Journal of Religion & Film

Volume 16
Issue 2 *October 2012*

Article 9

10-1-2012

Whale Rider: The Re-enactment of Myth and the Empowerment of Women

Kevin V. Dodd
Watkins College of Art, Design, and Film, doddblair@bellsouth.net

Recommended Citation
Dodd, Kevin V. (2012) "Whale Rider: The Re-enactment of Myth and the Empowerment of Women," *Journal of Religion & Film*: Vol. 16: Iss. 2, Article 9.
Available at: http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol16/iss2/9

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Journal of Religion & Film by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.

Whale Rider: The Re-enactment of Myth and the Empowerment of Women

Abstract
Whale Rider represents a particular type of mythic film that includes within it references to an ancient sacred story and is itself a contemporary recapitulation of it. The movie also belongs to a further subcategory of mythic cinema, using the double citation of the myth—in its original form and its re-enactment—to critique the subordinate position of women to men in the narrated world. To do this, the myth is extended beyond its traditional scope and context. After looking at how the movie embeds the story and recapitulates it, this paper examines the film's reception. To consider the variety of positions taken by critics, it then analyses the traditional myth as well as how the book first worked with it. The conclusion is, in distinction to the book, that the film drives a wedge between the myth's original sacred function to provide meaning in the world for the Maori people and its extended intention to empower women, favoring the latter at the former's expense.

Author Notes
Kevin Dodd teaches at the Watkins College of Art, Design, and Film.

This article is available in Journal of Religion & Film: http://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/jrf/vol16/iss2/9

Introduction

Whale Rider is an example of a mythic film that neither simply retells a traditional myth nor completely updates it. Rather, films like this embed the myth in abbreviated form within a contemporary story so that it both maintains some aspects of its own integrity, and it recapitulates and revitalizes itself in the new environment.[1] Often the original myth is referenced by a key episode. In this case the myth is of Kahutia-te-rangi or Paikea and the key episode is of him riding into Aotearoa/New Zealand on the back of a whale.

It also belongs to a further subset of mythic films whereby, when the traditional story is incorporated into the modern setting, the re-enactment has something to say about the treatment of women in the narrated culture. It critiques the subordinate position of women to men and calls for their social empowerment. To do this, several strategies may be used; these include extending the myth, re-applying it, or subverting it. *Whale Rider* uses extension. The ancient story has little to say about women directly and so its reach must be increased. When this is done, the story opens out to celebrate a young woman's natural leadership skills, which previously had been suppressed.

Whale Rider was, of course, more than a narration; it inhabited a contested social context. The narrative of Paikea functions as a sacred story of origin to the Ngāti Porou tribe of the Maori people; "the whale is the ancestral link to the originary Hawaiki, their means of arrival, settlement and cultural continuity in Aotearoa."[2] The Ngāti Porou trace their lineage back to Paikea through his descendent several generations later, Porourangi, the eponymous founder of their tribes. So we will first examine the film and its reception and then the traditional myth and the book to see if the film maintains the original sacred functions of the story.

The Film

The film commences with a young, subdued female voice (Keisha Castle-Hughes) narrating the following. "In the old days, the land felt a great emptiness. It was waiting: waiting to be filled up; waiting for someone to love it; waiting for a leader. And he came on the back of a whale—a man to lead a new people. Our ancestor, Paikea. But now we were waiting for the firstborn of the new generation, for the descendant of the whale rider, for the boy who would be chief. There was no gladness when I was born. My twin brother died and took our mother with him. Everyone was waiting for the firstborn boy to lead us. But he died. And I didn't." We watch Porourangi (Cliff Curtis), helpless and grieving, lose his wife and then face his father, Koro (Rawiri Paratene), whose singular empathy is his counsel that Porourangi can go home and try again. Porourangi asserts himself against Koro's disregard: he leaves home for Europe to pursue a career in art; he names his daughter Paikea, the last word spoken by his wife.

Thus, the movie alerts us immediately that we shall be identifying ourselves with Paikea and with her quiet embrace of her grandfather's abiding disappointment. She will narrate her own story. Koro is chief, but he feels impotent as his people are assimilating and losing their distinctive pride and heritage; he had been looking to his first-born son to be the leader who could restore them. But Porourangi had neither the talent nor the inclination. So Koro, with increased urgency, has looked to a grandson—that he might prove to be a "prophet"; someone "who's gonna lead our people outta the darkness." Paikea has internalized this.

Although her father has left for Europe, Paikea has stayed with her grandparents at Whangara on the North Island. She is now a girl reaching puberty. She joins her grandfather as

he is repairing a small boat engine and poses a question to him about her ancestors. He shows her a rope, observing that each strand is one of her ancestors; together they form an unbroken tie to Paikea and the whale on which he rode. After this, he twists the rope around the engine and pulls, snapping it. He curses the rope and leaves to get another. Paikea, however, ties a knot, repairing the rope, and then proceeds to start the engine, which angers him when he returns. The symbolism is obvious: he rejects that she, as a girl, could re-link her people with their ancestors and thereby revive them.

Paikea, however, seems unable not to take a leadership role and it creates an increasing amount of tension between her and her grandfather. Yet her calling attracts important allies. While her grandmother, Nanny Flowers (Vicky Haughton), has a reservoir of defiant energy toward Koro, she also respects him and his ultimate goals. She is not herself a target of his frustration and so she is provoked to confront him only to support those who are. Since her sons "are men" and "can handle it," she stands up to him mainly on Paikea's behalf. Paikea also receives support from her father and her uncle even though her father is abroad and her uncle, Rawiri (Grant Roa), lives an unmotivated life drained of ambition. Whatever their struggles with Koro have been in the past, they have lost them now in the triumph of Koro's disappointment with them. In Paikea's struggle, however, she mainly finds her strength from the sea; she often gazes out at it expectantly.

Koro announces that he is going to teach all the first-born sons the ancient ways in order to find the new leader. He tells Nanny, "When she was born, that's when things went wrong for us." Paikea is not to attend; when she does, she is allowed only to watch from the back. She quietly refuses to switch seats from the front, and so is ejected. She covertly returns, listening through a window to learn the chant of Paikea when his canoe sank and "he called on the ancient

ones for strength." Koro says to the boys, "You're going to learn that chant. . . . And if you break the chant, you will suffer the consequences." Hemi asks, "Like what? Someone dying or something?" Koro, after noticing Paikea eavesdropping and playing on the boys' castration anxiety, responds, "Like your dick'll drop off. So hold on to your dicks." He makes sure they are all doing so before beginning Paikea's chant, thus stressing that the founding myth relates to her differently than to the boys.

Hidden, she watches as the boys learn to use the *taiaha*, an ancient weapon of war. She is discovered and gets in trouble ("You don't mess around with sacred things!"), but she wants to learn anyway. Nanny directs Paikea to her uncle, who used to be a champion at it. By learning with him, she helps restore his sense of dignity. Hemi, when he sees Paikea lurking about with her *taiaha*, lunges at her with his and she both defends herself and disarms him. But the noise draws Koro out. "Do you know what you've done?" he asks. "You have broken the *tapu* of this school. On this *marae*, the one place where our old ways are upheld." She apologizes but he replies, "You're not sorry. Right from the beginning, you knew this wasn't for you, but you keep coming back."

He takes the boys out to sea. A sign of a chief is the *reiputa*, a decorated whale's tooth, worn as a necklace. Koro takes his off and throws it a distance from the boat, telling them "If you have the tooth of a whale, you must have the whale's jaw to wield it. One of you will bring that back to me." No one does, and Koro goes into mourning. When Paikea herself is out on the boat with Rawiri a little later, she asks where Koro threw the *reiputa*. She effortlessly retrieves it. When Rawiri shows his mother what Paikea found, he asks if she is going to reveal this to the grieving Koro. "No. He's not ready yet."

At this point, however, Paikea seems ready to admit defeat. An essay of hers has won an award and she wants Koro present when she delivers it at a school function. Through tears that night, with Koro absent, she states "My name is Paikea Apirana. And I come from a long line of chiefs, stretching all the way back to Hawaiki, where our ancient ones are, the ones that first heard the land crying and sent a man. His name was also Paikea and I am his most recent descendant. But I was not the leader my grandfather was expecting. And by being born, I broke the line back to the ancient ones. . . . But we can learn. And if the knowledge is given to everyone, we can have lots of leaders. And soon, everyone will be strong, not just the ones that've been chosen."

Meanwhile, Koro is drawn to the beach where about a dozen whales have become stranded. Paikea is asleep before the rest of the village finds out, and the night is spent trying desperately to keep them alive. In the morning, Paikea awakens and sees what is happening. At the same moment as Koro, she sees the proximate cause. Some distance from the others, larger than the rest, is "Paikea's whale," "sent to us because we were in trouble," Paikea narrates. Under the direction of Koro and Rawiri, Paikea being forbidden even to touch it, because Koro holds her responsible, a rope is tied to the whale and attached to a tractor. Then aided by dozens of people, the tractor tries to turn the whale around. If the whale returns to the ocean, the others will follow, Koro observes.

Recapitulating the scene with the boat engine, the rope breaks. In sympathy with the seeming loss of his people, this whale "wanted to die. There wasn't a reason to live anymore," Koro explains. As the people walk dejectedly away to rest, Paikea greets the whale with the informal greeting of holding heads together and rubbing noses. She has known this whale all her

life. She then mounts it as her namesake had done; the whale immediately responds to her, turns around and swims out to sea.

By saving the whales, Paikea is saving her people as well. She is not afraid to die, she explains. Koro, finally realizing his patriarchal ways were doing the opposite of what he desired, stays alone in Paikea's hospital room, as she lies unconscious with his *reiputa* around her neck, praying to her: "Wise leader, forgive me. I am just a fledgling, new to flight." He now sees Paikea not only as the knot that ties the present generation to the ancestors, but as the embodiment of the ancestors themselves. As she recovers, so do the people. The movie ends with the celebration surrounding the launch of her father's previously decaying ancestral long canoe. Koro is beaming while Paikea presides over the affair. She is to lead the people into a new era, that of democratic, and therefore of women's empowerment, as she envisioned in her speech. With an integrated group of rowers in the canoe, Paikea gives her final narration: "My name is Paikea Apirana, and I come from a long line of chiefs, stretching all the way back to the whale rider. I'm not a prophet, but I know that our people will keep going forward—all together, with all of our strength."

Critical Reception of the Film

Janet Wilson has summarized the criticisms of the film as threefold: neglecting the colonial past and its contemporary legacies, universalizing its themes, and homogenizing Maori as a single ethnic category.[3] First, Mandy Treagus holds that the film's depoliticization of the book leads "to a romanticization of Maori culture . . . in which the impact of colonialism can be ignored." "While *Whale Rider* is a highly successful New Zealand film," she writes, "it may not

serve the Maori pursuit of sovereignity as well as it at first appears to."[4] Pascale De Souza comes to a similar conclusion: While *Whale Rider* undoubtedly contributes to the celebration of Maori women "the contradiction between Maori identity and twentieth-century life 'continues unresolved in practical reality'"[5] Antje M. Rauwerda wonders if the positive international reactions to the film suggest something about 'western' viewers; "perhaps [we] would so much like to be convinced that indigenous populations can recover from European settlement that a movie celebrating traditional Maoriness in a contemporary context relieves our consciences."[6]

Barry Barclay, in 2003, wrote an open letter to John Barnett, one of *Whale Rider*'s producers, in response to his assertions that the story was properly universal, although it admittedly arose specifically among the Ngāti Porou.[7] Barclay concluded: "[D]on't put us down when we raise our concerns about how non-Indigenous artists handle this type of material; and don't go hyper-promoting, in any triumphalist way, 'universal story' to the detriment of genuine Indigenous efforts. Above all, don't tell us that we, as Mäori, must like this film. It is every People's right to make their minds up on that, particularly when it is their own world being shown up there on the screen."[8]

Tānia M. Ka'ai has written a highly critical paper on the film.[9] She notes the prominence of women leaders in sacred stories and in history and concludes, "It is well known amongst all Māori *iwi* [tribes] that Ngāti Porou is the most pro-female *iwi* of them all. The film contradicts the histories and traditions of this *iwi* that it is based on".[10] She outlines the special relationship between grandparents and grandchildren and finds the film's depiction of Paikea sitting on the front pew at the *marae* as something no child raised by grandparents would do and her refusal to leave as a glaring instance of an outsider (the director, Niki Caro—a *Pākehā*, a New Zealander of European descent), steeped in "Eurocentric feminism," misinterpreting Maori rituals as

degrading to women.[11] She examines Maori leadership lineage and qualities, uncovering an intrinsic flexibility and none of Koro's rigid stress on male primogeniture.[12] Finally she notes the dance at the end of the film, as the ceremonial canoe is launched, was probably chosen for marketing purposes, for two famous Ngāti Porou compositions, much more appropriate for the scene, were ignored.[13] She concludes that "the reality for Māori is that the film is a distortion and misrepresentation of the Māori world and in particular of Ngāti Porou *tikanga* and *kawa* [custom and protocol]."[14]

On the other hand, the book's author, Witi Ihimaera, who is clearly aware of the tensions an indigenous artist faces in trying to be true to one's distinctive heritage while using tools and approaches of other cultures,[15] has said he was thrilled with the work, and he would argue that it was a Maori film for all intents and purposes. "[T]he greatest seal of authenticity is if the film is claimed by Maori. And the Maori people of Whangara have claimed 'Whale Rider' as their own, claimed Niki and thrown the cloak of their *aroha* (love) over her shoulders . . ."[16]

Alan Duff is another important representative, with Ihimaera, of the Maori Renaissance, most famous for having written the book *Once Were Warriors* (1990) about Maori urban experience, which was adapted for film in 1994. He has written that only women "can bring about the changes in Maori society [for its renewal] which their male counterparts won't ever bring because they have no desire to."[17] Pascale De Souza has observed, after quoting this passage, that "[f]emale leadership in the films is not based upon 'Muss' (the nickname given to Jake [in *Once Were Warriors*] on account of his muscles) but upon women's roles as providers of both actual and cultural sustenance. Thus, in *Whale Rider*, the grandmother supports Pai in her quest for recognition, and Pai invests all her energy into learning Maori traditions."[18] He

continues, as we have seen, that *Whale Rider* undoubtedly does contribute to the celebration of Maori women as leaders.[19]

Finally, Jennifer Gauthier puts the discussion in another relevant context. She considered the film with two others released around the same time, *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner* and *Rabbit-Proof Fence*, saying that "they open up national cinema to voices that have long been silent (silenced)."[20] She concludes by saying these three films "[u]sher in a newer, revitalized form of national cinema, one that can stand up to the homogenizing powers of globalization. While they attract global audiences, they remain firmly rooted in a specific local culture and place. They not only entertain diverse viewers, but they also empower the colonized other within the postcolonial nation."

To adjudicate between the more positive and more negative assessments we need to analyse the traditional myth and then the book, upon which the film was based.

The Background Myth

"Everything follows from that first arrival. It establishes and makes meaningful the relationship between the land and the people who live on it, and the relationships between different sections of the tribe. It explains the past, bringing it into the present, and it gives the people mana." (Margaret Orbell)[21]

There are a number of versions of this founding myth of the Ngāti Porou; I will relate a composite from several common approaches.[22] In the ancient past, on the ancestral homeland of the Maori, called Hawaiki, not identifiable with any geographical location,[23] the people of the powerful priest-chief Uenuku prevailed over the forces of priest-chief Tawheta (or Wheta) in a

fierce battle launched in retaliation for a kin slaying.[24] In part, victory was due to Uenuku being able to call a fog to settle upon his enemies, causing them to fight among themselves, and then to call for its removal, so his forces could take advantage of the disarray. As booty, Uenuku took Tawheta's daughter as a wife, and she bore a son, Rua-tapu. When all Uenuku's sons were grown, he had a large canoe built and decorated, and then he had the hair of his many sons combed, anointed, tied, and ornamented, so they would be handsome when paddling the canoe. The last to be so prepared was Kahutia-te-rangi. Rua-tapu asked his father why he was being neglected, and Uenuku said these rites were holy and could not be defiled on the son of a slave woman, a son of little worth.

Grieving, Rua-tapu decided upon a plan of revenge. He drilled a hole in the canoe, plugged and hid the hole under wood shavings, then he roused his half-brothers to join with him and take the canoe out to sea. Keeping his heel on the hole, he kept prodding them to paddle ever farther from shore until the sight of land was lost. Rua-tapu then removed the plug, let the canoe sink, and even pursued his brothers until they all drowned. Only Kahutia-te-rangi eluded him, chanting a powerful incantation (*karakia*) to aid him as he swam away. When he finished the chant, he was carried away on a whale or sea-monster (*paikea* or *taniwha*) and taken to the east coast of the North Island.[25] Henceforth he himself was known as Paikea and became ancestor to the Ngāti Porou.[26]

There is little in the myth that develops a theme on women beyond three brief episodes. First, Uenuku was already related in marriage to Tawheta at the beginning of the story; he had married Tawheta's sister, Taka-rita. Taka-rita allegedly committed adultery, so Uenuku killed her; he cooked and ate (or had his son eat) her heart. When Tawheta heard of his sister's death, "he wept for her, then he waited."[27] But Uenuku thought the act to be inconsequential, so he and

his people were unprepared for Tawheta's act of vengeance, the kin slaying, which led to the aforementioned war. Second, it was considered normal to take a female survivor of a defeated adversary as a trophy and always hold her in an inferior social position. Third, the place where Paikea lands, he names Ahuahu; he marries and has children there and then moves on, doing the same as he journeys (thus leaving behind descendents throughout the region) until he settles in Whangara. One place he moves through on the way to Whangara is Whakatane, which means "Act-like-a-male," and there he marries Manawa-tina and has children. Manawa-tina, therefore, has to provide an explanation for the name, so typically she is initially mistaken by Paikea for a man. But there are more interesting variations like that of Mohi Ruatapu: After marrying her, all Paikea did "was sleep in the settlement; his wife was the only one who cultivated the crops. Then Manawa-tina said, 'Well, for a long time I've been a woman, but now I'm turning myself into a man!'"[28] But these are asides. The narrative is about men and the themes have to do with such things as male honor, humiliation, hospitality, revenge, conduct in war, and power (both social and over nature).

But what is the larger context in which these are to be understood? First, this story is but a small part of Maori originating stories: there are narratives of the genesis of heaven and earth (Rangi and Papa); of their children who are progenitors of the forests with their inhabitants, of winds and storms, of wild edible food, of cultivated food, of the ocean and all therein, and of human beings; of the separation of heaven and earth and the placement of the sun, moon, and stars; of the trickster god Maui fishing up the islands of Aotearoa; of why the lands appear as they do and are named as they are; of ceremonies, customs, morals, and powerful incantations.[29] Together they place the people in an environment shaped by their gods and ancestors, and provide for a continuing meaningful and significant communal life therein. Second, there are

many arrival stories as colorful (and more that are not) as that of Paikea: "One [ancestor] travelled on a rainbow, and another on the back of an albatross; several of them floated on pieces of pumice . . . ; . . . a man named Manawatere glided over the ripples of the water; two people floated here on calabashes . . . ; and a woman named Wairakewa, who had been left behind, caught up with her family by speeding across the ocean seated upon a manuka bush, then planted her tapu [sacred] bush when she reached Whakatane."[30] If the story of the whale rider is removed from this web of stories, it cannot alone bear the significance of the people.

The Book

The 1987 book recasts this original myth.[31] In his infancy, the whale lost his mother in a shark attack in the waters of Hawaiki. Crying over his loss, the young whale was drawn to the pensive, yet comforting strains of a flute played by a human, and the two, over time, developed a close bond. The young man, Kahutia Te Rangi, one of the few still gifted with communicating ("interlocking") with animals, began swimming with the bull whale, and then even mounting and riding him. The whale became adept at tensing his muscles to create a saddle for the man, to hold him in place, and to keep oxygen available for him to breathe underwater. One day Kahutia Te Rangi asked the whale to take him to Aotearoa and in he rode throwing spears from the houses of learning, which carried the life-giving forces which allow for close communication with the world and the wisdom of oneness between humans and animals.[32] The last spear would not leave his hand, so he spoke to it that it may fly into the future "to flower when the people are troubled and it is most needed." With that, the spear released itself and flew forward over centuries, landing some 150 years before the current story, roughly the time of the Treaty of

Waitangi (1840), "an infamously vague document in which the [Maori] chiefs granted sovereignty to the British,"[33] and waited.[34] The book narrates its subsequent flowering.

Koro is chief of the Ngāti Porou on the east coast of the North Island, residing in Whangara; he knows that the present generation will be taken care of by his grandson, Porourangi, but is worried about the next generation, especially now that Porourangi has only a daughter and his wife, Rehua, has died as a result of child birth. Equally problematic for Koro is Rehua naming her after Kahutia Te Rangi, which Koro considers to be belittling to the founder's prestige. Koro "could not reconcile his traditional beliefs about Maori hereditary rights with Kahu's birth,"[35] so he dismisses Kahu from the beginning: "She won't be any good to me," he declares. Koro is preoccupied with "many serious issues facing the survival of the Maori people and [their] land,"[36] so he not infrequently travels to conferences with other Maori leaders and joins them in making and supporting land claims in New Zealand courts. At home, he holds a regular instruction period for men to learn their history and customs—"to keep the Maori language going and to increase the strength of the tribe".[37] Just for men, he stresses, "because men are sacred." This is not unique to Koro; as Margaret Orbell writes, "In general, men were regarded as *tapu* or sacred, their actions restricted by social and religious usages; while women were *noa*, associated with profane, everyday concerns."[38] A central family dynamic is established very early: Kahu loves Koro (whom she calls "Paka," which means "bugger" and is used by her great grandmother to refer to him in the third person) with a resilient love, "but he didn't love her."[39]

Her uncle, Rawiri, the narrator, enjoys Nanny Flowers's disgust with Koro's patriarchal behavior. Nanny is an outsider—she is obviously from Whakatane, for she references her own story of how it received its name, "Act-like-a-Male": the myth of Muriwai. In the distant past,

Muriwai had come to Aotearoa on the *Maataatua* canoe. As it approached land, her brothers disembarked to investigate. The sea rose and the canoe began to draw precariously close to rocks and to certain death for all on board. "So she chanted special prayers asking the Gods to give her the right and open the way for her to take charge. Then she cried, . . . Now I shall make myself a man. She called out to the crew and ordered them to start paddling quickly, and the canoe was saved in the nick of time." Nanny Flowers would say to Koro that she herself was a descendent of Muriwai, "the greatest chief of my tribe."[40] She also alludes to another descendent of Muriwai as a model of female nonconformity: Mihi Kotukutuku (Stirling: 1870-1956). As the senior representative of her tribe, she had the right to speak on the *marae*, something considered *tapu*. In 1917, a man demanded she sit down and accused her of trampling the protocol of his *marae*. Her response was to tell *him* to sit down, to recite her geneology to show that he was her junior, and then to bend over and expose herself, saying he should not insult women, since a woman gave him birth.[41] These are two significant exceptions—one mythic and the other historical—to the rule that women operate outside the sacred sphere, which Koro willfully disregards in his quest to empower his people only through male leadership. We have noted two other exceptions associated with Whakatane in the previous section. Koro may ignore this minority tradition of women acting in sacred roles, but Nanny makes certain he cannot claim ignorance of it.

Koro's teachings stress the contemporary loss of the primeval interconnection between the gods, human beings, and nature.[42] Kahu is eight years old when one night, in the midst of a severe storm, Paikea's whale, now extremely ancient, beaches himself alone in Whangara. He is nostalgic for the days of his youth and the bond he had had with Kahutia Te Rangi, and distressed over the changes to the world, especially the cruelty and disregard of human beings to

the sea. Koro knows immediately that this is Paikea's whale and he discerns that it is up to them whether he live or die. Concluding this to be sacred work, he calls only males to work to free the whale; Nanny Flowers says, "If I think you need help, well, I shall change myself into a man. . . . Kahu, also, if she has to . . ."[43] Koro tells those gathered that this is a test. Once there was interlocking with gods and animals by human beings, he teaches, but humanity, in its arrogance, drove a wedge through the original oneness of the world.[44] This has led to a separation between the rational and irrational, the natural and the supernatural. The whale out there, however, is both; "if we have forgotten the communion then we have ceased to be Maori! . . . If we are able to return it to the sea, then that will be proof that the oneness is still with us." "Not only its salvation but ours is waiting out there."[45]

They fail and Koro sends Rawiri to "tell your Nanny Flowers it is time for the women to act the men,"[46] but Nanny forbids Kahu to join them. Surprising and disappointing them, the whale fights them off and moves out of their reach. Koro says, "Our ancestor wants to die. . . . The people who once commanded it are no longer here."[47] It is at this point that we have "a narrative resurrection of a primeval reality."[48] Kahu, undetected except by Rawiri, moves through the crashing waves, greets the whale, and identifies herself as Kahutia Te Rangi. The whale in shocked ecstacy, tenses his muscles to provide steps to his back, forms the saddle, and creates the impression around the blowhole so the rider can breathe underwater. When Kahu mounts him, he turns back and rejoins his pod, which had remained offshore. Kahu weeps because of her love for those she is leaving behind and "because she didn't know what dying was like."[49] On the other hand, in his bliss at being ridden by his old friend, the whale dives deeply, but is stopped midway by his equally ancient lover who was also with him when Kahutia Te Rangi rode in to Aotearoa; she redirects him to that time so he can discover for himself that the

human on his back is not his master, but his descendent "flowering" in the time of need. His mind shifts from nostalgic memory to the actual present and future, and he realizes the connection that still binds him to this people, so he resurfaces to deposit her onto a bed of kelp, under the protection of dolphins, until she be discovered and given leadership by her people. The bull whale's willingness to see the wisdom of his lover's counsel prepares us for Koro's final conversion to the guidance he has received from the significant women in his life.

Myths of the genesis of habitation must establish, among other things, a sacred bond, a covenant, whereby the environment willingly yields its bounty to the people through their intervention and the people carry out renewal rituals for the flora and fauna upon which they rely. This interdependence helps define the unique obligations and meaning of the people—they are the people of this land and the land is that of this people. Ihimaera has not lost sight of this. For one thing, he does not try to replace the web of interrelated sacred myths with this single one. He keeps the story of the whale rider embedded in other origin stories, so he has Rawiri pause in the narration to talk about the importance of whales to the Maori, by highlighting their place in the creation story of Rangi and Papa, and of their offspring.[50] He notes variations, referencing one where the whale becomes an island near Tolaga Bay.[51] Finally, he stresses that this is just one of many arrival myths. "Other tribes in Aotearoa have their own stories of the high chiefs and priests who then arrived to bless their tribal territories; our blessing was brought by similar chiefs and priests, and Kahutia Te Rangi was one of them".[52]

Further, Ihimaera fixes a unique significance on the Maori people through elaborating this myth. Kahutia Te Rangi rides in as a leader of a people who are to be uniquely gifted in "interlocking" with the other creatures of these islands and their surroundings; it is this special identity that has been compromised by European occupation. Thus the last spear landed around

the time of the Treaty of Waitangi, and awaited its moment to blossom, in the person of Kahu, who can be seen to represent the Maori Renaissance, with its own internal drives to re-evaluate gender relations, as it was gaining social traction. The book, therefore, is filled with a sense of ancestral providence: Kahu is called to restore the people to the promise of their original, collective mission in the world: uniquely interlocking with this environment (and therefore implicitly the need to reclaim their land). This is reinforced by the story of the whale, trying to navigate through the waters of human cruelty and neglect to refind his lost link to humanity. His connection can only be with *this* people and with a leader descended from the original Kahutia Te Rangi.

A sideward glance to the Hawai'ian activist and scholar Haunani-Kay Trask, who emerges from the same sorts of movements that spawned the Maori Renaissance, may be helpful. She bases her demands for sovereignty precisely on this reciprocal relationship between the land and its people.[53] She holds that the mythic geneology links her people specifically to these islands as children to their mother (Papahānaumoku), and to everything on the land as to siblings. Other mythologies among different native peoples link them to other types of land in the same way. The loss of these geneologies leads to estrangement, the treatment of land as a resource, as real estate, and as a dump, hence to the "rape" of the mother and the exploitation of siblings. The future health of the diverse lands and ecosystems on the planet depends on the restoration of these specific mythic interconnections between the lands and their people; the homogenizing drives of global capitalism can only result in wholesale ruination and pollution. So, the reassertion of a robust sacred mythology has had political and economic consequences with regard to the issues of indigenous sovereignty, autonomy, and rights of prior occupation in land disputes.[54] This is unsurprising since it was the original assertion of a Christian

mythological worldview that helped justify the imperial claims that dispossessed native peoples to begin with.[55]

The gender of the leader is secondary to this. The book enters in as one voice among many in Maori discussions about the public role of women—in tradition, in history, and currently. Ihimaera, as we have seen, lifts the Muriwai story from the set of traditions surrounding the naming of Whakatane, or "Act-like-a-male." Kahu is not only a descendent of Muriwai on her father's side, but also through her mother.[56] The whole idea of this other descendent of Muriwai, Rehua, wanting her daughter's name to be drawn from Porourangi's people, so that "at least her firstborn child would be linked to her father's people and land," haunts the story, because she did not draw it from the pool of female names. It is like naming a daughter Abraham in the Abrahamic traditions, or Moses, or Jesus, or Muhammad. It is deliberately provocative and seems aimed to incite unrest in Koro's patriarchal world, disputation between Nanny and Koro, the necessity of taking a stand for women's leadership in Porourangi and Rawiri, and a sense of destiny in Kahu herself. When Koro confesses at the end that he is properly blamed for everything and should have known "she was the one" from the beginning, he refers to an earlier incident. When Kahu was not yet two, Koro was relating a symbolic gesture he made long before to draw power from his mentor, biting his big toe, when he stops mid-sentence and looks under the table to see Kahu biting *his* big toe.[57] But he could have blamed himself for not coming to terms with her name in the first place, and what Rehua was trying to say by it on her deathbed.

Conclusion

Whale Rider highlights the fact that recapitulations of sacred stories can be tricky. The movie *is* reluctant to articulate the original story as the religious myth of a particular people the way the book does. It gives little information on the myth and its place among the Maori tribes. We are told that Aotearoa/New Zealand was "empty" and had a longing for one to arrive that would be leader of a new people, and that the ancestors in Hawaiki heard the land's cry and "sent" Paikea there. We are left to square this with the context given for Paikea's chant: his canoe sinks and *he* calls on the ancestors for help. This can be done, but what we have is not much of a story, even for an abbreviation. It is more of an emotional image, of loneliness that could be assuaged by about any leader and any people (even Europeans in the 17th and 18th centuries). And we are given so little about the whale, that its self-identification with this people remains mysterious even at the end. So the movie reduces the myth simply to how a people came to inhabit a land, losing its context within the larger corpus of founding myths, within the variety of renditions, and within alternatives that are equally sacred to other tribes. Because the dialectic between land and the people is so atrophied at the level of the original myth, its recapitulation in the film becomes mainly a cultural renaissance through democratization. Ritual in the finale, at the launching of the canoe, becomes an end in itself, the spectacle of a heritage, rather than a means to cosmic, environmental, and social renewal.[58] There is a pride to be found in cultural rejuvenation, but it is a far cry from the sense of meaning inherent in traditional myths of origination and their use in such contemporary issues as reclaiming land.

The movie has much to commend it, but it is primarily in terms of relationships. It works through the multiple tensions of the love that a grandfather has for his granddaughter, the

resentment a leader feels towards someone he perceives is sapping the potential of his people, the resilient forgiveness of a granddaughter to her grandfather's hurtful actions, and the determination of an adolescent girl to restore her people's dignity through her mastery of tradition despite the obstacles. It follows familiar tropes of a girl's coming of age, seeing the injustice of the special advantages males take for granted (yet think they have earned) in patriarchal cultures and acting to rectify the situation. While there is much to appreciate in this story of female empowerment, it suffers significant losses from the book in the sense of divine and ancestral providence over Maori history, in insight on the unique mission of this people, and in the power of the sacred to break through the mundane in a recapitulation of the people's founding event, restoring to them their special calling in the world. A wedge is placed between the theme of the restoration of a people to its originating call and that of the (universal) empowerment of women, allowing the distinctiveness of Maori lived experience to become a simple variable plugged into the general story of any adolescent girl's groundbreaking liberation from patriarchal strictures. So the extension of the myth to women certainly works, but only at the expense of the myth's original function.[59]

---

[1] Lydia Wevers notes how authors can dissolve "the boundaries between primordial ancestors and contemporary characters to produce a world view in which specifically located spiritual and cosmological beliefs are . . . visibly enacted," "Globalising Indigenes: Postcolonial Fiction from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific," *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 5 (2006): 126-27, accessed September 5, 2012, http://www.nla.gov.au/openpublish/index.php/jasal/article/view/92/341.

[2] Chris Prentice, "Riding the Whale? Postcolonialism and Globalization in *Whale Rider*," in *Global Fissures: Postcolonial Fusions*, ed. Clara A. B. Joseph and Janet Wilson (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2006), 254.

[3] "Re-representing Indigeneity: Approaches to History in Some Recent New Zealand and Australian Films," in *New Zealand Cinema: Interpreting the Past*, ed. Alistair Fox, Barry Grant, Hilary Radner (Chicago: Intellect, University of Chicago Press, 2011): 203f. See also http://northampton.academia.edu/JanetWilson/Papers/1088871/Re-representing_Indigeneity_Approaches_to_History_in_Some_Recent_New_Zealand_and_Australian_Films (accessed September 5, 2012). She develops three categories for analyzing recent films on the subject—Cultural Contrast; Cultural Recuperation; Cultural Difference—and places *Whale Rider* in the second one, stressing the need "to reclaim the indigenous heritage in order to acquire greater autonomy in the present" (199f).

[4] "Whale Rider," *Directory of World Cinema*, accessed September 5, 2012, http://www.worldcinemadirectory.org/.

[5] "Maoritanga in *Whale Rider* and *Once Were Warriors*: a Problematic Rebirth through female leaders," *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 1:1 (2007): 11. So too Lydia Wevers, "Globalising Indigenes," 130 and Chris Prentice, "Riding the Whale?" 258-259.

[6] "The Whale Rider," *Postcolonial Text* 1,1 (2004), accessed September 5, 2012, http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/view/292/779. It also suggests a quest for "authentic" experiences that can be "consumed" by western audiences. Note the importance of concerns about the genuineness of the depiction of Maori life among both German-speaking critics and audiences in Stan Jones, "Siting *Whale Rider*: A Survey of its Reception in a European Context," *British Review of New Zealand Studies* 14 (2003/4): 61-83, esp., 68f.; 71f.; 77ff.. On this search for a commercializable authenticity, see Lisa Aldred, "Plastic Shamans and Astroturf Sun Dances: New Age Commercialization of Native American Spirituality," *The American Indian Quarterly* 24,3 (2000): 329-352.

[7] Barnett's comments can be found in "Right Royal Barney," *Online* 19: 12 (2002), accessed September 5, 2012, http://www.archivesearch.co.nz/default.aspx?webid=ONF&articleid=8928. Ann Hardy notes how Niki Caro, the director, when talking about the film, would use the first person plural, embracing Maori culture, but at the same time suggesting the culture belonged to "all" New Zealanders. "Return of the Taniwha: The Re-Spiritualization of Land and Film in Aotearoa," *British Review of New Zealand Studies* 14 (2003/4): 97.

[8] *Onfilm* 20: 2 (2003), accessed September 5, 2012, http://cinema.usc.edu/archivedassets/059/11467.pdf. Alan Brash then wrote supporting Barnett, "A Brash response to Barry Barclay," *Online* 20: 3 (2003) and Carey Carter replied in favor of Barclay, *Online* 20: 4 (2003). Carter notes: "For a Mäori story and Mäori characters the root is always the 'spiritual essence' of the story, which is always overlooked and misunderstood in any adaptation or portrayal by non-Mäori, despite the best of intentions." Accessed September 5, 2012, http://www.archivesearch.co.nz/default.aspx?webid=ONF&articleid=9985.

[9] "*Te Kauae Mārō o Muri-ranga-whenua* (The Jawbone of Muri-ranga-whenua): Globalising local Indigenous culture—Māori leadership, gender and cultural knowledge transmission as represented in the film *Whale Rider*," *Portal Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 2:2, (July 2005), accessed September 5, 2012, http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/portal/article/view/92/59.

[10] "*Te Kauae Mārō o Muri-ranga-whenua*," 6. Jane Smith writes, "A Polynesian people who settled Aotearoa between A.D. 1000 and 1350, the Maori formed about fifty tribes (iwi) in which social relations were understood in terms of age and genealogy rather than gender" (384). She continues, "Maori women, especially those of high birth, enjoyed more power and privilege, including the right to possess rights [*sic*] to land and water, to speak at public meetings, and to retain their own names at marriage" (394, fn 6). "Knocked Around in New Zealand: Postcolonialism Goes to the Movies," in *Mythologies of Violence in Postmodern Media*, ed. Christopher Sharrett (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999).

[11] "*Te Kauae Mārō o Muri-ranga-whenua*," 7-9.

[12] "*Te Kauae Mārō o Muri-ranga-whenua*," 11.

[13] "*Te Kauae Mārō o Muri-ranga-whenua,"* 11-12. ". . . *Ka Mate* is likely to have been chosen because of the international reputation it has gained through its use by the All Blacks, New Zealand's premiere rugby team, prior to the start of a game. It is this icon that is used so that the global mass can identify with a New Zealand identity as opposed to a tribally specific identity."

[14] "*Te Kauae Mārō o Muri-ranga-whenua*," 12.

[15] Mark Williams writes, "for Ihimaera, Maoriness is capable of including other cultural experiences, including Pakeha ones, without losing its own nature." "Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace: The Maori Renaissance," *Studies in*

International Literature, 2000, accessed September 5, 2012, http://www.ucalgary.ca/uofc/eduweb/engl392/williams.html.

[16] Jonathan Curiel, "'Whale Rider' also a story of an outsider looking in / A white director fights cultural bias to film a Maori tale," *The Chronicle* 16 June 2003, accessed September 5, 2012, http://articles.sfgate.com/2003-06-16/entertainment/17494859_1_maori-witi-ihimaera-new-zealand.

[17] *Maori: The Crisis and the Challenge* (Auckland: Harper/Collins Publishers, 1993), 95.

[18] "Maoritanga in *Whale Rider*," 19.

[19] "Maoritanga in *Whale Rider*," 11.

[20] "Indigenous Feature Films: A New Hope for National Cinema?" *Cineaction* 22 (March 2004): 63. All three are referenced favorably by the 2009 documentary, *Reel Injun*, directed by Neil Diamond, Catherine Bainbridge, and Jeremiah Hayes.

[21] *Hawaiki—a new approach to Maori tradition* (Christchurch: The University of Canterbury, 1985), 43.

[22] See the first two chapters of John White, *The Ancient History of the Maori, His Mythology and Traditions: Horo-Uta or Taki-Tumu Migration*. Vol. 3 (New Zealand: Government Printer, 1887), accessed September 5, 2012, http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-Whi03Anci.html for the multiple versions. See also William Colenso, "Historical Incidents and Traditions of the Olden Times, pertaining to the Maoris of the North Island, (East Coast), New Zealand; highly illustrative of their national Character, and containing many peculiar, curious, and little-known Customs and Circumstances, and Matters firmly believed by them. Now, for the first time, faithfully translated from old Maori Writings and Recitals; with explanatory Notes," in *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 14 (1881): 7-26, accessed September 5, 2012, http://rsnz.natlib.govt.nz/volume/rsnz_14/rsnz_14_00_000520.html. A concise scholarly summary is found in Edward Tregear, "Paikea," *Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary* (Wellington: Lyon and Blair, 1891), 303, accessed September 5, 2012, http://archive.org/stream/maoripolynesian01treggoog#page/n331/mode/1up and a popular one in "The Story of Paikea and Ruatapu," *Te Ao Hou: The Maori Magazine* 40, September, (1962), 6, accessed September 5, 2012, http://teaohou.natlib.govt.nz/journals/teaohou/issue/Mao40TeA/c5.html.
An important collection of myths by a Nāgati Porou writer is *Ngā Kōrero a Mohi Ruatapu: The Writings of Mohi Ruatapu*, trans. & ed. Anaru Reedy (Christchurch, NZ: Canterbury University Press, 1993). The Paikea story in English translation is found on pages 142-145 (from an 1871 manuscript) and pages 200-204 (from an 1875 manuscript).

[23] The name can be traced back to Savai'i, but, as Margaret Orbell says, "all else is myth." *Hawaiki*, 19.

[24] Orbell (*Hawaiki*, 33) points out that although Hawaiki is paradisial, it need not be a peaceful place.

[25] There are versions where he swims to shore on his own and others where he turns into a fish himself. Several have him returning to the shore of origin. The rendition that after his chant, he is picked up by the whale and taken to an island other than that "from which he had paddled" may be found in *The Writings of Mohi Ruatapu*, 145.

[26] Some renditions distinguish Kahutia-te-rangi and Paikea, with the former being killed or not embarking on the canoe and the latter escaping. Others simply have the character named Paikea from the beginning. In any case, the name precedes the ride.

[27] *The Writings of Mohi Ruatapu*, 138.

[28] *The Writings of Mohi Ruatapu*, 145.

[29] See, for example, Antony Alpers, *Maori Myths and Tribal Legends* (Aukland: Longman Paul, 1964).

[30] Margaret Orbell, *Hawaiki*, 29-30.

[31] As Mircea Eliade reminds us such recasting has always been present in mythic narration: "The recitation is not necessarily stereotyped. Sometimes the variants depart considerably from the prototype," *Myth and Reality*, trans. Willard Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1963), 145. Often those doing a recitation have been chosen not just for their memory, but for their imagination and creativity as well.

[32] Ihimaera is using an image already in Ngāti Porou myth. See the story of Hine-twa-ho in *The Writings of Mohi Ruatapu*, 135.

[33] Jane Smith, "Knocked Around in New Zealand," 385. However one reads the treaty, "under the pressures of ever-escalating demand for land by immigrants . . . , the Treaty was almost immediately broken . . ." "Introduction," in *New Zealand Cinema*, p. 22. Demands for sovereignty and redress have, therefore, tended to focus on it. For example, the title at the beginning of Sam Pillsbury's film *Crooked Earth* (2001) reads "In 1840 the Treaty of Waitangi was signed . . . The treaty promised Māori ownership and control of their lands, but over the next 130 years, most of their land was taken. In the 1980s, . . . the long battle for justice began . . ." Quoted in Harriet Margolis, "The Western, New Zealand History and Commercial Exploitation: *The Te Kooti Trail, Utu,* and *Crooked Earth*," in *New Zealand Cinema*, 92. See also Ann Hardy, "Return of the Taniwha," 90; 93; 97-100.

[34] Witi Ihimaera, *The Whale Rider* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 1987), 3-7; 11-12; 27-28; 30-31; 39-41; 58; 95-96.

[35] *The Whale Rider*, 16.

[36] *The Whale Rider*, 34.

[37] *The Whale Rider*, 35.

[38] "Māori Mythology," in *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*, ed. Carolyne Larrington (London: Pandora Press, 1992), 288. I should probably stress the "in general," to make sure readers are aware that there is a minority, potentially subversive tradition that has been subject to careful feminist retrievals.

[39] *The Whale Rider*, 33f.

[40] *The Whale Rider*, 16f; 19f. Kathie Irwin, in her article, "Towards Theories of Māori Feminisms," appeals to the importance of Muriwai as an example where differences in myths have led to different practices among the Maori. *Feminist Voices: Women's Studies Texts for Aotearoa/New Zealand*, ed. Rosemary Du Plessis et al. (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992), 15.
There is one reference to Muriwai in the film: Paikea asks, "What's wrong with me, Nanny?" to which Nanny replies "Nothing's wrong with you. . . . You've got the blood of Muriwai in your veins, girl. Think she'd be proud of you saying things like that?" No story is told.

[41] *The Whale Rider*, 81f. See also Angela Ballara, "Mihi Kotukutuku Stirling," in the *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography*, accessed September 5, 2012, http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s36/1.

[42] *The Whale Rider*, 39-41; 49f., 116f.

[43] *The Whale Rider*, 113.

[44] *The Whale Rider*, 116.

[45] *The Whale Rider*, 117.

[46] *The Whale Rider*, 121.

[47] *The Whale Rider*, 122.

[48] Adapting a memorable phrase from Bronislav Malinowski. Mircea Eliade quotes it in *Myth and Reality*, 20.

[49] *The Whale Rider*, 129.

[50] *The Whale Rider*, 39ff.; cf., 103

[51] *The Whale Rider*, 40f.

[52] *The Whale Rider*, 30; cf., 4.

[53] *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i* (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1993), 6, 80ff, 121f, 134, 185ff.

[54] A significant investigation of the tension in New Zealand, at the time *Whale Rider* was released, between a desire to capitalize on the popularity of Maori mythological themes culturally while wanting to refuse the Maori rights of prior land occupation based on them is Ann Hardy's "Return of the Taniwha."

[55] It is called the "Doctrine of Discovery" and Steven T. Newcomb, in particular, has stressed the importance of this being based in a Christian political worldview. See, for example, his 1992 paper, "Five Hundred Years of Injustice," *Shaman's Drum* (Fall 1992): 18-20, accessed September 5, 2012, http://ili.nativeweb.org/sdrm_art.html. His later book is *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery* (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008). On the current state of the discussion with special reference to Christianity, see "Preliminary study of the impact on indigenous peoples of the international legal construct known as the Doctrine of Discovery," prepared for the UN Permanent Forum for Indigenous Peoples, accessed September 5, 2012, http://unpfip.blogspot.com/2011_12_01_archive.html. These emphasize the United States' legal appropriation of the doctrine, but paragraph 4 in the last document calls for inclusion of how other countries colonized by England, such as New Zealand, have carried it over into their legal systems as well.

[56] *The Whale Rider*, 20.

[57] *The Whale Rider*, 36; 145.

[58] Jones notes how effortlessly Porourangi's German girlfriend is integrated with the tribe as part of the happy ending. "Siting *Whale Rider*," 64, 67.

[59] I would like to thank Lisa Williams, librarian at Watkins College of Art, Design, and Film, for her help in acquiring materials for this paper, Cary Beth Miller, for her encouragement, William Blizek for his insightful criticism of an earlier draft.

References

Aldred, Lisa. "Plastic Shamans and Astroturf Sun Dances: New Age Commercialization of Native American Spirituality." *The American Indian Quarterly* 24,3 (2000) 329-352.

Alpers, Antony. *Maori Myths and Tribal Legends* (Aukland: Longman Paul, 1964).

Ballara, Angela. "Mihi Kotukutuku Stirling." In *Dictionary of New Zealand Biography.* Accessed September 5, 2012. http://www.teara.govt.nz/en/biographies/3s36/1.

Barclay, Barry. "An open letter to John Barnett from Barry Barclay." *Onfilm* 20,2 (2003). Accessed September 5, 2012. http://www.archivesearch.co.nz/default.aspx?webid=ONF&articleid=9301.

Barnett, John. "Right Royal Barney." *Online* 19,12 (2002). Accessed September 5, 2012. http://www.archivesearch.co.nz/default.aspx?webid=ONF&articleid=8928.

Brash, Alan. "A Brash response to Barry Barclay," *Online* 20: 3 (2003). Accessed September 5, 2012. http://www.archivesearch.co.nz/default.aspx?webid=ONF&articleid=9639.

Carter, Carey. "A response to "Brash stupidity." *Online* 20: 4 (2003). Accessed September 5, 2012. http://www.archivesearch.co.nz/default.aspx?webid=ONF&articleid=9985.

Colenso, William. "Historical Incidents and Traditions of the Olden Times, pertaining to the Maoris of the North Island, (East Coast), New Zealand; highly illustrative of their national Character, and containing many peculiar, curious, and little-known Customs and Circumstances, and Matters firmly believed by them. Now, for the first time, faithfully translated from old Maori Writings and Recitals; with explanatory Notes." In *Transactions and Proceedings of the Royal Society of New Zealand* 14 (1881) 7-26. Accessed September 5, 2012. http://rsnz.natlib.govt.nz/volume/rsnz_14/rsnz_14_00_000520.html.

Curiel, Jonathan. "'Whale Rider' also a story of an outsider looking in/A white director fights cultural bias to film a Maori tale," *The Chronicle* 16 (June 2003). Accessed September 5, 2012. http://articles.sfgate.com/2003-06-16/entertainment/17494859_1_maori-witi-ihimaera-new-zealand.

De Souza, Pascale. "Maoritanga in *Whale Rider* and *Once Were Warriors*: a Problematic Rebirth through female leaders," *Studies in Australasian Cinema* 1:1 (2007).

Duff, Alan. *Maori: The Crisis and the Challenge* (Auckland: Harper/Collins Publishers, 1993).

Eliade, Mircea. *Myth and Reality*, trans. Willard Trask (New York: Harper & Row, 1963).

Fox, Alistair, Barry Grant, Hilary Radner. "Introduction: The Historical Film in New Zealand Cinema." In *New Zealand Cinema: Interpreting the Past*. (Chicago: Intellect, University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Gauthier, Jennifer. "Indigenous Feature Films: A New Hope for National Cinema?" *Cineaction* 22 (March 2004).

Hardy, Ann. "Return of the Taniwha: The Re-Spiritualization of Land and Film in Aotearoa." *British Review of New Zealand Studies* 14 (2003/4).

Ihimaera, Witi. *The Whale Rider* (Orlando: Harcourt, Inc., 1987).

Irwin, Kathie. "Towards Theories of Māori Feminisms." In *Feminist Voices: Women's Studies Texts for Aotearoa/New Zealand*, ed. Rosemary Du Plessis et al. (Auckland: Oxford University Press, 1992).

Jones, Stan. "Siting *Whale Rider*: A Survey of its Reception in a European Context." *British Review of New Zealand Studies* 14 (2003/4) 61-83.

Ka'ai, Tānia M. "*Te Kauae Mārō o Muri-ranga-whenua* (The Jawbone of Muri-ranga-whenua): Globalising local Indigenous culture—Māori leadership, gender and cultural knowledge transmission as represented in the film *Whale Rider*," *Portal Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies*, 2:2 (July 2005): 1-15. Accessed September 5, 2012. http://epress.lib.uts.edu.au/ojs/index.php/portal/article/view/92/59.

Margolis, Harriet. "The Western, New Zealand History and Commercial Exploitation: *The Te Kooti Trail, Utu,* and *Crooked Earth*." In *New Zealand Cinema: Interpreting the Past*, ed. Alistair Fox, Barry Grant, Hilary Radner (Chicago: Intellect, University of Chicago Press, 2011).

Newcomb, Steven T. "Five Hundred Years of Injustice," *Shaman's Drum* (Fall 1992): 18-20. Accessed September 5, 2012. http://ili.nativeweb.org/sdrm_art.html

Newcomb, Steven T. *Pagans in the Promised Land: Decoding the Doctrine of Christian Discovery* (Golden, Colorado: Fulcrum Publishing, 2008).

Orbell, Margaret. *Hawaiki—a new approach to Maori tradition* (Christchurch: The University of Canterbury, 1985).

Orbell, Margaret. "Māori Mythology." In *The Feminist Companion to Mythology*, ed. Carolyne Larrington (London: Pandora Press, 1992).

Orbell, Margaret, ed. "The Story of Paikea and Ruatapu," *Te Ao Hou: The Maori Magazine* 40, (September 1962): 6. Accessed September 5, 2012. http://teaohou.natlib.govt.nz/journals/teaohou/issue/Mao40TeA/c5.html.

Prentice, Chris. "Riding the Whale? Postcolonialism and Globalization in *Whale Rider*." In *Global Fissures: Postcolonial Fusions*, ed. Clara A. B. Joseph and Janet Wilson (Amsterdam: Rodopi B.V., 2006).

Rauwerda, Antje M. "The Whale Rider." *Postcolonial Text* 1,1 (2004). Accessed September 5, 2012. http://postcolonial.org/index.php/pct/article/view/292/779.

Reedy, Anaru, ed. and trans. *Ngā Kōrero a Mohi Ruatapu: The Writings of Mohi Ruatapu*. (Christchurch, NZ: Canterbury University Press, 1993).

Smith, Jane. "Knocked Around in New Zealand: Postcolonialism Goes to the Movies." In *Mythologies of Violence in Postmodern Media*, ed. Christopher Sharrett (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1999).

Trask, Haunani-Kay. *From a Native Daughter: Colonialism and Sovereignty in Hawai'i*. (Monroe, Maine: Common Courage Press, 1993).

Tregear, Edward. *Maori-Polynesian Comparative Dictionary*. (Wellington: Lyon and Blair, 1891). Accessed September 5, 2012. http://archive.org/stream/maoripolynesian01treggoog#page/n331/mode/1up

Treagus, Mandy. "Whale Rider." *Directory of World Cinema*. Accessed September 5, 2012. http://www.worldcinemadirectory.org/.

Wevers, Lydia. "Globalising Indigenes: Postcolonial Fiction from Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific." *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 5 (2006): 121-132. Accessed September 5, 2012. http://www.nla.gov.au/openpublish/index.php/jasal/article/view/92/341.

White, John. *The Ancient History of the Maori, His Mythology and Traditions: Horo-Uta or Taki-Tumu Migration*. Vol. 3 (New Zealand: Government Printer, 1887). Accessed September 5, 2012. http://www.nzetc.org/tm/scholarly/tei-Whi03Anci.html.

Williams, Mark. "Witi Ihimaera and Patricia Grace: The Maori Renaissance." *Studies in International Literature*, 2000. Accessed September 5, 2012. http://www.ucalgary.ca/uofc/eduweb/engl392/williams.html.

Wilson, Janet. "Re-representing Indigeneity: Approaches to History in Some Recent New Zealand and Australian Films." In *New Zealand Cinema: Interpreting the Past*, ed. Alistair Fox, Barry Grant, Hilary Radner (Chicago: Intellect, University of Chicago Press, 2011).