) exemplified these processes in her study of the 1987 Mad Cow Disease debate. Food, in her discussion, is the perfect example of natureculture in everyday life—the way humans plant, cultivate, or catch and consume other living things, incorporating other life forms into our bodies on an on-going basis. Occasionally this intimate pattern of life and death is disrupted by global industry, by politics, and by broad social forces as with Mad Cow Disease. Caused by the feeding regimes of industrial cattle farms, this disease manifested and spread as a result of protein supplements derived from cow, and other animal, carcasses being fed back to cattle in order to speed growth. It resulted in a degenerative brain disease called Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy. Eventually, this disease spread to humans causing more fatalities across species.

So began a widespread debate over the feeding practices of industrial cows. Why, for instance, were herbivores being fed animal derived protein, and what were the implications of cannibalism on the human diet? Most importantly, if the disease could spread to humans, what was the connection between humans and cows? Cattle farms were investigated and the political and economic rationale of farmers were brought to the fore for global debate. This led to a change in many individuals’ food choices as well as global regulation for cattle farms. Connections were made between human and cow, food and farm, and local and global, all based on a corporeal hybrid, on a protein that formed a disease in the bodies of living creatures.

Fishing in Kaikoura operates in much the same way. Consumption of marine products is not isolated from the rest of the coastal environment, as regulations indicate,

nor is it distinct from politics and broad social forces in the community, like Kaikoura's cultural connection to crayfish and other seafood and concepts like guardianship. To be discussed in more depth in the following two chapters, seafood consumption is connected to individual identity and the community. I move now from the coast into the water, deeper into the shared spaces between whales and humans.

In the Water

Getting in the water was, in many ways, the most important thing I did in Kaikoura. My brief and amateurish attempts at free-diving changed the way I understood seafood consumption and opened my eyes to a new way of understanding human relationships with nearby seas. It allowed me to join fishers who champion sustainability and ocean ethics, and it challenged my land-body to move through the water. Similarly, the Seal and Dolphin tours with which I participated, were practical as a way of bringing me closer to the marine life that is so often talked about in the tourist literature and among the residents and visitors of Kaikoura. They also served as a re-introduction to the deep sea. I slipped into the water clumsily with my unfamiliar second skin, the wetsuit. I bobbed in the deep sea, trying to find ways to right myself, see through my borrowed mask, and navigate a close encounter between myself, 10–15 other swimmers, and unpredictable marine creatures. These experiences were incredibly valuable to me as a researcher and as a person, but it was surfing that taught me my greatest lesson.

I had met and lived with many surfers, an identity label that I did not use until it was self-stated. In fact, I think that this is the best way to understand the surfing community in Kaikoura. I rarely heard restrictions or barriers being set regarding the label because the word 'surf' was used more as a verb than as a noun; it was something to be done. To label someone a surfer was usually to point out that that individual spent a lot of time surfing and enjoyed it, rather than to allude to some stereotype such as the sun-touched, ultra laid-backed beach character so often portrayed in film and television. The surfers that I lived with and came to know well are called as such because their day's activities were greatly influenced by the swell of the sea. Weather forecasts were read regularly, friends and fellow surfers were consulted, and, most decisively, the many

surf spots along the Kaikoura coast were checked and re-checked. My surfer friends were varied in personality, appearance, ethnicity, and identity.

Talking with Phil weeks after I first met him, I admitted to letting my imagined surfer stereotype fill in the gaps of my knowledge of him. I connected his shoulder length blonde hair, tanned skin, and the kind of body that comes with outdoor activity with what little I knew of him, which was that he drove to my hostel to pick up Colin, a fellow cleaner, after the day's chores and brought him to the beach to "check the sea." I thought I had come face to face with the characters I imagined, but with just a little time I realized that surfing was important to him in ways that exceeded a generic label and a caricature. Phil has a clear philosophy of his life; he often said that living, for most people, is to work. Their work dictates their goals and the money they make is as good as spent because their positions carry with them a sense of entitlement. Work connects to status and status has standards. Phil, and many other friends who often participated in discussions of this subject, vaguely blamed the "system" or our capitalist culture for this unfortunate situation. The individuals who "live to work" were not conceived as bad or unintelligent, but trapped and controlled by media projections of happiness and success. Conversely, Phil subscribed to a "work to live" philosophy. Life, in his view, is less structured and planned. Work loses importance and becomes a means to support a flexible life plan with a wide variety of interests and goals. Phil dove or fished for the seafood he ate. On many occasions I watched him in the water, in a wetsuit, with a spear and a net working very hard to catch dinner.

I did not understand how surfing connected with a worldview that viewed the sea as something to be used but guarded; once I got in the water with a surfboard, I did. The first time I tried surfing was at a place called Mangamaunu, just outside of town. I went with a few friends, three of whom were avid surfers. I could barely get past the break at the beach; I was too intimidated by the power of the waves and the sensation of drift as the current pulled the water back out to sea. I was focused on breathing, swimming, and balancing on the board on my stomach until my feet could no longer touch the sand. I thought about sharks, whales, seals, and drowning until the first wave appeared on the horizon and I ducked below it to avoid getting forced into a premature surf. My friends and fellow surfers explained the basics, pushed me into a fast paddle, and watched as I rode a wave without standing. I got pushed under a few times, I

stumbled, I got scrapes from the rocks on the beach, but I enjoyed it and went back for more. Getting in the water reminded me that the sea is dynamic and powerful. It is not a solid thing in which marine creatures live; it is a participant in their life, and while I was surfing, in my life as well. In the water, I was immersed in a shared space and my body was not distinctly human but blurred into a temporary sea creature at the whim of waves and current. It reminded me that for all living things in Kaikoura, the sea impacted the conditions of life and of death and must be treated with respect (Serres, 1995).

Moments of performance in and near water remind me of deep ecology perspectives, wherein non-human life has the same right to exist as human life and the environment is recognized for more than just utility (Milton, 2002). Similarly, as with eco-phenomenology, a convergence of phenomenology and contemporary environmental concern, nature has implicit value and it is through one's own interactions and performances that this value can be appreciated and understood (Brown & Toadvine, 2003). All of the actors in this chapter live in relation to the coast and share spaces with other marine creatures. This is what I found to be the most attractive and alluring part of Kaikoura; you are always in the overlap between the land and the sea, both literally and figuratively. To address the question I posed at the beginning of this chapter, do we only understand ourselves in relation to animal 'others'? I would argue that the process of 'othering' is based on not only false dichotomies but on overly static and solid categories of opposition. Just like with writers who dismantled self vs. other, we can look to bodily performances by whales and whale watchers to witness entanglements that exist between the dualism.

If natureculture can be found in the body and the shared spaces of human and nonhuman species, it can also be broadened into the larger social, historical, and political world as bodies move through time and space. It is to the larger scope of Maori history, indigeneity, and Kaikoura politics that I now turn.

4. The Politics of Whales

The politics of whales are the politics of humans as both species entangle and affect one another. These politics take many shapes and forms but it is those that relate to indigenous histories and their connections to whales and the whale watch industry that dominates many political discussions in Kaikoura. In this chapter, I will define the broad associations of Maori peoples and whales before narrowing the relationship to whale watching in Kaikoura particularly. I hope to represent the diversity of opinions and the stories as well as the contradictions and inconsistencies that were conveyed to me during my fieldwork, aiming not to present one truth on this subject, but a diversity of truths and a diversity of voices.

Defining Maori Research

Following Smith (2012), it is not my intention to disguise the history of colonialism in anthropology and in New Zealand, but neither are these issues the sole focus of my thesis. Smith reversed the anthropological lens back onto the researcher to ask questions like the following: In whose interest is the research? Who owns this knowledge? Who is writing and who benefits from the finished product? I felt these questions were fitting in my research, as I was already concerned with the ethics of studying tourist sites that create indigenous and non-indigenous contact zones for marine species and humans alike; for example, I did not want to write just from a tourists' perspective, which may lack local struggles and histories. Smith suggested letting narratives speak for themselves to learn from them rather than using them to prove an overarching theoretical point (Smith, 2012, p. 18). She also argued that "the individual, as the basic social unit from which other social organizations and social relations form, is another system of ideas which needs to be understood as part of the West's cultural archive" (Smith, 2012, p. 51). The belief in the 'individual,' she wrote, led to the misunderstanding of indigenous beliefs and practices, contributing to their low ranking under the rules of social Darwinism; they were expected to die out and peoples of the

West expected to maintain their high ranking and superiority (Smith, 2012). In current scholarship, she argues that we must readdress alternatives to the ‘individual.’ Thus, it is connectedness and the relationships, which exist and change, that provide deeper insight into the Maori culture and Kaikoura whale watching.

My writing on the Maori and whale watching in Kaikoura reflects Smith’s lessons and concerns. In this chapter, I begin from a position wherein Maori histories and stories represent a “diversity of truth” (Smith, 2012, p. 146), which positions individuals in relationships to other people and the environment, revealing the importance of connectedness over the ‘individual’ (Smith, 2012, p. 149). Problematically, as Amoamo and Thompson (2010) argued, the idea of connection has been corrupted and Maori people have been stereotyped and homogenized in New Zealand as a result of marketing aimed at offshore tourists. Non-indigenous controlled tourism companies have drawn on colonial representations of ‘other’ indigenous people, emphasizing their ‘exotic’ traits such as their relationship with nonhuman species. However, this is not always the case, and indigenous people are not passive in their relationship with tourism. Amoamo and Thompson (2010) argued that tourist sites are actually “emergent locations of culture” (p. 36), wherein identities are forming and challenging existing categories of being and where postcolonial counter-narratives develop to reclaim cultural power in the wider political realm. I address this concern in this chapter after my discussion of cultural heritage, settlement, and stories of whales, turning to power struggles and politics of Maori groups in Kaikoura. Lastly, I recount narratives of Maori identity, believing it important to include the colonial and post-colonial Maori perspective to further challenge notions of ‘the individual’ without reproducing stereotypes of Maori people as passive or closer to whales and nature.

Connectedness and Maori Cultural Definitions

Inherent in many Maori stories is *Kaitiakitanga* or guardianship,

an inherent obligation we have to our *tupuna* [ancestor] and to our *mokopunga* [grandchildren]; an obligation to safeguard and care for the environment for future generations. It is a link between the past and the future, the old and the new, between the *taonga* of the natural environment and the *tangata whenua* [people

of the land] . . . *Kaitiakitanga* is not an obligation which we choose to adopt or to ignore; it is an inherited commitment that links *mana atua* [territorial rights], *mana tangata* [human rights] and *mana whenua* [traditional land rights], the spiritual realm with the human world and both of those with the earth and all that is on it. (Selby, Moore, & Mullholland, 2010, p. 1)

Guardianship, *Kaitiakitanga*, has been linked to indigeniety which can has been given five characteristics, summarized below by Durie (as cited in Selby et al., 2010):

the first reflects the dimension of time and a relationship with the environment that has endured over centuries; the second, also derived from the environmental relationship, is about human identity, creativity, and social order. The third characteristic is a system of knowledge—indigenous knowledge—that integrate indigenous world views, values, and experience, and generates a framework for understanding the human condition. Application of that perspective to natural resources and human endeavour provides a basis for the fourth characteristic, environmental sustainability for the benefit of future generations. Finally, indigeniety is also characterised by a language so strongly influenced by the environment that it is not spoken as a first language in other parts of the world. (p. 241-242)

With these characteristics, Maori is a culture which has “oral traditions, carvings of *pounamu* [greenstone], wood and bone, woven articles such as *kete* [chants], cultural performances such as *kapa haka* [rank dance], and the use of *Takahanga Marae* [sacred place] as a Māori cultural attraction” (Poharama et al., 1998, p. 3) and “seeks balance in sustaining our natural resources as the basis for wellbeing – rather than as limitless commodities to use at our will” (Selby et al., 2010, p. 3). Although aspects of these definitions may fit the Kaikoura context, I believe them to be romanticized and essentializing or at the very least overly simplistic and not representative of Smith’s lessons of critical research. In my nine months in Kaikoura, I was introduced to a diverse range of stories, voices, and identities that exemplified connectedness but also conflict and tension; it is these politics that follow.

Maori Settlement

I begin with a brief introduction to Maori settlement as it is generally recounted in history books and the written record of New Zealand occupation. This story is one of many, I begin with it not because it is more 'true' but because it is more widely distributed and accepted.

The first settlers to New Zealand were Polynesian descendants; although their precise landfall place and time is debated, this ancestry is widely accepted (King, 2003). One common tale of early settlement was widely disseminated in public schools between 1910 and 1970, as seen below in a slightly abbreviated version:

Kupe was from Tahiti, his canoe was named Matahorua and it carried Kupe, his crew, his wife and his daughters. Ngahue, another chief, accompanied Kupe in another canoe named Tawirirangi. They set out on a long voyage with only the unbroken horizon in front of them, until one day nearing starvation, Kupe's wife called out, "*He ao, He ao!*" (A cloud! A cloud!), referring to a cloud on the horizon usually indicative of land. They paddled towards it, and as they neared the cloud grew taller and wider causing the crew to call out "*Aotea!*" (The White Cloud!) This name is still used by both Maori and Pakeha alike. (King, 2003, p. 39)

This retelling was very popular, due to the naming of Polynesian ancestors and to the opposition and resistance to the counter narrative stating that Dutch explorer Abel Tasman and Englishman James Cook 'discovered' New Zealand (King, 2003). However, this myth has been critiqued. For example, it is not based in any one general Maori tradition; the stories of Kupe can be grouped into east and west coast versions. Similarly, Aotearoa was not a name used by Maori in pre-Pakeha times (King, 2003).

What is generalizable about Maori settlement in New Zealand is that it advanced in three definable stages. First, the colonial era, where Polynesians from islands other than New Zealand landed and adapted to the environment, exhausting most big game and eventually turning to fish and molluscs for food. Second, there was a transitional period where art forms and lifestyles shifted from Polynesian to what is now more associated with Maori culture. For example, wood carving became more prevalent and a sedentary lifestyle was chosen over a nomadic one. The increased sedentary

population and competition for resources led the Maori to develop into tribal organizations by the 16th century, often centering on a *pa*, or fortified hilltop (King, 2003).

At this point in history, Maori identity was linked very firmly to place and ancestry so smaller units were named and defended. They were known as *hapu*, meaning pregnant, or *iwi*, meaning people. A *Hapu* usually refers to a more intimate or closely related group while an *iwi* is a wider unit composed of many related *hapu*. Often, these groups would be defined by a natural landmark, such as a river or mountains, or the natural resources that were widely available.

Maori Creation

As mentioned, settlement as described in history books is only one story, one way of understanding or tracing the local populations of New Zealand. I include the following stories for two purposes. The first is to exemplify Smith's (2012) "diversity of truth" by questioning single version history (p. 18). The second purpose is to begin connecting the present condition of whale watching in Kaikoura to the long history of whale-human interaction in Kaikoura as represented by Maori storytelling. In these narratives, some of which I will recount here, space is given great meaning and lends itself to the creation of place and the integration of whales and humans as co-creators of place meaning in Kaikoura.

I was told by a Maori local that his people had populated Kaikoura for 900 years and only stories pre-dating the European settlement would help me understand the importance of whales in this place. What follows is my retelling of the first story he told me:

Ranginui (The Sky Father) and Papatuanuku (Earth Mother) were joined together in an embrace so close that that the world was in perpetual darkness. Their sons, who lived between them, disliked the darkness so they resolved to act. One son, Tumatauenga (The God of War) first proposed that the parents be killed but Tanemahuta (God of the Forest), another son, convinced him that they only need be separated. The sons tried to pry them apart unsuccessfully until Tanemahuta placed his shoulders against the earth and his feet on the sky and

straightened his body until they were separated and the sons were in the light for the first time. From then on the earth would forever be a nurturing mother but the sky would become a stranger. Tawhirimatea, objected to Tanemahuta's actions and left the earth to join Ranginui in the sky, becoming the god of wind, rain and storm. He used his powers to disfigure the land below him. Gods associated with Ranginui and Tawhirimatea continued to be those that shaped the land; Tu te raki whanoa, the grandchild of Ranginui had a son of his own, Marokura and it was he who sculpted the sea canyons. Tawhirimatea had his greatest effect on the earth when he attacked Tangaroa, another of the sons,⁷ causing him to flee to the seas (he is later known as the God of the water). The fish, his children, followed him but the other children, the reptiles, could only find protection in the forest with Tanemahuta. Because of this Tangaroa would always be jealous of Tanemahuta and so the land and the sea remain forever separate. Tanemahuta went on to have three children, the trees, the birds and the insects. He also made a woman from the earth and breathed life into her and became the father of all people.

This story alludes to the importance of connectedness over individuality (Smith, 2012) and the human relationship to the earth and the sea, associating the elements with gods and demigods (King, 2003). As Selby et al. (2010) retold,

the natural environment is located between Ranginui and Papatuanuku, between Earth and Sky, and is shared by their descendants, *tangata whenua* and all other people. In order to live in harmony with the environment and each other, and to ensure our long term survival, we must respect and protect the environment. (p. 1)

My storyteller emphasized the importance of the separation of earth from sea and reminded me that humans are made from the earth so we must be respectful and cautious of the sea. That is why, he continued, Kaikoura was not the original name for

⁷ Tangaroa is sometimes represented as the first husband of Papatuanuku (Tierney et al., 2007, p. 23).

this place but rather *Te Koha O Marokura*, The Gift of Marokura, the God who sculpted the underwater canyon, creating a home for the whales and other marine creatures.

This is not the only story that explains how the world was created. There is another, which complements the story of Ranginui and Papatuanuku. It is a story that accounts for the shape of New Zealand and it is derived from and still told throughout Polynesia (King, 2003).

Maui was a demi-god from Hawaiiki who had magical powers unbeknownst to his family. One day after being discovered hidden at the bottom of his brother's canoe, Maui dropped his fishhook over the side of their *waka* (A Maori canoe) and after much struggle fished up *Te Ika a Maui* (the fish of Maui). His brothers all fought over the fish, pounding and striking it, changing its shape. The fish became the North Island, so the rugged and mountainous landscape is actually the result of the fight over the catch. The South Island is *Te Waka a Maui* (the Waka of Maui) and Stewart Island, below the South Island, is *Te Punga a Maui* (The Anchor of Maui).

There are geographical landmarks all through New Zealand that are related to this story; for example, Kaikoura's peninsula is known as the place where Maui stood to fish up the North Island. I heard this story many times during my stay in New Zealand and found that many people enjoyed looking at a map and tracing out the shape (Figure 11).

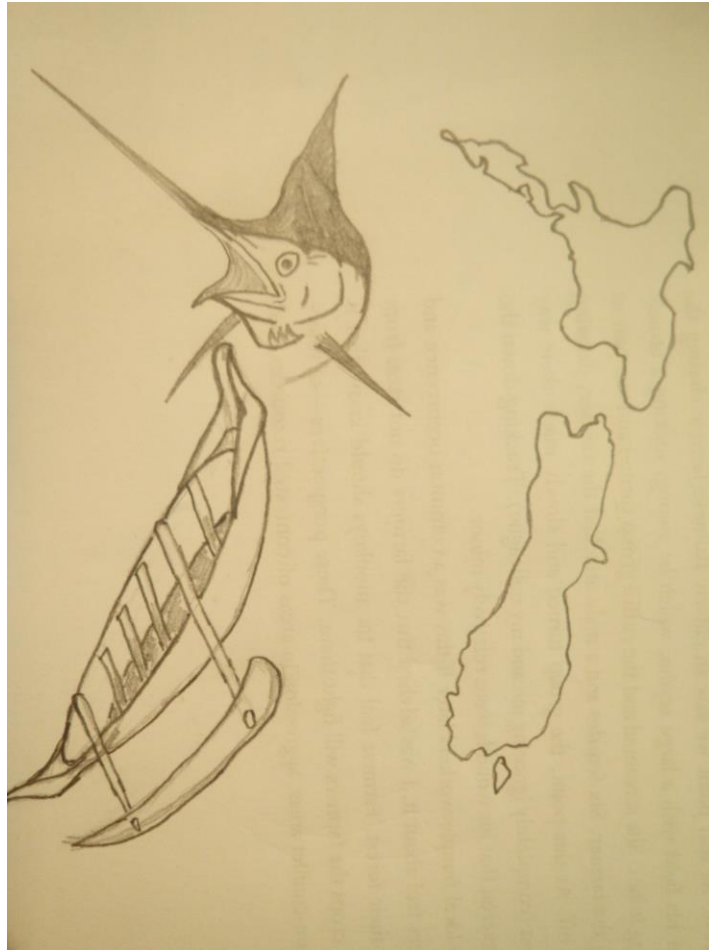


Figure 11. The fish and the waka.

Note. Printed with permission from Andrew McDonnell.

As place must draw upon cultural definitions (meanings, values, and social contexts), which are historical and symbolic and can socially construct place-identity (Gieryn, 2000; Goodrich & Sampson, 2009, p. 903), these stories speak as much to the construction of Kaikoura as they do to Maori narrative. Rather than decipher the stories as they relate to Maori populations in general, problematically fitting them into an overarching theory rather than allowing them to speak for themselves, I will continue by exploring further marine creatures in Maori place making, historically and in the modern era.

Stories of Kaikoura and the Whales

Land and sea were important themes in the creation stories I was told and were continually echoed in stories that were more specific to Kaikoura and whale watching. For example, *Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura* or The Kaikoura Coastal Marine Guardians link the ancestral people of Kaikoura with the God of the water and the Sculptor of the seafloor: “Te Tai o Marokura [the seas around Kaikoura] lies within the realm of Tangaroa, the god of waters and is an integral part of Ngāti Kuri history and cultural identity” (Tierney et al., 2007, p. 23). The third story I must tell comes from the Ngāi Tahu Claims Settlement Act of 1998 and demonstrates how place is understood in relation to the sea and how whales are part of the history of Kaikoura. For context, the Ngāi Tahu are an *iwi* or tribe whose tribal area extends from Kaikoura as far south as Stewart Island. Within this *iwi* are many *hapu*’s or clans; Ngāti Kuri is one *hapu* that once lived around Goose Bay beach in Kaikoura.

Particular to Ngāi Tahu’s relationship with the Kaikoura coast is their special connection with its whales. This relationship has its basis in tradition. The well-known rangatira (chief) and brave warrior of the Ngāti Kuri *hapu* of Ngāi Tahu, Te Rakaitauneke, was said to have a *kaitiaki* (guardian) whale named Mata Mata, who lived in the sea opposite his home in Goose Bay Beach. Mata Mata’s sole duty and purpose in life was to do Te Rakaitauneke’s bidding, to serve all his needs and protect him from harm. Everywhere Te Rakaitauneke went, Mata Mata went too. When Te Rakaitauneke went to Takahanga, Mata Mata could be seen blowing outside the garden of memories, as close to shore as he could possibly get. He loved the whale as the whale loved him. After Te Rakaitauneke’s death, Mata Mata was not seen along the Kaikoura coast for some time, and it was rumoured that he had gone away and died of sorrow. There were those, however, who remembered Te Rakaitauneke’s prediction—that Mata Mata would return when one of his descendants was facing danger or death. There are many stories since then of Mata Mata appearing to foretell the death of one of Te Rakaitauneke’s descendants. It is also said that many of the descendants of Te Rakaitauneke, when faced with peril on the high seas, have been saved by the timely intervention of a whale” (Tierney et al., 2007, p. 26).

In Maori mythology, whales were chiefly regarded as 'fish' derived from *Tangaroa* (the God of Oceans) himself; they were therefore thought of as somewhat supernatural. They were guardians during the long ocean voyages and were sometimes responsible for the safety of certain individuals throughout their entire life. These are deemed *tapu* (sacred) in many stories and are now recognized as *taonga* (cultural treasure) under the law (Gillespie, 1999). In Kaikoura, the local Maori *iwi* Ngāti Kuri O Ngai Tahu has sometimes been referred to as "the people of the sea" (Gillespie, 1999, p. 3), a reference often used to further the connection between Kaikoura Maori populations and whales.

Maori storytelling does not simply remain legend in Kaikoura but has important political effects. The above story is used to explain that the descendants of Maori ancestors have a spiritual relationship with the coastal area and to locals who share ancestry (Tierney et al., 2007, p. 27).

Maori Claims

Other than spiritual relationships to whales, Maori groups have also had a relationship based in economics and political history. In 1987 the Treaty of Waitangi was confirmed as the founding document of New Zealand. This was a monumental decision because in the treaty, signed originally on February 6th 1840 by representatives of the British crown and Maori chiefs, the rights of Maori people under new British rule were negotiated. The original treaty has been widely debated as there are slightly differing versions. Most striking is the issue of sovereignty, the British believing the treaty gives them rights to govern the country and the Maori believing the same with the exception of their authority over their own land and affairs (King, 2003). Many breaches of the treaty occurred, calling for the need of a Tribunal in 1975 to debate and readdress how the treaty should be interpreted and upheld (King, 2003). By 1987 many issues were brought to court and Maori citizens began reclaiming rights to land and resources. It is important to note that the treaty does not place Maori rights above the crown in all cases but restricts the ability of the crown to act for New Zealand in a way that conflicts with Maori fundamental rights.

For example, the crown's sovereignty must be exercised in accordance with the protection of *rangatiratanga* (Maori sovereignty), the crown maintains the freedom to

govern New Zealand, Maori are granted the right to retain *rangatiratanga* over their resources and *taonga* (treasured cultural tangible and non-tangible items and places) and have all rights and privileges of citizenship, and the crown has a duty to consult with Maori groups (Willis, 2010). A marine example of Waitangi Tribunal claims comes from the debate over the bodies of stranded whales. Maori representatives have fought for the rights to these bodies because they are gifts from Tangaroa; they are part of Maori resources and so they are symbolic for prosperity and status as well as for the struggle for indigenous rights (Kalland, 2009, p. 152; Gillespie, 1999).

During this era of Maori claims, Te Runanga O Kaikoura (The Ngāi Tahu *hapu* in Kaikoura) set up a company called Kaikoura Tours Limited (now Whale Watch), which is meant to both manage resources for Kaikoura Maori and generate employment for local residents (Poharama et al., 1998). This claim was supported partially due to the global climate of cetacean concern championed by the International Whaling Commission (IWC), of which New Zealand was a part (Gillespie, 1999). Around the same time, Ngāi Tahu people brought a land claim to the Waitangi Tribunal in order to retain rights to land and the coast, officially tying Ngāi Tahu people to a particular place and granting them a monopoly on activities like whale watching in tribal land/coast (Poharama et al., 1998). These dual events lead to the present day connection of Ngāi Tahu and Whale Watch and the blurry boundary between Maori spiritual connection with Kaikoura land and economic and political control over Whale Watch and whale watching in general.

Critiques of Maori Claims

The connection of Kaikoura with Maori has been translated into authority over the area: “Tikanga are the customs and traditions, handed down through many generations that govern the use and conservation of the environment. These management practices enabled Ngāti Kuri to sustainably harvest and conserve their fisheries. Traditional fisheries management included restrictions on harvesting, known as *rāhui*” (Tierney et al., 2007, p. 27). The *Rāhui* in Kaikoura is a compulsory closure of the coastal area between the old and new pier, meaning that nothing from that area may be removed (Figure 12). Maori ownership is conveyed in other ways that are less visible; for example, the permits issued for whale watching by the Marine Mammals Protection Act (MMPA) are restricted to only one tour company, Whale Watch, owned by local Ngāti

Kuri people (Gillespie, 1999). These displays of ownership and control of the coast are not always accepted by local residents, Maori or otherwise. For instance, Whale Watch has been burgled and vandalized on more than one occasion owing to the debate over Maori special status versus fair consideration in the Treaty of Waitangi (Gillespie, 1999).



Figure 12. A sign marking the coastal usage ban (*Rāhui*).

Note. Photo by author.

Brown Colour Crime

Jim has lived in Kaikoura most of his life, although he refuses to stay in one place for too long believing that there are controlling forces in Kaikoura that will limit his ability to pursue his chosen lifestyle. Mostly, he spends time on the beach in his truck; he fished for his own food in accordance with the *Rāhui* for practical rather than obligatory reasons. Jim told me many times of his personal concern over fishing and maintained that he took what he needed and what would not damage the coastal ecosystem; his

actions were not to be taken as a sign of passive lawfulness. He was deeply concerned with my representation of him in my records, repeating many times that he was not someone who agreed with how Kaikoura was governed.

I could not tell how old Jim was but I guess he is younger than I thought; his face was permanently tanned and weathered and his general appearance and behaviour suited his quasi-outdoor mobile home. He used his mobile home to his advantage as he created connections over a wide area, trading and bartering with friends and acquaintances. Jim argued against Maori or crown control over land. He felt that individuals could form connections and community with each other and the coast if they were not so controlled. For example, fishing restrictions mean that one person can take only so much (a rule highly regulated and enforced), negating the possibility of one person fishing for a family or group while other members have other tasks like home care or legal employment. I asked Jim if he thought his system would be abused. Would people take advantage and overfish? How would tourists and passers through participate in this style of community? Jim rarely answered these questions, maintaining that his beliefs were fair to everyone and not just those in power.

In reading my interview notes with Jim I was consistently struck by his questioning of interests: Whose interests does the government protect? What were my interests as a researcher? How would I protect and represent him? Like Smith (2012), he argued for a different style of indigenous research, even when his critiques were aimed at Maori groups and not those of the crown. Specifically, and of most significance to my thesis, was his concern with racism and whales.

Jim used the phrase 'brown colour crime' many times before I got him to explain it to me in detail. He defined it as "Maori on Maori racism. When we turn on each other . . . want to be like them or act like them, you know?" I surmised that 'them' was people of British descent but was told it was anyone of colonial background, any European tourist or resident, basically any non-Maori in New Zealand. Jim's best and most repeated example of brown colour crime had to do with the Maori ownership of Whale Watch. I did not record our interviews, at Jim's request, but I took extensive notes and what follows is a recreated conversation based on those notes and conversations (personal communication, October 4, 2011).

Sarah Do you consider yourself a Maori person?

Jim Maori is a colonial word. It doesn't exist.

Sarah What do you mean it doesn't exist? Haven't you said you are Maori or you have Maori ancestry?

Jim I know what I am, and who I am but Maori is a word they use to control us. Do you know about *iwi*'s about all the different places we're from?

Sarah I know there are different tribes.

Jim Tribes! See, it's colonial. Lots of *iwi* live here, there are different groups so there is no one kind of "Maori" person you know?

Sarah Is there any generalizable Maori identity at all? Anything in common?

Jim Right so you're into whales here right? Ok so you get it—it's like everyone who's not white are not human, like the whales. Do you understand?

Sarah I'm worried about that Jim. I don't know about comparing whales to indigenous people.

Jim We get screwed Sarah. There isn't one whale, have you seen the Orca's yet! They aren't even whales did you know that? People here don't know, they don't care just like with the "tribes" [in a mocking voice].

Sarah I have seen the Orcas. I knew they were dolphins, or not whales anyway. But they're not the ones the boats go to see usually right? And I think they say on the boats which are more common, which whales live in Kaikoura permanently and which are passing through.

Jim They don't own them. We don't get any money from the whale watching. It's not for everyone you know.

Sarah I don't know about the ownership exactly. I know its run by a Maori group.

Jim A Maori group! No such thing, it's a family, it's so small. It's not for everyone. Its brown colour crime.

Sarah So you think they should share with more people? But isn't there no one Maori community? Didn't you say that?

Jim They say there is. But they don't act like there is. You come here to see whales, some people get all the money, they don't own the whales.

Its brown colour crime.

Another conversation we had took place in the company of a South American cleaner, Andres, who had lived in Kaikoura for three or four months. Andres agreed with Jim about brown colour crime, telling me many times how the town is set up for people who can afford to whale watch. Those who could not afford it were those who were excluded and targeted for fishing and other fines. There was always a balancing act in these conversations: Jim and Andres both agreed that people of indigenous ancestry should look out for one another, but they resisted any labelling or generalizing title like 'Maori' and complained consistently of stereotyping and racial targeting. After re-reading Smith (2012) I believe this may be due to the resistance of the 'individual,' "the individual, as the basic social unit from which other social organizations and social relations form, is another system of ideas which needs to be understood as part of the West's cultural archive" (p. 51). Jim and Andres hoped for a community without ownership and without rules based on individual interests. They felt their idea of connection was not represented in Kaikoura community. To reiterate:

Community provides a mechanism by which individuals are able to culturally (re)produce identity and belonging. *Identity might be individualized in its interpretation, but it draws on a collective set of values, behaviors [sic], and actions that are embedded in shared community practices [emphasis added].* We argue that communities carry with them a specificity that binds them to particular locales, while locales provide a set of parameters or boundaries to the possibilities of what can be symbolically drawn upon. In this way, identity is still culturally constructed and reproduced but it is done within the bounds of a particularized landscape, with particularized attributes. (Goodrich & Sampson, 2009, p. 913)

Brown colour crime then represents more than an issue of racism—it is a statement about community and the construction of identities within the bounds of the Kaikoura coast. A community is a place with opportunities for shared beliefs and practices. In this case, Kaikoura whales and their interactions with humans provide a basis for such communal understandings. However, this does not negate oppositions or personal constructions and a diversity of truth. In fact, Jim taught me that debates and critiques of

shared practices are what reinforce community, tying it to the landscape and to actors of differing cultures or even species.

Pakeha and Maori Conflict

Once explored deeply, Maori histories of Kaikoura do not simply contrast with Pakeha histories of colonization and whaling; rather, the stories are engaged in flexible entanglements. The history that is conveyed is dependent on the social or political context and does not usually fall clearly between one story or the other, drawing on each for lessons and marked events. Guides employed by Whale Watch recited a scripted traditional Maori greeting and occasionally used Maori terminology like *taonga* (cultural treasure) to refer to whales. However, they also spoke of whaling histories and whale biology. They are at the centre of contact zones between both species and both cultural narratives, so they represent multiple positions within the community.

The guides were not allowed to be interviewed by me or by other researchers outside of the Whale Watch company. I was told this was partially due to the growing number of ecotourist critics, whose position compared whale watching to whaling and the exploitation of cetaceans (Gillespie, 1999). Although the guides could not speak to me about their work, a few did suggest I read about the critiques of the company, specifically about the exploitation of Maori values for tourists' benefit. Unfortunately, it was very difficult to find much written on the subject and I could not find an informant to discuss this with me for the purposes of my thesis.

In the Whale Watch building, there are Maori elements: Some of the signage is written both in Maori and English, there are some traditional greetings and symbols, and there are books, art, and jewellery of Maori designs for sale. One whale watcher I interviewed was disappointed with the lack of Maori mythology, as she was hoping to learn more about the relationship between Maori people and cetaceans. I asked a Whale Watch guide on a tour and he told me most people asked for more biology and natural history and that the Maori greeting conveyed enough of the relationship. Poharama et al. (1998) argued that the Maori culture is muted in Whale Watch because "the scale of operation makes it more difficult to practice the principles that emphasise culture" (p. 31). I was told by the same guide, "you wouldn't want to exploit the Maori

people and have Maori stuff everywhere”; an argument echoed in a Maori tourism survey was, “Maori culture has been exploited for too long by many people, especially non-Maori, who portray Maori heritage forms in culturally damaging ways” (Poharama et al., 1998, p. 37). They continued by arguing that tourism is tied intimately to post-colonialism as former colonials are increasingly popular as tourist destinations, relying partially on indigenous peoples’ lifestyles, arts, folklore, and heritage (Smith, 2012; Amoamo & Thompson, 2010, p. 37).

In conclusion, Maori mythology and narratives are linked to whales and are now being utilized in Whale Watch, albeit with caution and not without critique. A core Maori value that was repeated to me on numerous occasions is the protection of natural resources and guardianship of the whales—a value that is not without conflict in the realm of tourism, economics, and politics. It is not my goal here to demonstrate the resolutions to these conflicts but communicate the ways they are entangled in the community, perhaps, without singular consensus.

5. Whale Watching, A Natureculture; Identity and Community Formation

The year after I completed my undergraduate degree, I decided to travel through New Zealand while waiting to begin my Master's program. I left on a 10 plus hour flight for Sydney with no plans but a *Lonely Planet* guidebook and a journal. On the flight, I began reading my possible adventures, itemized by town and season, and I began writing notes in my journal of 'must-see' agendas, leaving room for flexibility and spontaneity. Kaikoura was highlighted early on in the book: "Whales, dolphins, crayfish—postcard-perfect Kaikoura is intertwined with the sea" (Smitz et al., 2004). I made note of it in my journal with the caption "whale watching!"

I had been backpacking for about four months when I arrived in Kaikoura with the intention of whale watching. I had done little research beyond what was in my guidebook but had heard from many people I met along the way that Kaikoura could not be missed, especially if one was interested in whale watching, which I was. I arrived at the Whale Watch building, paid for my ticket and browsed the gift shop, looking at Maori inspired jewellery, books, and carvings and purchasing some fizzy candy to ward off sea sickness. I attended the mandatory introductory film, which explained the geography of the Kaikoura Canyon, safety, and what to expect on our trip. On board the boat, during the 20-minute trip out to sea, to the deepest part of the canyon, we were told more about the geography and briefly about whale biology and the 'resident whales,' those individuals that are identified by fluke markings and sighted regularly. The guides seemed to know just what we would see, how and when made possible by their technologies and practice, both proudly boasted about.

I heard the captain's voice over the intercom inviting us to move from our seats up to the deck as the spotter had found a whale nearby and we were moving into viewing position. Every passenger got up quickly and moved towards the deck (except one elderly woman who was quite obviously experiencing sea sickness) before angling

for the best spot along the deck railing. I stayed behind the cluster of whale watchers; being tall and not fond of cramped spaces, I thought I would enjoy myself more from a distance. The water parted and a large greyish hump appeared, and before I could grasp what part of the whale I was looking at, a great blast of water and immense breath silenced the murmuring of us humans (Figure 13). Stunned, I stood and watched thinking mostly of what lay beneath the ocean surface. Others were quickly excited and began taking countless photos, chattering to themselves and each other and asking questions of the guide who stood near me looking patient and satisfied. We were united once more as a group by the call of camera readiness made by the intercom voice; the whale was about to dive. Cameras blocked faces and the disappearing tail was lit by flashes, including my own (Figure 14).



Figure 13. Resident Sperm Whale Tutu

Note. Photo by author.



Figure 14. *Tail of Resident Sperm Whale Tutu.*

Note. Photo by author.

Once again stunned, a fellow whale watcher who had also stayed behind the group turned to me and said, “It’s like I am the whale.” We were summoned back to our seats and told we would be moving to a location usually home to Dusky Dolphin pods. I sat deciphering what the young whale watcher meant while watching other passengers review their photos, comparing and complaining, talking to each other about our proximity, sea sickness, and past New Zealand adventures. The experience was mediated, regulated, and controlled and yet not the same for everyone. Recalling my discussion of experience in Chapter 2, it is clear that lived-through experience may be over simplified as experience depends on recalled past, anticipated futures, structural

factors (environmental, cultural, political, etc.), and present senses (Mattingly, 1998; Throop, 2003). In this context of whale watching, the encounter was staged and yet not completely predictable, human was apart from whale and yet not completely distinct, and narratives of 'self' and 'other' existed not only between humans and other species but among human groups. I tell this story because it demonstrates the complexity of the whale watch encounter and two assumptions that often guide it. The first is that categories of whale watchers are finite and distinct; they are not, and the narratives in this chapter will demonstrate this. The second is that the whale watch encounter is always the same. Again, this is not the case, and in tackling these assumptions, the complexities of multispecies experiences will be revealed.

Elsrud and Stigsdotter (2004) wrote that the best way to get at the individual construction of tourism is to access narratives to avoid reifying tourist categories as true or static. It is my intention, for this final chapter, to use narratives to present the categories of whale watchers and the whale watch encounter as I understand it, noting that they are not finite but susceptible to changes and exceptions. I have written about the ways whale lives interact and affect human lives in terms of physical space, bodily experience, Maori mythology, and current political, economic, and racial histories, and will now delve into the effects on tourism and travelling identities: how whale watchers define themselves and how whales are involved in multispecies encounters. In doing so, I continue my argument that whales are involved in the Kaikoura community and that, like humans, they are entangled in shared collective practices that collapse the nature-culture and other binaries. In this chapter, I argue that shared community practices (whale watching) does not mean uniform interpretations and experiences but rather the complex identity formations that are flexible, entangle whales, and are at the core of Kaikoura's community. I will begin by recounting the history of tourism as it is defined by anthropologists and the way it plays out in Kaikoura.

Tourism: Histories and Environmental Adaptations

Although there are many theories and ways to study tourism, it can be broadly defined as "temporary travel for the purpose of experiencing a change" (Gmelch, 2010, p. 5). Some anthropologists research travel as a ritual (Graburn, 2010) or the liminal experience of being between home and away (Turner, 1967), others consider the

'Tourist Gaze' and the way tourism alters the lives of local people (Urry, 1990), or authenticity and the altering of tourist destinations (MacCannell, 1973, p. 1999). In anthropology the study of tourism changed drastically as researchers ceased to treat cultures as bounded and static and began looking at linkages and connections. Tourism researchers followed suit, looking at origins (why we travel) and cultural impacts and changes (Gmelch, 2010). I approach tourism in Kaikoura with these in mind, looking for flexible categories of whale watching and the corresponding community connections. That being said, the whale watchers with whom I spoke consistently set up an opposition between what was generally called 'mass tourism' and 'ecotourism'—a distinction that has been well researched in the anthropology of tourism. I will set up this distinction, and its problems, as it exists in the anthropology of tourism literature and as it was defined by participants before exploring the various incarnations and identities that exist in the blurred boundary between this constructed binary.

Mass tourism is so called because of its scale; tourism accounts for 11% of the global gross domestic product (GDP) (Gmelch, 2010) and has increased an estimated 6.6% over the last half century (Yeoman, Munro & McMahon-Beattie, 2006). With popular destinations moving further away from 'home' (defined by the traveller) (Fennell, 2008), it is often seen as a prosperous industry connected with many countries and often with 'development' initiatives (Gmelch, 2010). This is consistent with Löfgren's (1999) belief that mass tourism businesses, organizations, and workforce make it the world's largest industry. It is a complex phenomenon that has been studied across disciplines and is now considered to have multiple definitions.

Some scholarship is quite critical of nonhuman animals being involved in mass tourism. Davis (1997), for example, argued that whales are used in SeaWorld for entertainment and the economic gain of the corporation and that the relationship of species in this context is exploitative and consumptive. In contrast, Zeppel and Muloin (2007) focused on visitor benefits and the possible positive psychological, educational, and environmental outcomes that may result from the experience. However, even if mass tourism is economically beneficial and provides visitor satisfaction, there may be consequences to the marine creatures themselves. Since tourism operates on a scale, marine creatures can be held captive as in a zoo or aquarium, be semi-captive as in a protected area, or observed in a protected area; unfortunately this scale is susceptible to

sliding and the level of marine creature interference may vary from operator to operator and tourist to tourist (Miller, 2007). Most participants did not consider Kaikoura whale watching mass tourism in its entirety, but many did point to elements of the experiences as closer to this type of tourism. More often, they placed whale watching in the category of ecotourism.

Although animals are extensively commodified either actually or through representation in zoos, advertisements, and media, some are still considered more 'wild' or 'natural' and are thus valued as a refuge from consumer capitalism (Mullin, 1999, p. 216). "In theme parks, ecotourism, and mass media, contact with 'charismatic megafauna' such as whales and orangutans appeals to consumers as a sort of 'anticonsumption,' no matter how profitable to transnational corporations" (Mullin, 1999, p. 216). Some megafauna, such as whales, are involved in profitable industries on a large scale, yet they are considered symbols of the 'wild' or 'nature,' demonstrating the blurred line between mass and eco tourism.

As Fennell (2008) observed,

ecotourism has grown as a consequence of the dissatisfaction with the conventional forms of tourism, which have, in a general sense, ignored social and ecological elements of destinations in favour of more anthropocentric and profit-centred approaches to the delivery of tourism products. (p. 17)

Mass tourism has produced some environmental concerns such as the depletion of natural resources, invasive species, increased population in certain areas, pollution, increased infrastructure, etc. (Gmelch, 2010). Ecotourism has therefore come about as a means to decrease these negative environmental effects and focus on conservation as well as the well being of local people (Gmelch, 2010). Some initiatives are even known as community-based, meaning local people manage tourist ventures and tourists. As part of these initiatives, individual travellers are sometimes encouraged to take responsibility for their impact and research their travel plans to reduce environmental and cultural hazards (Gmelch, 2010).

Ecotourism has three major guiding principles: environmental conservation, improvement of local people's well-being, and enhancement of positive attitudes and

desirable behaviour in tourists (Hill & Gale, 2009). However, like mass tourism, the operationalization of this definition in Kaikoura is problematic because there is so much debate surrounding the environmental dangers of boat-based whale watching tours, and the idea of local well-being is under constant dispute.⁸

There is a middle ground between eco and mass tourism, a category called nature-based tourism, which

encompasses all forms of tourism—mass tourism, adventure tourism, low-impact tourism, ecotourism—which uses natural resources in a wild or undeveloped form—including species, habitat, landscape, scenery and salt and fresh-water features. Nature-based tourism is travel for the purpose of enjoying undeveloped natural areas or wildlife. (Goodwin, 1996, p. 287)

Again, even this definition does not encompass the complexities of Kaikoura as it encompasses the presumption of the existence of wilderness and the dichotomy of nature and culture. Since the refusal of these premises is the basis of my theoretical framework, as discussed in Chapter 2, I will only reiterate here that this too is inadequate in describing Kaikoura tourism.

However problematic, the oppositional paradigm of mass versus eco tourism was echoed on many occasions by participants, who were either trying to define their own identity or explain the state of tourism in Kaikoura. Monika, the manager of the Dusky Lodge, suggested whale watching was verging on mass tourism:

I came here for the whales, then the mountains and sea, the smallness of the town. People here always needed whales, or knew they were there but just lived with them. Now they are so crowded. How many boats do you see? They are so crowded. I don't know why the whales come back. Now it's like all those

⁸ For critiques on ecotourism more broadly see; Honey and Stewart 2002; Crouch & McCabe 2003; Bushell 2003; Walsh 2004 and for critiques based on social inequality see; Boo, 1990; Aronsson, 2000; Buckley, Pickering, & Weaver, 2003.

other tourist things . . . like Queenstown (personal communication, December 21, 2011).

Monika, like many of my participants, did not perceive whale watching tourism as completely environmentally friendly due to its scale, in this case the overcrowding of Queenstown, another small tourist town in New Zealand's South Island. Whale watching tourism was often placed on a precipice between mass and eco tourism in my discussions, seemingly at risk to revert back to the more dangerous form, through which little care for the environment or local Kaikoura people has been demonstrated.

On the other hand, Te Korowai o Te Tai o Marokura, the Kaikoura Coastal Marine Guardians, wrote in a characterization report of Kaikoura that whale watching is an ecotourism venture that is concerned both with the employment and well being of local Maori and Pakeha residents as well as the cooperation with Marine Mammal Protection Act regulations regarding whale safety and respect (Tierney et al., 2007). However, they also state that ecotourism is maintained due to its geographic location on a main tourist route, the Kaikoura canyon being a significant food source for marine mammals and birds, the variety of marine mammals and seabirds found along the coast, the fact that marine-mammal watching is a year-round activity, and the high probability of successful encounters with marine mammals and seabirds (Tierney et al., 2007, p. 79). In other words, the relationship of tourism to marine mammals seems coincidental and exploitable and seemed to approach mass tourism scale with over 1.5 million tourists per year (Perkins & Cloke, 2005).

If whale watching is neither simply eco nor mass tourism, it can be considered a space where diverse meaning making processes exist, conflict, and change. It is my argument that when other species are taken into account as actors in a tourism site, the definitions of tourism experiences are less easily defined. Categories of understanding move from the encounter itself into the community, entangling various groups of actors in various ways. I will begin with a discussion of whale watching as a natureculture and contact zone before looking at cases where identity construction and meaning making employed various notions of tourism and entangled whales in the process.

Whale Watching as a Natureculture

I refer back to the concept of natureculture because it reminds us to look at everyday politics and the way binaries that may be distinctly opposed in theory collapse on the ground in practice. During the first month of my fieldwork I tried to come to terms with the eco versus mass tourism problem; I was left with a dichotomy to which tourist encounters, as I understood them or as I was told by participants, rarely fit. After grappling with the theoretical distinctions for some time, I began to see a parallel between mass tourism/ecotourism and culture/nature. Both set up a distinction of involvement, the former of each pair implying human action, dynamism, or transformations through history, and the latter assuming distance and neutrality. However, to reiterate, as Haraway (2008) argued, actors become who they are through grappling with each other in natureculture contact zones where everyday politics are at work. There can be no distinction between historical culture and biological nature because the two are in constant connection forming hybrids and blurring boundaries. In these contact zones humans and other species meet and co-produce space and identity (Fuentes, 2010) thereby collapsing any boundary.

As for the tourism/ecotourism binary, I find a similar deconstruction can be applied. Throughout my nine months in Kaikoura I heard stories of opposition; traveller versus tourist, local versus long-term resident, Maori versus Pakeha, all of which circled around whales and the other marine mammals that were known for their association with tourism. Even with the consistent opposition between eco and mass tourism, identities and narratives were flexible and tourism categories were moulded to fit individuals especially when confronted with an unwanted label: "You think I am a tourist?" As Sökefeld (2001) wrote, "Identity is not selfsameness but sameness in terms of a shared difference from others" (p. 536). In the community, whale encounters provide a contact zone in which to grapple with natureculture politics and to negotiate tourism categories and individual identity; their flexibility points to the importance of understanding everyday politics of whale watch tourism.

As a final disclaimer for this chapter I think it is important to note that although I found some consistency in the definitions of tourism identity categories told to me by participants, I never encountered an individual who claimed to exist in only one category

all the time. In fact, most participants believed that it is not what you do as a traveller but how you understand certain encounters and events that guide your tourism identity, hence the same whale watching context (boat based whale tour) led to descriptions of different tourism categories. So, while I set out the categories below, the narratives of identity formation surround stories of whale encounter and how participants incorporated that experience into their own understanding of travel and of themselves.

The Boat

I begin on the boat, not because this is the only place where humans and whales meet but because it is where I first met a whale and where many of my participants located the practice of whale watching. Moreover, it is the location in which most of my participants situated and defined 'the tourist.'

Although whale watch guides were not allowed to be interviewed by me or talk to me about the company directly, their stories did reach me through mutual friends and coincidentally in my day to day activities working in the largest Kaikoura hostel. Our hostel was home to up to twelve cleaners, some of whom stayed in Kaikoura for many months, and two managers who had lived in the town for over two years; Monika from, the Czech Republic, and Geraldine, from Germany. I was never an official manager in the hostel but my partner, Andrew, from Ireland, worked as night manager for many months and took over day manager duties when either Monika or Geraldine went away on holiday. This allowed me into the close knit network of long term hostel workers, who, between the few dozen of us, knew almost every long term resident, permanent resident, or passers through in Kaikoura. Without even asking about whale watch encounters, stories from the boat reached me daily. I recount them here without worry of anonymity because there was no single source or participant and no exactitude of date or individual boat trip. Nothing included in this chapter was disclosed to me privately or in secret. However, I have refrained from including names in some stories as they were recorded with permission but with the request of either pseudonyms or anonymity. Rather than assume that each group has different rules and behaviours because they are named differently (Paris, 2011), I will convey the categories as set out by participants and informants, which eliminates definitive categorization and merely represents constructed categories, while keeping in mind that categories of tourism are vague and a single trip

can have both touristic and non-touristic aspects (Uriely, Yonay, & Simchai, 2002, p. 528).

Is it 'Us' vs. 'Them'?

What is most important about whale watching on the boat is that the encounter is planned and anticipated; it is paid for in advance and patrons climb aboard with some idea of what they will see. Does this mean the encounter is exploitative or that the whale is rendered passive and an 'other' (Gmelch, 2010)? As Perkins and Cloke (2005) argued, the positioning of the whale watcher and whale does not negate spontaneity or insure predictable whale performance, leaving room for the disruption of an 'us' versus 'them' encounter. Using Thrift (as cited in Perkins & Cloke, 2005), they argued, "performances are intimately related to places in the sense that, 'places are passings that haunt us'" (p. 301). That is, places are dynamic and may be designed or staged to bring forth particular practices and responses, but performance is not encapsulated by such staging; rather, all kinds of unanticipated performances can arise even in carefully staged places and these practices can contribute to the intelligibility of the place concerned. "Thrift emphasizes the importance of emotion, memory, and language as key performative competences which illuminate how places haunt us and we haunt them" (Perkins & Cloke, 2005, p. 906).

Whale watch guides tell stories of the difficulties in whale spotting based on weather, season, or the whale movements and patterns. The whales are often difficult to find; they occasionally perform in ways that are unexpected or not at all. However, in Kaikoura it is widely accepted that the boat is the most likely space in which a whale sighting is possible. Whale watchers on board a boat may not necessarily be 'othering' the whales in an 'us' versus 'them' binary, but that does not mean their watching behaviour is not considered different than other Kaikoura whale watchers. In particular, it is their presumed seeking behaviour that has led to the connection of boat whale watchers with a particular definition of tourist by many longer term Kaikoura residents. So, what is a tourist in Kaikoura?

The Tourist

You wouldn't believe what happened on the boat today. I just got back. I am so sick of all these tourists. So we got out there, it took ages, I guess the residents were far out—probably because it's autumn or maybe because of the Orcas. Anyway, it took ages and there were some tourists behind me complaining, some were sick I guess, but they were whingeing the whole time. We got there and he was about to dive right away, Tutu or something, I can't remember his name. [The guide] was so excited at the dive, he said it was a beautiful 360°, that we were really lucky. It was amazing, the tail went up like this [mimes tail and dive] right in from of the mountains and the sun was out so the water was perfect, I mean come on? Way better than some of the other trips. Ok right, so then some guy freaks out, he's sick or something and [the guide] said we had to head back early to get him off the boat—a medical emergency or something, I couldn't really hear. So then we're waiting to get off the boat and these old tourist ladies are giving [the guide] a hard time saying that we didn't get as close to the whale as it shows on the ad and that they paid 900 bucks for six people and they were disgusteddisgusted [laughs]. I couldn't believe it. [the guide] was cool, he said their ad was zoomed in and that New Zealand law states you must be 50 metres away so even they maintain a safe distance when shooting ads or whatever. The ladies were like "we zoomed in too and our photos don't look like that." Ridiculous. I laughed, I mean nothing's good enough—they don't care about the safety of the whale, or about the medical emergency guy, they just want a closer tail shot [laughs] (personal communication, February 8, 2012).

The above story was told to many of the cleaners of the Dusky Lodge after an experience on board the whale watch boat. Although not a guide, the storyteller had experience with whale watching and the 'tourists' that frequented the boats. So what is a tourist? When asked who counted as a tourist, one longer term cleaner answered, "anyone who just comes and goes, coming just to see the sights but doesn't really care. They just want pictures." Tourists were labelled, "annoying" or "in the way" and many other negative descriptions usually concerning their lack of local knowledge or understanding of how the town worked. When describing themselves as a tourist, my participants were far less negative. A longer term Dusky Lodge cleaner and avid traveller, Jane, described tourist travel as a series of checklists. Sometimes you encounter a new place and explore without objectives, but occasionally you have less time in one place and approach the area's sights as a list waiting to be completed. Accordingly she could be a tourist in one place but not another, "I'm not a tourist here

[Kaikoura], even if sometimes I do touristy things, but like when we went to Cairns, we were tourists.”

Jane and I knew each other from our hometown of Stouffville, Ontario, but other than a summer in Alberta, this was the most we had ever travelled together. Arriving in New Zealand at separate times, for separate reasons, we met up and decided to take a short trip to Cairns, Australia. We researched operators that took groups out snorkelling and scuba diving, chose one that seemed to offer the most activities and length of stay for the least amount of money, travelled to Cairns specifically for this purpose, and left after we had been on the trip. As Graburn (2010) would argue, we were embarking on a tourist ritual, a trip in which our activities would stand in opposition to our everyday lives, and we would at one stage encounter a spectacle (the reef), which marked the sacred tourist moment (p. 29). Goffman (1971) would explain the ritual as a conventionalized act where an individual conforms to a collective sense that certain sights must be seen and shows some sense of duty to this object of ultimate value (p. 62). We explored the town somewhat but never spent great amounts of time getting to know the people or the history of the land, focusing instead on our day trip to the Great Barrier Reef. For this, I felt guilty.

On board the boat, we had been told by a very timid marine biologist the rules of snorkelling on the reef. There were about 20 in our group and most of us were too busy trying on our equipment to gather for a speech about the biology and dos and don'ts. Some rules seemed obvious to me, but I knew this was because I had ocean experience, and Jane listened eagerly. We were not to touch anything, stand on anything, or take anything from the sea; there were safety rules reiterated but the whole boat had heard these many times and signed a document stating that we understood. These rules, however, were scarcely heard, so I was not surprised when I saw a couple swimming directly above a sea turtle, touching him and grapping his shell to move him into a better angle for a photograph. Underwater, you cannot yell at other people, but the soft spoken biologists' rules were resonating in my head: “Don't touch the turtles! We carry dangerous oils and bacteria that can harm them! Don't swim above a surfacing turtle, it can drown!” At this point, I swam over and shoved one of the swimmers, with angry snorkel bubbles as my only mode of communication. They left and I felt briefly satisfied. I realized later that these common faux pas are just that,

common, and in a new country and very new environment, common knowledge itself may not exist. But, I return to my aforementioned guilt. I felt like I should not have come to Cairns just for this, especially if there was the potential for damage and destruction—I didn't want to be considered a tourist, if this is what it meant. However, as Jane said, we were tourists too, but that does not mean we all adhere to the same behaviour in all scenarios. And although this particular couple made a mistake, many others on our trip did not.

Back in Kaikoura, this point was my main concern and it was Andrew, the Dusky Lodge temporary manager, who helped provide deeper insight. He worked with 'tourists' on a daily basis and although he separated himself from them, he did so in a way that goes beyond a simple stereotype. He said, "It's [tourism] an individual story—its not who they are or what they think, its how they are moving through New Zealand. It is just, we get to know the place really well." In this description, the label of 'tourist' is used more as a symbol that distinguishes one kind of travel from another and says less about the individual who is travelling, implying that this identity is indeed one of many and is dependent upon travel experiences. Going back to Graburn (2010), a tourist may be considered someone who seeks out and finds his or her sacred experience. Tourist forms of travel may also be "visible institutional arrangements and practices by which tourists organize their journey: length of trip, flexibility of the itinerary, visited destinations and attractions, means of transportation and accommodation, contact with locals and so forth" (Uriely et al., 2002, p. 521). So, Jane and I may have been tourists in the way we were travelling, for a short period, without deep knowledge into the place or community, and with a sacred spectacle in mind, but that does not mean we conformed to any one particular identity.

Back to the boat. A community forms around individuals engaging in different ways with shared practices, like whale watching. In this way, the tourists here are simply individuals who connect with whales in one particular space, a boat, and become part of the community. As Monika once said, "Kaikoura would not be here if not for the whales [and whale watching]"; the town needs tourists to maintain the numerous hostels, restaurants, and pubs. But I maintain that tourists are not a singular consistent group, nor are they opposed to any one singular consistent group. For example, what other identities are formed from similar whale watch encounters?

Variations of Backpackers

In Kaikoura, whale watch guides and operators divide whales into groups of either residents or transients (Tierney et al., 2007, p. 20); living in a hostel, my participants began to emulate this process, naming and categorizing visitors to Kaikoura by degrees of tourism. Most often, this came down to one category, backpacker. I set out this category here, as it was explained to me, while also including its problematizations and blurring. Originally backpacking was a term used for outdoor travel like camping. Backpackers would “keep the woods cleaner than they keep their homes” (Turner, 2002, p. 452) and they were guided primarily by the ‘leave no trace’ ethic, living off the land without its being altered or damaged (Turner, 2002). Presently, backpacking still refers to young budget travellers (Nieoczym, 1997), although the travel does not necessarily centre on the outdoors.

Backpacking is a kind of tourism when tourism is defined simply as, “the idea of leaving home and work in search of new experiences, pleasures and leisure” (Löfgren, 1999). In Kaikoura, however, a backpacker is considered almost oppositional to a tourist. Firstly, a backpacker is differentiated by accommodation with youth hostels as the primary choice. Beginning as a retreat for the wealthy into the countryside, hostels soon became more common and spread firstly throughout Britain, becoming inexpensive accommodation and centres for activity and socializing (McCulloch, 1992). Secondly, motivation is of prominent concern with many backpackers travelling for personal growth, looking to understand themselves and other cultures (Vogt, 1976; Nieoczym, 1997). This is a reaction against the seemingly organized and controlled forms of tourism that represent leisure as a commodity.

Lastly, meeting other people, participating in recreational and social activities, and having the flexibility to be informal about these meetings and activities have come to define backpackers (Loker-Murphy & Pearce, 1995). What follows are four variations of ‘backpacker’ that I encountered at the Dusky Lodge.

Backpackers

A month into my research in Kaikoura, I met a young Englishman, Noel, who had heard about my thesis from a long term Dusky Hostel cleaner and sought me out. He

found me sitting on the back porch playing my ukulele, so he sat down with a guitar and introduced himself as a backpacker. He talked a lot about how difficult his travelling decisions were in Kaikoura. Being flexible, he had made no concrete plans, but once he was here he was overwhelmed by the choices: whale watching, dolphin swimming, seal swimming, etc. He was worried about the value for his money since he rarely spent large sums in any one place. Eventually, he came around to the idea of whale watching from a boat based on the personal growth it promised:

You may see a whale other times, but from a boat you will see the whale and that is definitely a whale, in the water it could be anything. I never thought I would get to see a whale in nature, we don't have whales at home. (personal communication, November 12, 2011)

He was staying in a hostel and desired personal growth and experiences different from home, but his self-identification as a backpacker came mainly from his flexibility and casual planning. We talked about it later: "You're right, I wouldn't just sit down and join in back home. It's [music playing] a really good way to meet people and get talking." He made our interview informal and casual, more social and participatory, and even though he stayed in Kaikoura for only three days, he made friends, influenced my work, saw whales, and felt included in the community. He felt that casual meetings, with me and with the whale, separated him from other kinds of whale watchers. Whale watching was part of his time in Kaikoura, but was not what brought him here entirely, and he may have just as easily left the town without going on the boat.

Transformed Backpackers

A backpacker can also transform into another identity, as Jane demonstrated using whale watching to explain the shift. Travelling around New Zealand, she came to Kaikoura and ended up whale watching using a similar process of decision making as Noel. She decided to stay a few weeks after her experience and, in that time, ended up seeing more whales from shore (personal communication, February 8, 2012).

Sarah - So are you a backpacker?

- Jane - I was when I came here definitely. I was just passing through, meeting people to travel on with, you know?
- Sarah - And you went whale watching?
- Jane - Yea, I love whales but I thought dolphin swimming would be better for the money. They said the dolphins were hard to find when I wanted to go.
- Sarah - Because of the Orcas?
- Jane - Yea, I think so. Anyway I went on the whale watch boat and it was amazing. And now I've been here longer.
- Sarah - And now you're not a backpacker?
- Jane - No. I mean I'm not local or anything, more of a traveller I guess. But I was gonna say, I saw whales from shore last week, Orcas. Not technically whales I guess but whatever. It was so much better than the boat, so much more real.

Backpacker identity in this case transformed when a typical tourist attraction was experienced unexpectedly and demonstrates the fluidity of identity when connected with multispecies encounters. This variation of backpacker engages more with the idea of identity plurality and community formation since community shared practices prompted new understandings of how to define oneself in the community.

Group Backpackers

It was a Friday night, the night that our Dusky family most often went to the local Irish pub. Only this night, we were all so tired from doing yoga in the morning and lazing around on the couches that we could not muster the energy to make the five minute walk into town. After much persuasion, Ann and I decided to drive down and say hello to Colin, our close friend who worked in the pub. We strolled into the half empty bar and quickly realized that on this particular night there were many young backpackers we did not know and they seemed somewhat grouped together. As always, the band playing

kiwi classics and top forty classic rock was one we had seen on many occasions previously, and, without any discussion, we headed straight out the back of the pub to the 'beer garden,' where a few tables are always set up for those who prefer quieter conversation and/or cigarettes. We sat at a table with seats for four and began to talk about our work day and about our plans for the following morning. Not 15 minutes later our private conversation gave way to a different kind of social interaction.

Ann is a beautiful woman, born in Scotland; she is thin and fair with large blue eyes and an impeccable sense of comedic timing and silliness. She is the kind of person that becomes the centre of attention and says what she thinks to the point of bluntness but is always good to be around. Sitting at the smokers' table, we were engulfed by new faces, mostly but not all men, but I felt comfortable and at ease knowing I had a friend that would deflect any awkward social interactions. It began slowly. One young man seated beside me asked where we were from. In sequence, and unenthusiastically, we muttered, "Canada," "Scotland." Another young woman began asking me what part of Canada I was from, stating she was from The United States and had been to Toronto once. I answered, "I'm from Toronto but I live in Vancouver now," hoping to return to my conversation with Ann. I overheard her fielding questions from a third and slightly intoxicated backpacker, "I wanna talk about Scotland," he slurred. "I don't" she responded. We sat quietly, listening to an explanation of how these new faces came to be here: "We didn't know each other before, but you know how it is. We met in Queenstown and we've been travelling together, us four in one car and those three over there in another," a twenty something German man told us, pointing to a group of three young travellers at a nearby table. "Have you guys been whale watching yet? We don't know if we should do it." Although both of us had been whale watching, Ann said no and began to get up. "Well we might go tomorrow morning, so maybe see you there," he called out after us.

Once back at the hostel, we talked about what had happened and how that situation would have been an ideal way to meet people a month ago when we were both new to Kaikoura. Ann's sentiment was, "maybe I was more of a backpacker then. Now its just annoying." She continued, "I want to see all the whales you can see here . . . but for free [laughs] and I definitely don't want to go with those guys." Again, flexibility of

itinerary and meeting people seemed to define this group's whale watch experience and their backpacker identity and Ann's own opposition to it.

Flashpackers

After my experience with Ann, I thought I was getting closer to a definition of backpacker, until I spoke with John, a twenty something busker from Liverpool who livened up any gathering with music and fun and who had come to Kaikoura previously and now lived and worked at a neighbouring hostel. In his travels, he said he was most confused by what he called flashpackers, those who "backpack for a gimmick." I had never heard this term before, but I soon realized it was a category that fit between a tourist and a backpacker. Paris (2011) defined flashpackers as "generally older, having more disposable income, and traveling as a 'backpacker' by choice rather than budgetary necessity, flashpackers' tourist experience is mediated by communications technology often through mobile devices" (Paris, 2011, p. 1095). They move through the world more fluidly with the use of transportation systems, credit cards, travel agents, and travel websites and can connect almost anywhere with various mobile technologies, uploading videos and photos instantly (O'Regan, 2008; Paris, 2011).

Interestingly, these flashpackers can access more 'off-the-beaten track' locations as they have more disposable income to book local guides, personal transportation, etc. (Hannam & Diekmann, 2010). They also do less research and stay for a shorter amount of time in one country, using technology to research on the go and moving more quickly through sights and experiences (Paris, 2011). I later met David, an older self-described flashpacker. He had disposable income and chose to stay in hostels when he could afford other more upscale accommodation. He used his money and technological access to locate the best guides, surf instructors, and other local experts and moved through New Zealand fluidly without worry of funds, transportation, or accommodation. On the subject of his travels he told me, "I'm just here to have fun, I don't know why you'd be unhappy here, I guess I just like to get out there and have fun, I don't have any worries at all [laughs]."

I provided this snapshot of backpackers in order to demonstrate the flexibility of travelling identity. Even a seemingly straightforward category like 'backpacker' is

complex and subject to individual variations and understandings. Drawing on the landscape of Kaikoura and its marine inhabitants, the community shares whale watching with different individuals who transform, reinforce, or explore their identities.

The Travellers

Much like the resistance of backpackers to tourists, in Kaikoura there was a reaction to backpackers, and it was most often associated with 'traveller.' This distinction was first brought to me by my friend and co-cleaner, Bee. Bee worked as a travel agent in her home country, Malaysia. She loved to travel and was on a working holiday visa, which enabled her to live in places for an extended period of time as she worked for her travelling money. After spending about a month cleaning together at the Dusky Lodge, I spoke to her about her own travelling identity (personal communication, October 23, 2011).

Sarah Would you call yourself a backpacker?

Bee Um, not a real backpacker anymore, just a normal person who maybe sees more things than others in the world because some people, they are not going to see a lot of thing like us travelling. When you're traveling a lot, you are seeing a lot of different things and you know what things you should do and what you should not do

Sarah And you wouldn't call yourself a backpacker?

Bee Um, I think a back packer should be like they move more easily and they don't have like car or more technology things with them.

A lack of technology and mobility defined backpacking for Bee, and because she had a car, a computer, and a phone, she was more settled and therefore did not fit her concept of 'backpacker.' According to the definitions of backpacking I set out, Bee seemed to fit the mould; she lived in a hostel, she travelled to see a lot of things and meet a lot of people, and, having her own car, she seemed flexible. However, her technology and accessibility moved her into a different identity. She did not consider

herself a flashpacker, as she was on a working holiday, had researched her destinations, and did not have excess disposable income. For Ann, and many other travellers I met, backpacking was no longer a change from home, but rather a lifestyle that began blurring any distinction between home and away. This has been labelled 'lifestyle backpacking' (Cohen, 2011), but my participants separated travelling from backpacking entirely, and it is to this distinction I dedicate my final tourism identity category.

At this point, Perkins and Cloke's (2005) description of travel as a "significant performative space in which conventional rules, practices, and moralities of everyday culture and exchange are 'rendered uncertain, negotiable and full of possibility'" (Perkins & Cloke, 2005, p. 906; Fullagar, 2001, p. 172) was clear to me. One such performance became very important in understanding the traveller identity; drawing on Franklin and Crang, Perkins and Cloke (2005) wrote, "Sometimes, travel permits performative encounter with the 'natural' or 'wild' world, in which nature becomes a visceral experience rather than an object of contemplation, revealing a "becoming-nature or becoming animal rather than a stable masterful human subject" (p. 906).

This sentiment is expressed beautifully in Varawa's "The Delicate Art of Whale Watching" (1982). She wrote about playing, with the intent of revealing a world of play that exists within the world we make ordinary with everyday worry and concern. In one story, she made vivid this world as it involved her during a unexpected but playful meeting with a porpoise in the Hawaiian sea while enjoying an afternoon snorkel. In her story, the sea became a playground with seaweed for toys and a curious porpoise for a playmate. The world changed and her own physical inadequacies as a land creature in the water washed away—that is, until a nearby shark brought back fear and worry and quite quickly brought her back to the land. However temporary, she was not above or distinct from the marine world and its inhabitants; this is the intention of the Kaikoura traveller.

The traveller was defined by my participants as someone who stays in one place for an extended period of time, working, or finding other ways to live and participate in the community. Similar to a backpacker, they are interested in the sights of a particular place, but are also interested in places, people, and events not mentioned in guide

books. Home is considered flexible to travellers, and places like the Dusky Lodge become more than a hostel used for one night of rest; they provide more permanent residency and social groups. As play is valued highly, whale watching is talked about very differently than by other groups of whale watchers.

Traveller Whale Watching

Monika was concerned for the whales. Not just because of the dangers of close boat proximity but because of the constant interference in their lives. As they jumped, splashed, and dove, whale watchers on boats would be taking pictures and getting as close as legally possible. To Monika, this encounter could not be deemed playful for either actor. She felt this was a stressful encounter, and although she had been on the whale watch boat, she valued other whale watching experiences more highly.

Monika had never seen Orca's from shore and the one day during my trip that they were close enough to be spotted, the same day Jane saw them, Monika was working and unable to leave her desk to come to the beach. She regretted and resented this, telling me that that spontaneous encounter is more visceral and separates travellers from tourists and backpackers. For her, the length of her stay in Kaikoura (over two years) and her concern for the environment and marine safety meant she should be lucky enough to be connected to whales without plan or mediation. She compared this to her viewing of Pilot whales from her home. After doing yoga, they were spotted and she felt lucky and part of nature: "When I saw the pilot whales I wasn't looking for them, like on a tour, we were both just living, you know, going about our day."

This is not to say a more visceral experience cannot occur in mediated and controlled spaces, like on the whale watch boat. I accompanied Jane on a whale watch boat tour to observe her experience. She was nervous of getting seasick, and this concern seemed to preoccupy her until the onboard announcer told us to come up to the deck as a Sperm whale was spotted. Jane shrieked, she moved herself as close to the railing as possible, and laughed, pointing to the spray and the emerging dorsal fin and eventually tail. She listened to the information being provided by the guide and talked to me about how amazing it was. But it was later that she surprised me. We had sat back down below deck, waiting to move to the next possible location when the announcer

excitedly told us to move back above deck because a humpback had been sighted. It was unplanned and unexpected. Jane stood still and silent, watching the young whale turn and lift a fin out of the water, rolling in the boat wake while Dusky Dolphins jumped nearby. She later told me, “its different excitement, like with the sperm whale. You know you’re gonna see the tail, like it’s gonna happen, you just have to wait patiently so you’re not getting too excited. But it was such a different reaction with the humpback whale. We later discussed how travellers have access to rare whale encounters, to more playful and less scheduled performances. Whale watching was discussed as a series of encounters, rather than one, and the experiences were tied to an understanding of Kaikoura.

Scavengers

Returning to Perkins and Cloke’s (2005) description of travel as a “significant performative space in which conventional rules, practices, and moralities of everyday culture and exchange are ‘rendered uncertain negotiable and full of possibility’” (Perkins & Cloke, 2005, p. 906), Kaikoura scavengers offer one last variation on traveller identity.

In Kaikoura there are individuals who seem to successfully forget everyday worries and enjoy play. They care less about money, time, privacy, security, or other things that can potentially make the world a worrisome place. Play, for them, is of the utmost priority. Many Kaikoura visitors who get to know these people often speak of them as the gypsies.⁹ but they were also known less problematically as scavengers. To be called this here means that some social norms are broken or ignored altogether. A scavenger manages to elude the common rules of Kaikoura. They will avoid spending money by either discovering free alternatives or borrowing, trading, or finding—a skill referred to amongst Dusky Lodge cleaners as, understandably, scavenging. They will, according to one so called scavenger, “work to live rather than live to work,” meaning that work does not take up one’s entire day or life but is something that is enjoyed throughout the day along with and equally as pleasurable as other activities. These

⁹ I use this term as it was one assigned by my participants. I recognize the history, racism and stereotyping that lead to its use in Kaikoura and will redefine it here as my participants understood it. See Richardson, J. (2006). *The gypsy debate: Can discourse control?* Exeter: Imprint Academic.

scavengers are not tied to mobile phones or fixed addresses; perhaps having both, they do not rely on these symbols of social stability.

This life is not made for everyone and when in conversations with people who led lives similar to this, I often said it was quite a privilege and that not all places in the world could accommodate such a way of life. To avoid seeming romantic, I would say that the scavenger life is not always as pleasant as it seems. For one, it can make one pessimistic and possibly judgemental towards other lifestyles. Things like office work become connected with anti-play. It can also become isolating. Contacting friends and family from afar becomes less easy or less desired, so social connections can be difficult to maintain. I also should mention that I have not met anyone in town who lives this lifestyle all the time. Nonetheless, individuals who are dubbed scavengers do seem to succeed in playing in the world. Like Varawa, they seem at ease, happy, and calm until they are confronted with a metaphorical (or perhaps literal) shark.

For these individuals, whale watching occurs only accidentally from shore, or, if a free boat trip is offered, “Whale Watch! If I see a whale it will be when I’m in the water surfing or diving or something, and then it will be terrifying.” For this group of travellers, their experience with whales would likely be accidental and unplanned and unlike the broader group of travellers who would pay for the experience; scavengers would not.

The Whale Watching Paradox: Travellers’ Dilemma

Whale watching, to some, may seem like a paradox. For example, ocean explorer Jacques Cousteau once famously tied up a whale underwater, blurring the boundary between wanting to observe a creature in its natural habit and influencing it with human presence and culture (Sullivan, 2000, p. 159). Similarly, Hoare (2009) wrote of a whale transported from Labrador to London for the purpose of spectacle, the conflict of wanting to see something so different but in the comfort of one’s town. What is a whale watching encounter if not a demonstration of this very paradox, the desire to contact a creature in its natural habitat with the simultaneous and inevitable transference of human culture? The encounter is both natural and cultural, unpredictable and yet planned, accidental and intentional. I have described various identities and whale watching experiences with the intention of demonstrating this flexibility and its effects on

identity and, inevitably, community. Whales are not passive in whale watch encounters; they are active participants whose everyday lives impact the meaning making of human identity and the Kaikoura community. As Herman Melville wrote, “Chief among these motives was the overwhelming idea of the great whale himself. Such a portentous and mysterious monster roused all my curiosity” (Melville, 1967).

6. Conclusion

The question of how humans live in Kaikoura cannot be answered without asking how whales play a part and have done so throughout history. Kohn (2007) questions “the privileged ontological status of humans as knowers” (6) in what is called ‘anthropology of life,’ an anthropology where nonhuman creatures are entangled with humans in many ways in the body, in language, in culture, and in history. In this anthropology, humans are not erased; in fact, as Haraway (2008) would argue, difference is of key importance. Humans can no more ‘think with’ (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010) or remain distinct and exceptional from whales than they can with the sea, it is an active ‘living with’ that makes and changes Kaikoura and the people that live and pass through it. ‘Anthropology of life’ challenges the current sociocultural anthropological practice that makes distinctly human attributes (language, culture, society, and history) tools to understand only humans rather than what it means to be human in a broader world of life (Kohn, 2007, p. 5).

Kohn (2007) reminded me of my original aspirations. I became interested in whale watching because I felt that Kaikoura was a place surrounded by whales both literally and figuratively, and I wanted to know if the whales were considered objects, commodities, or something else. Throughout this thesis, I have demonstrated that whales are something else; more importantly, they become so not because of human desire but because of their own agency, performance, and everyday lives. Throughout history, whales have impacted the humans of Kaikoura and their community; they do so via close bodily encounters and representations in narratives in businesses and in tourism.

Perkins and Cloke (2005, p. 920) wrote, referring to whales in Kaikoura,

It is difficult to be evenhanded in understanding these assemblages, relations, and performances. Given that epistemological privilege is loaded towards a nuanced account of relational human agency, despite scientific studies of

cetacean behaviour, there is a constant tendency for the animals concerned to become rather blank figures whose relational and performative capacities can become divorced from the specific agencies which they bring to relational agency.

In my accounts of human and whale entanglements, I too worry about a blankness in the nonhuman creatures of which I write. However, I remind myself that in all the ways humans enact whale watching in Kaikoura, whales enact as well through their spontaneous and unpredictable performances and their “power to evoke elusory, sublime, transcendent, emotional, and aesthetic relations with humans” (Perkins & Cloke, 2005, p. 921). Just as a participant said to me when I was struggling to learn how to research in Kaikoura with whales, “your thesis is just a name you call your life” (personal communication, October 10, 2011). Whale watching is just a label that specifies part of life in Kaikoura.

I wanted to include one last example of this co-constituted entanglement, a moment that I think back to fondly not just because of the human participant but because of the whale and the power of its performance.



Figure 15. Looking for Wales.

Note. Photo printed with permission from Andrew McDonnell.

This photo (Figure 15) was taken on a whale watching boat excursion in mid-February. Jimmy, a Welsh tattoo artist, chef, surfer, and Kaikoura bartender, was struggling to get a photo of a whale's tail as it dove down beneath the water. Andrew, his whale watch companion and the photographer of this photo, took a picture of Jimmy instead of the whale because he was amused at Jimmy's frustration and concentration as the whale dove too quickly for a "good photo." What was especially interesting about this photo was that when it was posted to a social media site, as many travelling pictures are, the comment "looking for Wales?" appeared. If not for the unpredictability of the whale, its fast dive and its appearance in the first place, Andrew may not have taken this photo. Once posted, connections were made between home and away, and whales were linked to place through social media wordplay. In that comment, Jimmy was represented as away from his country of origin, as a traveller linked to home, and as a whale watcher. The whale impacted his identity, place in the community, and his relationship to home in one quick dive into the South Pacific.

"I Am the Whale"

While on board my first whale watch boat with Tutu, the resident Sperm Whale, a mere 50 metres away and set off by a backdrop of coast and mountains, the words "I am the whale" resonated with me, inviting questions without answers. Do some people connect more with other species? If so, is that encounter more meaningful? I do not have answers for these questions but I can convey what those words meant to me.

"I am the whale" goes beyond what one individual feels in a particular encounter. It reveals the importance of the human in multispecies encounters and the danger in trying to erase species difference to find equality. The goal of my writing was not to hide the human in whale-human encounters, but rather explore the role they have played and continue to play in Kaikoura. In doing so, I avoided 'thinking with' whales; treating them as symbols, objects, or commodities (Kirksey & Helmreich, 2010). Instead, I explored how humans 'live with' whales, how whale lives affect humans in their bodies, in history, in politics, in their identities, and in their community. "I am the whale" is a message to me as a researcher and as a human interested in species respect and mutuality. By studying the human, I was studying the whale and vice versa. This realization allowed me to truly break down boundaries and binaries and exist in a natureculture myself.

Whales and humans are different species that live different lives, but those lives are connected in our bodies, in history, and in our community; they are not distinct. As Kohn (2007, p. 6) argued, situating human worlds within processes and relationships that exceed the human is an important task for those of us who care about nonhuman animals and their relationships with humans, who are concerned and wish to understand environmental crises, and those of us who wish to readdress anthropological social theory. He continued by re-considering Haraway's (2004) words: "perhaps we have never been human" (p. 2). After seeing the deep entanglements of humans with whales in Kaikoura, this call to re-understand humans as part of interconnected life worlds was clear to me.

I end with more of Haraway's (2008) words: "We know that becoming is always becoming with—in a contact zone where the outcome, where who is in the world, is at stake" (p. 244). For me, these words carried more meaning once I realized the extent of our entanglements with other species. It is not just for the whales' sake that mutuality is desired, but for our own and all other species with which we are entangled everyday.

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