

## The Enigma of Japanese Whaling Policy : How the Whaling Culture Was Constructed and Construed

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## **The Enigma of Japanese Whaling Policy: How the Whaling Culture Was Constructed and Construed**

**Noriko Usuda**

### **1. Introduction**

In the summer of 2019, Japan withdrew from the International Whaling Commission (IWC) and officially resumed commercial whaling after three decades of ‘scientific whaling’. At the time, Deputy Chief Cabinet Secretary Yasuto Nishimura said, ‘We hope it will get on track as quickly as possible, rejuvenate the community, and lead to the handover of our country’s rich whaling culture to the next generation’.<sup>1)</sup> The BBC reported a speech by Shigeto Hase, the head of the Fishery Agency, who said, ‘The resumption of whaling would ensure the culture and way of life will be passed on to the next generation’.<sup>2)</sup>

A more appealing speech was made by Yoshifumi Kai, the head of the Japan Small-Type Whaling Association and a senior fisheries official in Taiji: ‘My heart is overflowing with happiness, and I’m deeply moved. This is a small industry, but I am proud of hunting whales. People have hunted whales for more than 400 years in my hometown’.<sup>3)</sup>

This paper explores the reason why these voices echo that of Newfoundland seal hunter Will Alyward, who appeared in a public relations by the local sealers’ association, ‘My family has gone sealing for generations. It’s a vital part of our culture’ (Barry 2002: 254). Brian Barry argued that any political system is subject to lobbying by minority groups who have a special interest in some aspect of public policy (Barry 2002: 39). Jun Morikawa (2009) argued that, in Japan the political system lobbied by the ‘minority groups’ for the whaling policy as ‘cultural bearers’ is formulated by the following organizations:

1. bureaucracies (e.g., the Japan Fishery Agency industry)
2. the whaling and fishing industry
3. political forces (e.g., National Diet members associated with the fishing industry)

Morikawa argued that these ‘triangles’ are attempting to share their desire to maintain and promote whaling and projecting it as the will of the Japanese people (Morikawa

2009: 119).

Anthropologist Mary Douglas proposed the cultural theory of risk (often shorted to Cultural Theory), which posits that the structures of social organization give individuals to perceive perceptions that reinforce those structures (Douglas 1970). In this line, Douglas was explicit about the meaning of *culture*: ‘The crux of this theory is whether people are interested in getting and holding power’ (Mary Douglas 1996: 179). I do not fully accept her concept of Cultural Theory; however, Douglas’s argument below is an apt description for understanding why promoting whaling culture has become such a strong tactic in support of Japanese whaling policies:

Culture thrives on opposition. This is such a vital insight for the way that culture generates political debate, and so relevant to the environmental issues, that it needs emphasis (Douglas 1996: 175).

Using Douglas’s argument, the first section of this chapter will extend perspective to the discourse of whaling, starting with the ‘Save the Whales’ campaign that was more or less born at the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm, Sweden (hereinafter, the Stockholm Conference), in 1972. I will argue that the historical facts presented at the Conference have since been distorted by the political actors Morikawa mentioned. I am particularly interested in the discourse analysis of Charlotte Epstein, who said, ‘what matters is what the actors say’ (Epstein, 2008: 15). At this point, she fell into a post-structuralist approach, and her observations were ‘just another contribution to an undecidable and thus ever-ongoing conflict’ (Humrich 2010: 539).<sup>4</sup> If we use her analysis critically, however, we can clarify the real issues raised by the ‘whaling culture’.

In the second part, I will examine how anthropological knowledge has been used to construct cultural identity: *Nihonjinron* (Japanese theory) has been a powerful defense for the Japanese whaling movement. This identity-making has been one of the best tools for evoking nationalist sentiment among the right-wing front. In the third part, I will confirm the advantages of using the concept of ‘sustainable development’ to counter anti-whaling messages of the environmental movement. Although the actors have shown anger toward environmentalists, this is merely a performative style to justify the exploitation of natural resources. In this sense, it appears that attacking our culture sets up a logical fallacy. The overall structure of this paper is as follows:

1. The ‘Save the Whales’ message of the Stockholm Conference
2. Japan’s construction of ‘whaling culture’ and its anthropological interpretation
3. ‘Sustainable Development’ as a tool to counter and obscure the environmental movement

Much of my argument in this paper is based on my fieldwork, including observations and interviews. For a research method, I used video recording. Some of the footage was screened at the public symposium/lecture “Considering Whaling Activities in the World”

in 2018.

## 2. Making Anti-American Discourses

The United Nation's conference on the human environment already adopted a resolution calling for a ten-year moratorium on killing whales. And whereas the human race is a species endangered [on] July 1st, 1972, all people of the earth... joyously proclaim a ten-year moratorium on the hunting, killing, and environmental poisoning of the human species.<sup>5)</sup>

This was a part of the unique speech applauded by the audiences at the People's Forum of the Stockholm Conference and cheered by the audiences. The Conference questioned the relationship between human society and the planet, asking people to re-evaluate their impact on the natural world. At the Conference, a ten-year moratorium on commercial whaling was adopted without any objection. A former environmental correspondent for BBC, Richard Black, recalled that the resolution passed 'despite the fact that whaling had not been raised as a major issue in documents governments had prepared leading up to the Conference'. The reason for the swift adoption of this moratorium was the growing popularity of whales and dolphins among the (mostly) Western public and a movement that can best be summed by a popular bumper sticker of the time: Saved the Whales.<sup>6)</sup> The call for the moratorium, however, was not legally binding. The legal status was not affirmed until the meeting of the IWC held two weeks after the Stockholm Conference.

### 2.1 Stockholm Conspiracy

A former Japanese commissioner, Kunio Yonezawa, has insisted that 'The real intention of the whaling campaign at the UN Conference was to divert attention from America's war in Vietnam' (Umezaki 1986: 30). He appeared on a propaganda film, *Behind the Cove*, promoted by the Japanese Fishery Agency, and reiterated his belief as it had been shared on various occasions, including in television broadcasts and academic circles.

We see a similar belief in Epstein's discourse analysis. 'From the scientific perspective, Stockholm had been highly ambiguous.... When the draft of the American moratorium proposal was under deliberation, there had been no scientific discussion on the state of whale stocks' (Epstein 2008: 127). For this argument, Epstein quoted the opinion of an unnamed observer:

The draft was put to a vote without debate. This can only be regarded as a political move. No consideration whatsoever was given to the position of the Japanese delegation, which had twice expressed its desire during the deliberation to refer the draft to scientists for discussion (Scarff 1977: 367).

My question is who was this observer? Scarff's footnote revealed that the observer was a part of the pro-whaling lobbyist group, The Japan Whaling Association.<sup>7)</sup> By obscuring this fact, Epstein misled her readers and betrayed her premise that 'what matters is what

the actors say' (Epstein 2008: 15). Furthermore, Epstein argued that the 'save the whales' and 'save the planet' messages at the conference were a deliberate strategy deployed by the Nixon administration. For her argument, she pointed out several reasons from various sources: (1) The conference was scheduled only a few months before the presidential elections in which Richard Nixon's re-election was at stake; (2) The American whaling industry was extinct; (3) Policies supporting the 'Save the Whales' movement provided Nixon with an easy and inexpensive opportunity to secure what is now called the 'green' vote; and (4) Although Nixon had already established himself as the 'greenest' president to date, he needed California voters to be re-elected, and California was considered the home of the 'Save the Whales' crusade (Epstein 2008: 109).

However, as stated earlier, the whaling moratorium proposed at the Stockholm Conference was just a proposal and it would not become legal enforcement until the IWC meeting later that same year when the IWC discussed resource management.

## 2.2 Nixon's Letter

In 1971, Nixon sent the following letter to Pedro. Wygodzinsky, a curator at the American Museum of National History, answering Wygodzinsky's request:

[There are] now some 35 species and subspecies of animals included under the Endangered Species Conservation Act. Protection of the whale is not guaranteed by the Act; our nation in placing the whales under the Act will curtail only the United States demands for whale products. It is now up for other countries to follow our lead if the whales are to receive the protection they deserve. With your encouragement and that of your distinguished colleagues, I am hopeful that the necessary worldwide protection of whales will be obtained (from a letter stored at Nixon Library: 2 February 1971).

This letter tells us that the Endangered Species Conservation Act (1972) was not valid beyond the borders of the United States effort, as was also the case with other national environmental legislation. However, the opinions underlying the Act were divided within the United States itself due to the domestic pressure by Alaskan Eskimos (Inuit), who argued that they should be permitted to continue to hunt bowhead whales as part of their traditional cultural practices (Guevara 2008: 55).

Following the letter, the US Senate passed a resolution to negotiate the moratorium on commercial whaling at the IWC meeting of 1972. The proposal was, however, rejected at the meeting. According to the discourse of whaling, the reason was that a blanket moratorium could not be justified scientifically. On the other hand, the major Japanese newspaper *Asahi Shinbun* reported the inside story of the meeting. At that time, Japan and the Soviet Union (now Russia) had been taking over 80% of the world's annual whale harvest among the nine-member countries as the members of IWC. Representatives of the Soviet Union had not attended the Stockholm Conference, but they appeared at the IWC meeting, where they said, 'We recommend Americans stop the annual killing of 250,000 dolphins with the use of gill nets'. Their reasoning could be explained by Scarff (1977), who cited a voice of the Soviet Union's ban on fishing for

saving porpoises in the Black Sea in 1966: 'dolphins have brains strikingly close to our own' (384).

However, the significant issue at the meeting was neither the rejection of the US proposal nor the performance of the Soviet Union but how to regulate 'illegal whaling'. In consequence, the meeting voted for an 'observer system' to monitor suspected illegal whaling (Scarff 1977: 596). Yet, the system was not working. As a result, in 1974, Australia proposed the New Management Procedure, suggesting that commercial whaling be stopped only for those stocks that had been 'badly depleted'. The Soviet delegate, I. V. Nikonorov, approved this plan, but the Japanese delegate, Iwao Fujita, rejected the proposal, saying that 'it would not be easy for the Japanese whaling industry' (Christol, Schmidhauser, and Totten 1976: 161).

### 2.3 Save the 'Anti-Whaling'

Japan's efforts to support its whaling industry became mired in controversy when some members of the 'Save the Whales' movement came to be questioned. To understand what was happening, we need to look inside of some actors and ask the question: who were the real campaigners?

Much of the momentum (and early funding) began with Stewart Brand, whose bestselling *Whole Earth Catalog* magazines and its spin-offs had earned millions of dollars that were funneled into a non-profit environmental organization, The Point Foundation. Brand and others were concerned that the Conference might be a lightning rod for anti-American protesters over its controversial involvement in the war in Vietnam. The Point Foundation provided the first and biggest grants to send groups to Stockholm, which was holding an Environmental Forum in parallel with the UN Conference, and the Forum was attracting numerous competing groups from around the world. Hoping to defuse the anticipated violence with a calming presence, Brand sent a contingent from the celebrated personalities, Hog Farm collective, poets, pacifists, musicians and set up camp, establishing a Free Food Kitchen and a stage. The violent protests never happened, but the Hog Farm marchers attracted a crowd with their whale float (a bus drape in black plastic and sporting an enormous whale tail), parading through Stockholm as a tape recorder played humpback whale songs; when the recorder broke, the members continued singing the whale song (Brand: 2009). In contrast to the usual bureaucratic discourse of whaling, Brand's people epitomized the counterculture grassroots activists and the nonconformists of the time.

Regardless of the successful campaign, Stewart Brand was disappointed by the outcome, saying, 'Good ideas and goodwill simply were not enough to change the world' (Kirk 2007: 152). In 1995, Brand wrote an article ('We Owe It All to the Hippies') for a special issue of *Time* magazine called 'Welcome to Cyber-space':

Personal computers and the Internet had grown directly out of the counterculture. We owe it all to the Hippies. Forget antiwar protests, Woodstock, even long hair. The real legacy of the sixties is the computer revolution (Turner 2006: 103).

Brand and the other 'Save the Whales' people were progressive liberals, but as the anti-whaling campaign escalated, many grew disillusioned and began questioning the righteousness of the cause. For example, consider an article by Paul Jacobs published in the *Detroit Free Press*, 'Save the Anti-Whaling Movement'. Jacobs, an anti-nuclear activist who had investigated the government cover-up of the health hazards related to nuclear weapons testing in 1950s Nevada, wrote about Michael Phillips's allegations that anti-Japanese sentiment, not a genuine concern for whales, was infecting the movement:

The charge of racism has been openly leveled against the anti-whaling movement by Michael Phillips, a conservation activist and the person whose foundation first funded the anti-whaling campaign. Phillips has been mightily distressed by this development, and now states that the anti-whaling 'message is not being accepted because of its merits but because it appeals to a basic American prejudice against the Japanese' (Jacobs, *Detroit Free Press*, 9 November 1976).

Michael Phillips was president of The Point Foundation from 1972–1974, and he traveled to Japan with ecology author Joan McIntyre to promote the 'Save the Whales' campaign. I read Jacob's article with some confusion at first but understood more when I had the chance to interview Phillips in Tokyo, a two-hour discussion I captured on video. This interview reminded me of the complexity of the environmental and anti-whaling movement:

My friend was Jerry Brown, who became a governor of California in 1975. He didn't like the fact that Japan was picked out. He called a meeting in his office. All leaders of the anti-whaling movement in California. He said you must read Phillips's article. You come back to me if you can find anything wrong—you'll get my support in the anti-whaling movement. But if Mr. Phillips is right, you better stop what you are doing (Michael Phillips, interview, 2014).

In ten years, according to Phillips, the anti-whaling movement in California had ceased. Jerry Brown, twice the governor of the US state of California and now (among other things) executive chair for *Bulletin of the Atomic Scientists* (an NGO concerned with science and global security issues relating to technology), is well known as a leading activist for environmental causes, including climate change.

There were plenty of ruptures in the movement. Epstein, for example, cited the newspaper advertisement campaigns by US environmental groups to set up the movement as Us versus Them, and her descriptions highlight dissent among the ranks. According to Epstein, the ad campaign 'othered' (251) the pro-whaling factions ('Them') using the words 'ruthless', 'angry', 'bitter', 'defiant', 'arrogant', 'cynical', and 'Japanese and Soviet'. For her analysis, Epstein spent 13 pages (Epstein 2008: 169–182), yet she avoided explaining why Project Jonah (an anti-whaling NGO founded by McIntyre) was not listed in the campaign articles even though she emphasized the importance of how McIntyre, as the leader of Project Jonah, rallied the Hog Farm activists in Stockholm



with her anti-whaling synecdoche: ‘How can we save the environment if we cannot even save the whale?’ (Epstein 2008: 112). The reason can be found in Phillips’s account.

After studying anthropology at the University of California, McIntyre published *Mind in the Waters: A Book to Celebrate the Consciousness of Whales and Dolphins*, a collection of essays that urged us to change our concept of cetaceans and our relationships. This book was written by leading scientists, including an anthropologist Gregory Bateson. McIntyre left for Hawaii due to the distress with the movement but her seeds of activism spread throughout many countries such as Australia where, as Epstein pointed out, Project Jonah was backed by 70% of the population and achieved the support of the National Liberal Party elected in 1977 (Epstein 2008: 149–150).

Yoshito Umezaki, a journalist and public relations consultant, used Jacob’s article printed in *Detroit Free Press* for his business opportunity, disputing that the anti-whaling campaign was anti-Japanese (Umezaki 1986: 93). In his book, *Kujira to Inbo (Whales and Conspiracy)*, Umezaki omitted a line from Phillips’s original account in the article referring to anti-Japanese: ‘except for Greenpeace’.

Umezaki’s idea was infused by the *Executive Intelligence Review* (weekly news magazine founded by fringe conspiracist Lyndon LaRouche) sent by Alan Macnow, a New York-based PR consultant for the Japanese Fishery Association, in 1995. According to the EIR, ‘It was Anglo American elites who were planning and helping the environment movement. They pursue zero-development because their dominant power would be threatened by the world economy and increase of the population’ (Umezaki 2001: 278). LaRouche had also claimed that England’s Queen Elizabeth II was a drug trafficker, the International Monetary Fund created and spread the AIDS virus, and the CIA, KGB, and others were plotting to kill him (Washington Post 2019, 13 February). LaRouche was also one of the main contributors and proponents of the Wise Use Movement, discussed below.

## 2.4 Controlling Japanese Tastes

By 1972, the food preferences of the Japanese people were already changing, as shown in Figure 1. During the UN Conference, the *Sankei Newspaper* conducted a telephone survey on the demand for whale meat in Japan, calling 1,000 randomly chosen people to



Figure 1 Illustration by Shunsuke Maekawa that appeared in the *Sankei Newspaper*, 14 June 1972. Used with permission.



ask the question (repeated in the illustration), ‘How important is whale meat in your diet?’ The results showed the more than half the respondents did not consider whale meat a necessary part of their diet, particularly the younger generation:

6.7%	it is vital
13.1%	do not need
42.4%	don’t care
37.2%	better than nothing

Kazuo Yamamura, the head of Japan Whaling Association (JWA), said, ‘The whaling industry knew the business was on the decline, but things were changed when the price of meat went up (due to the moratorium and the limit of the market supply) and intellectuals and politicians took the anti-whaling movement as anti-Japanese’ (Yamamura 2014: 19).

One example of anti-whaling action perceived as a threat by the US was 200 miles sanction.<sup>8)</sup> When the moratorium was adopted in 1982, Japan objected to it at first, but due to the threat of excluding the fishing from 200 miles zone, Japan had to withdraw its objection (Shima 2013: 63). Shigeko Misaki, an adviser for The Japan Whaling Association, argued that Japan was threatened by the US whaling policy, thus the victim of the anti-whaling movement (Misaki 1994). Kazuo Shima, a former Japanese commissioner for the IWC, however, told us the internal decision at that time: ‘Some people have said about 200 miles sanction, but we acknowledged the fact that the US fishery stock was on the decline (thus not an effective threat)... the real reason for the withdrawal of the objection was to start the Research Whaling’ (Shima 2013: 63). Shima’s account is credible since “Japan had already hired former US Transport Secretary Brock Adams, who was once a director of the Coast Guard,” enforcing the 200-mile fishing limit around the United States. (Day 1992: 136).

When the moratorium was set on the enforcement in 1987, a large type of coastal whaling was terminated with substantial compensation (Kondo 2001: 436). In contrast, ‘*Small-Type Coastal Whaling*’ (termed by a group of anthropologists) was turning into a quagmire.

### 3. The Construction of the Whaling ‘Culture’

In 1986, at the IWC meeting in Malmö, Sweden, Fukuzo Nagasaki, a director of the Institute of Cetacean Research, explained the Japanese planned to take 210 minke whales in the Northwest Pacific under a small-scale operation with the provision for ‘aboriginal subsistence whaling’ adopted that year. The plan was, however, ignored (Shima 2013: 65–66). After this failure, a Canadian anthropologist, Milton Freeman told Kazuo Shima, ‘I have an idea. If you leave it to me, I may be able to find a clue’. Shima told this to Saito commissioner, but it was immediately rejected as ‘waste of money’. Later, however, Shima decided to ask Freeman to work on this cultural argument (Shima 2013: 66).

Freeman invited 12 social and cultural anthropologists from various countries (four from the United States, two from Canada, one each from Norway and Australia, and four

from Japan) to Japan for a one-week workshop that included three days of fieldwork in four local communities (Abashiri in Hokkaido, Ayukawa in Miyagi, Wadoura in Chiba, and Taiji in Wakayama). The result was *Small-Type Coastal Whaling in Japan (STCW): Report of an International Workshop*, published in 1988. The book defined *culture* as ‘the shared knowledge and beliefs transmitted to succeeding generations through a traditional socialization process’ (Akimichi et al. 1988: 4–5).

### 3.1 Whaling License

To persuade the participants at IWC of the importance of this cultural argument, Akimichi *et al.* (1988) described Japanese whaling coastal towns as places that ‘fostered a strong sense of community identity and solidarity’. For this purpose, Taiji was the best example, as ‘one community which continued traditional localized whaling since 1606’ (Akimichi et al. 1988: 27). They argued that one of the distinctive characteristics of Taiji whaling was its use of ‘whaling licenses’. The local fishing cooperative association in Taiji tried to keep its license by building a whaling ship, the *Seishin-maru*, a story used in support of the efforts to maintain social and cultural identity in Taiji. However, this storyline does not reflect the reality of a whaling boat owner in Taiji.

Iwao Isono was a coastal whaling operator when the researchers visited Taiji. Isono was working as a gunner on an Antarctic whaling ship but had retired in 1969. In 1971, he started operating his small whaling ship, the *Katsu-Maru*, as a family-based business. However, he had to move his ship from Taiji to Wadoura in Chiba prefecture and Abashiri in Hokkaido owing to the decline of the pilot whale stock in Taiji resulting from the start of the dolphin drives. When the Taiji Whaling Museum was constructed in 1969, the museum staff needed dolphins for the aquarium, so they went to Kawana, a coastal village in the Izu peninsula where dolphin drives were actively conducted. The Kawana Fishery Cooperative was thriving with the dolphin hunt at that time; it provided the dolphins for the Ocean Expo in 1975 for the celebration of the return of Okinawa in 1972 (the same year of the Stockholm Conference). However, according to the head of Kawana Fishery Associate, Kawana’s dolphin drive was terminated due to overhunting and anti-whaling activists (Takahashi, interview, 2013).

The end of the dolphin drive in Kawana caused its expansion in Taiji, which also affected the small-scale coastal whaling. Indeed, it was a vicious cycle both environmentally and economically. In his autobiography, Isono noted that on one occasion, he could not afford a whaling license at the bidding of Taiji city office; it would have cost him 30.9 million yen for six years in advance, far too expensive for his income. Instead, he bid on a whaling gun, much cheaper than the whaling license, and another man who did not have a whaling ship bid and obtained the whaling license (Isono 2004: 137).

### 3.2 Construction of Tragedy

A more problematic interpretation by anthropological research was the mystification of the tragedy in Taiji. Akimichi *et al.* (1988), for example, emphasized the words of an anonymous informant in Taiji: ‘We are alive today only because of our ancestors.... It is, therefore, the whale whom we have to thank for being alive today’, to which Akimichi *et*

*al.* (1988) added, ‘This consciousness of the interdependence between whales and humankind gives rise to the concept of an ecosystem relationship between the two’ (76). Their ‘idealistic’ speculation on the relationship between whalers and whales was followed by the voice of a whaler from Ayukawa:

If we don’t catch the whales, the fishermen will suffer because the shrimps are[the whales’] favorite food. They’ll increase in numbers and eat more and more shrimps, and then what’ll happen? The fishermen here won’t be able to make a living in the same way as they have done in the past (Akimichi et al. 1988: 76).

This argument, used even today in several versions, was to confirm ‘whalers’ broad knowledge of the intricate relationship existing between whale, nature, and humans’ (Akimichi et al. 1988: 76). Then the anthropologists linked this ‘knowledge’ of Ayukawa with the ecological knowledge of Taiji:

This ecological knowledge is reinforced by the belief system, which can clearly be seen in a whaler’s perceptions and rationalization of disasters such as the one that occurred in Taiji when more than 111 whalers died when they decided to try to kill a mother with her calf. This incident has now been incorporated into the local communities’ worldview and in our opinion should be viewed as the art of a valid indigenous resource management regime (Akimichi et al. 1988: 76).

The problem with this interpretation was multiplied when it was used by NHK broadcasting on its program, *The Japanese Whaling Story Series*, in 2009 (NHK 2009).<sup>9)</sup> One of the anthropologists in the workshop, Tomoya Akimichi, appeared on series and commented on the tragedy, saying it was caused by breaking the traditions that whalers should not take a mother whale with a calf. Due to stock declines, however, the whalers were going out even in the most terrible weather and they did not want to waste an opportunity to bring back the whale. The story continued with comments about the bad judgment of Kakuemon Taiji, who had decided to go whaling against the objections of his cousin, another leader of the Wada family (the Taiji family is a branch of Wada family). Kalland and Moeran also wrote about this story:

Whaling brought prosperity to the people of Taiji during the Tokugawa period (1600–1868) [but] as the Tokugawa period came to an end, catches of right and humpback whales declined, probably as a result of whaling activities of the Americans and other Westerners in the Pacific. Consequently, Taiji was plunged into recession—a recession so bad that in 1878, poverty drove whalers into breaking a long-observed taboo of never hunting a female right whale with its calf. The result was that at least 111 men lost their lives in a fierce storm (Kalland and Moeran 1992: 31).

Having watched the NHK program, one direct descendant from the Taiji family, Akira Taiji, objected with the following points:

1. To hunt right whales with calves was advantageous for whalers (thus, not a taboo).
2. The weather on 24 December 1878 was not that bad.
3. Regarding the decision of whether to hunt or not that day, there is no record of an argument between the two leaders (Wada and Taiji).
4. The character of Kakuemon Taiji was misrepresented.

To examine the recession in the discourse, Akira Taiji compared the income of the whalers over the course of nine years (1870–1878) and found that it was in 1878 when the tragedy happened, the monthly profit was at its highest during that period (Taiji 2001: 92).

1870	1,278 yen
1871	1,090 yen
1872	1,077 yen
1873	1,632 yen
1874	1,135 yen
1875	1,208 yen
1876	784 yen
1877	1,055 yen
1878	3,769 yen

Akira Taiji wrote a letter to NHK, asking them to correct the misinformation based on the historical documents. Neither NHK nor Akimichi responded to his request (telephone interviews with Akira Taiji, 2010).

Here, my question is not which side is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’, but why the story has been legitimized and become a discourse of the Japanese whaling. For answering this question, we need to understand the nature of the story written in a book, *The Story of Whaling in Kumano Taiji Inlet* (1936). The book was written by Gorosaku Taiji, an adopted child coming from the Wada family line. He noted that his memory at the time of the disaster was not clear because of his age: only 5 years old when the tragedy happened (Taiji 1936).

The book was, however, reprinted next year when Japan entered the Sino-Japanese War. Timely to appeal to the audiences, it was added with the letter of the title written by the navy commander, Ryokitsu Arima, the head of Meiji Shrine and adviser of the Imperial Court. In the same year, Arima organized the infamous pro-war organization called the Central Federation of National Spiritual Mobilization Movement (*Kokumin-Seishin-Sodojin*).

Junichi Takahashi, one of the anthropologists in the workshop, discussed the role of Gorosaku as an ‘identity maker’: In 1982, when the moratorium was adopted at IWC, ‘Gorosaku’s evocative speech was filled with nationalistic sentiment’ (Takahashi 1987: 163). I would like to look at Gorosaku’s role more in-depth from different perspectives, asking how Gorosaku came up with the idea in the way the story was narrated and

accepted by the local people. To do so, we need to look at another book, *The History of Whaling in Kumano-Taiji Inlet* (1932), published four years before Gorosaku's writing. In this book, a Confucius scholar, Geidosen Yukawa, contributed the following Chinese verses (my summary).

“One whale enriches seven inlets”,  
 This phrase is tactical and deceptive  
 Don't you know where there is a great profit, there is a great fault  
 How regrettable, villager's lives are sacrificed for the profit  
 Yet, the profit of the sea is not credible  
 Money was spent on nothing on some occasions.  
 A lord is a lord, sitting on a mat and devouring the sea

Geidosen Yukawa was the supervisor of the educational system in Shingu (the neighboring town of Taiji). The verses were reflecting on the social movement thriving at the beginning of the 20th century in Shingu. I presume that Gorosaku embraced this spirit of the time and put it in use for convincing locals to win their hearts and minds. Gorosaku became the mayor of Shingu.

On the other hand, such humanistic liberalism was not the atmosphere that prevailed in Japan at the time of the publication. Tamaji Higashi, a school teacher, was appointed to write the book by Taiji Fishery Technical School. He later became the first director of the Taiji Museum. In the preface to the book, Keizo Shiozaki, the issuer and the head of the school, emphasized the importance of *Kume Uta* (the song of the warrior *Kume* clan, recorded in *Kojiki* in 712 and *Nihon Shoki* in 720).

In the fortress of Uda, we set a trap for a snipe,  
 Instead, an agile *kuchira* was trapped

The song is about the imperial conquest of the western part of Japan. When the emperor Jinmu invaded Uda, a part of the mountainous area in Nara prefecture (the old capital of Japan), there were two brothers in a dominant clan. The elder brother was fighting against the emperor's invasion and made a trap in his house, but the younger brother betrayed and informed the emperor about the plot. As a result, it was the elder brother who was pushed into the trap.<sup>10)</sup>

Shiozaki argued that it was the first song about a 'whale' referred by the emperor. Higashi also started the first chapter with the title 'A Whale Seen in The history', saying that 'the song was about the ignorance of the elder brother who dared to fight against the emperor. Higashi maintained that '*kuchira*' was a 'whale' seen by the emperor while passing the offshore of Kumano, and the song was the reflection of the emperor's memory".

Their cultural assertion relating to the imperial court is based on Romantic nationalism developed in the 19th century: 'people flourish only within their ancestral cultures'. In this type of nationalism, each culture constitutes a 'self-contained' moral universe (Barry 2002: 263–264). Today, such Romantic nationalism is reinstalled to

justify the Japanese whaling policy without critical arguments.

In the following section, I would like to highlight the vital questions raised by Epstein: why the making of identity involves wrenching a ‘self’ from an ‘other’; how identity can change; and how the ‘other’, thus excluded, seeks to reclaim the power to define its ‘self’ (Epstein 2008: 255).

#### 4. The Calamity of ‘Culture’

After the NHK broadcasting, Japanese nationalists started shouting on the street of Tokyo, ‘You Americans came to Japan for whale oil!’. There is no doubt that the program was effective at insinuating the message associating ‘oil’ with the West and ‘meat’ with Japan. Epstein’s discourse analysis echoed the same message:

The rise of modern whaling was driven not by the needs of human consumption but by industrial demand. Its main products were oils and baleens, two raw materials that went to the heart of industrialization. One exception is Japan, where the meat has always been a key motivation for whaling (Epstein 2008: 31).

The discourse associating the Western countries with ‘oil’ (seen as a luxury) versus Japan with ‘meat’ (seen as a necessity), however, was constructed through PR tactics on the foundation of the newest phrase: sustainable development. This concept spread widely when the international battle over whale protection versus whaling came to be seen as a resource management issue. In that context, as Rowell said, ‘sustainable development’ is nothing more than the privatization of wildlife (Rowell 1996: 371). Moreover, ‘sustainable development’ has become a tool to constrain the voice of internal Others.

##### 4.1 Voice of the Internal Others

From 1916 to 1917 Kamaishi City in Iwate prefecture was flourishing when it permitted the construction of whaling bases. The owner of the meat processing company recalled that time, “The residents of the previous village were complaining about the smell coming from the local whale processing factory.” He maintained that ‘Their complaints were understandable since 120–130 whales were dismantled annually in the same place’.<sup>11</sup> Whalers caught sei whales (*Balaenoptera borealis*) and fin whales (*Balaenoptera physalus*) but not sperm whales (*Physeter macrocephalus*) because it was considered valueless at markets in Japan. Moreover, processing companies used only the white meat (*sunoko*) and the oil; the red meat was not considered edible and ended up as fertilizer. (*Koho Kamaishi*. V. 63 Whaling Base. 1979) In those days, therefore, the purpose of the whaling was mostly oil, the same as for Westerners.

After the Great East Japan Earthquake hit Tōhoku in March 2011, a small historical archive was constructed in front of the Kamaishi station. I visited the archive to find more historical resources about whaling but could not find anything, not even one word. I asked an old man who was sitting outside the gate about the lack of information. He answered, ‘Yeah, we were just talking about it in the morning. We can’t talk about it

openly'. I just nodded, thinking of 'sustainable whaling policy'.

Whaling was thriving—so much that eventually, overhunting polluted the ocean and destroyed the local ecosystem, especially the shellfish and seaweed, particularly in Northeast of Japan. In 1911, more than 1,000 fishermen in Hachinohe attacked the Toyo Hogeï's whaling factory (Photo 1). In 2011, Masami Iwaori, a former council member in Hachinohe, examined the power politics and the local people at that time and wrote a book, *Hachinohe Inlet: Whale Incident and Fishermen*. Iwaori argued that the case of the riot should be examined from an ethical perspective. While the villagers were suffering from the damage caused by the whaling, the industry was hunting as many whales as possible. Iwaori noted that the 'blood tide' reached other coastal villages, turning the seas red and interfering with fishing. Indeed the operation of the whaling industry was chaotic, but intellectuals and politicians were looking down on the local people, saying that they were too ignorant to consider the economic effect of whaling.



**Photo 1** Attack on the Toyo Hogeï whaling factory in Hachinohe, Japan (Photograph courtesy of Takeo Suzuki, reserved at Hachinohe Library)

In those days, the anger of the fishermen in Hachinohe toward the whaling industry was not a special case. Many other coastal villagers opposed being whaling bases, including Ayukawa, the whaling town that Freeman's working group had emphasized for its traditional significance.

When I visited Norway, I learned that the Tōhoku fishermen's revolt was similar to one that occurred in the northern part of Norway in 1903. In the Menhaven Riots, local fishermen had destroyed the Menhaven whaling station. A curator of the Whaling Museum in Norway told me this:



There was an older thought that whales draw the fish to the shores, but the fish disappeared. The result was that the angry fishermen and the local people attacked the land stations on the coast of Finnmark and destroyed one of the stations.... The economy of the whaling did not bring money to northern Norway. All the money went to the southern part of Norway (Jan Erik Ringstad, video interview, 2012).

That is exactly what happened in Hachinohe eight years later. In Norway, however, journalists stood up to defend the fishermen, and the whaling industry was forced to leave Northern Norway. In contrast, the Japanese fishermen were jailed as Watanabe detailed its history (Watanabe 2006). Nevertheless, local people quickly learned that if they tactically negotiated with the industry, they could obtain a great deal of profit (a similar case of nuclear plants).

#### 4.2 Legacy of the Industrial Whaling

In a sense Kakuemon Taiji was a scapegoat and a victim of the whaling industry. He had an undaunted spirit, started yet another whaling company in 1898 but it ended in failure and died in 1907. He left a message that ‘due to Norway’s harpoon whaling and the increase of motorized ships, whales didn’t come to the traditional net-whaling place’ (Taiji 2001: 23). This was a reason for the decline of traditional whaling.

The industrial whaling began in 1898 when the Japanese government approved the Deep Sea Fisheries Promotion Act. The president of Toyo Hogeï, Oka Juro, in Yamaguchi Prefecture, took a chance based on the Act and established a new company called Nihon Enyogyogyo. Sometimes it is hard to trace the history due to the change of the name:

1909	changed to Toyo Hogeï
1934	changed to Nihon Hogeï
1936	changed to Kyodo Gyogyo after a merger with other whaling companies
1937	changed to Nihon Suisan after a merger with Nihon Syokuryo (Japan Food)

Kalland and Moeran (1992) acknowledged the industrial development in Taiji, where Nihon Enyogyogyo started the industrial whaling in 1905 with a boat captured from the Russo–Japanese War (1904–1905). The new company hired three Norwegians as gunners and instructors (Kalland and Moeran 1992: 31–32). It was Toyo Hogeï which dominated the Japanese whaling industry during the Taisho period (1912–1926) and the cause of the decline of traditional whaling.

Isao Kondo was the director of the company when it was named Nihon Hogeï and the chief officer of Kushiro, Ayukawa, and Taiji under the name of Kyodo Gyogyo. After retiring, he wrote about his experience of working in the industry in his book, *The Rise and Fall of Japanese Coastal Whaling* (2001). Kondo noted that he did not publish the book right away because of his worry about his colleagues’ feelings. In the end, he felt a responsibility to speak up about the real history.

Looking back to the resource management in Japan, we were too optimistic about the whale stocks. We gave the number of whale stocks to IWC counted by local officers, but the committee rejected it as untenable. Now I feel like the assessment of the whale stocks by American's anti-whaling was more precise (Kondo 2001: 432).

Kondo was talking about the 'observer system' voted into effect in 1972 by the IWC. As discussed earlier, the monitoring system was intended to check illegal whaling. His opinion was clear: the calamitous decline of Japan's whaling industry was a result of the resource management failure. Kalland and Moeran (1992), on the other hand, repeatedly portrayed the whalers as victims, quoting anonymous whalers:

We have prayed for their souls so that they can be reborn in Paradise, just as we do for our own father and mother. Why should we accept it? But why should we suffer for political reasons? Why should we suffer as a result of other countries wanting to solve their problems? (Kalland and Moeran 1992: 195).

In this way, Kalland and Moeran have characterized whalers as victimized people, but to do so they appropriate whalers' emotions as a tool that obfuscates the history of the Japanese whaling. Arne Kalland was once a delegate from Norway to the IWC. In the preface of the book, he wrote, 'I do not pretend to be objective and neutral' (Kalland and Moeran 2009: x). Brian Moeran was an expert on Japanese advertising. Their work has helped to falsify the real cause and contribute to attack environmentalists as 'thefts' and 'terrorists'. According to the Code of Ethics of the American Anthropological Association (AAA), 'Anthropologists must not agree to conditions which inappropriately change the purpose, focus, or intended outcome of their research' (AAA 2012). However, as Timothy Malefyt and Robert Morais wrote, 'This is not a realistic condition in business research. We produce research findings, but our clients own the research, and they can use it as they wish' (Malefyt and Morais 2012: 134).

The Japanese government has successfully used the dialogue of 'our suffering people' to attack the environmental activists based on the Wise Use Movement scheme. Four of the 11 objectives, relating to my argument, of the Wise Use Movement are the following, according to Rowell (1996: 18):

1. Immediate development of the petroleum resources of the Arctic National Wildlife Refuge
2. The Global Warming Prevention Act (replacement of old-growth forests with new trees)
3. To amend the Endangered Species Act (species protection based on cost-benefit analyses)
4. Standing to sue in defense of industries threatened or harmed by environmentalists.

The Wise Use Movement was formed as a counterpoint to the environmental movement, yet it co-opts much of its foes' rhetoric. Its tactics have occasionally misled people into thinking of the Wise Use Members as environment-friendly organizations. They are

barons of Big Business looking out for their own profitability (e.g., the biggest names in timber, oil, paper, chemicals, and even the National Rifle Association). In Japan, Kunio Yonezawa started a Wise Use group called the Global Guardian Trust (GGT). After retiring from the Fishery Agency, he was hired by Nihon Suisan and became a vice-president of the company. In short, Yonezawa was a typical example of *Amakudari* (revolving door), wherein people move from government to private for-profit companies (or vice versa) and push the same agendas, as Morikawa concerned (2009). When Yonezawa started GGT, he made the pronouncement:

Having formed the GGT, we absolutely must confront this environmental protection movement that has gone too far (*Global Guardian Trust Newsletter*, February 1994, as cited in Rowell 1996: 368).<sup>12)</sup>

This stand was echoed by the Canadian policy, which was more tactical than the Japanese one. When Canada withdrew from the IWC, Japan hired a former Canadian commissioner, Dan Goodman, who had helped draft the Agreement on Cooperation in Research, Conservation and Management of Marine Mammals in the North Atlantic, establishing the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission (NAMMCO) agreement (Shima 2013: 146). David Day noted that everyone was astonished when Canada suddenly changed to vote for the whalers. ‘What incentive was there for the betrayal of the conservationists for sperm hunt ban?’ (Day 1992: 133). Due to the outrage of the environmentalists, Canada withdrew from the IWC as a voting member in 1981 (Day 1992: 134). Canada is currently an ‘observer country’ of NAMMCO.

At the IWC meeting in 1991, Iceland and Norway signed the draft agreement (Shima 2013: 77). In 1992, a coalition of pro-whaling and pro-sealing representatives from the governments of Iceland, Norway, Greenland, and the Faeroe Islands formed NAMMCO. Iceland declared its withdrawal from the IWC when a Japanese official played the ‘Iceland card’, suggesting a contract for Iceland to sell whale meat to Japan (Shima 2013: 77).

Eugène Lapointe was another Wise Use Canadian promoting whaling in Japan. After being dismissed from his position as Secretary-General with the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) following strong NGO lobbying campaigns, Lapointe founded the International Wildlife Management Consortium (IWMC) to counter the environmental movement and further the message of sustainable use (Rowell 1996: 364–366). Lapointe’s mindset is similar to Yonezawa’s:

It took us a long time to realize that rights granted to animals are rights taken away from humans (Lapointe, as quoted in Rowell 1996: 366).

The Wise Use Movement was strengthened in 1995 by Masayuki Komatsu, particularly when he used the Kyoto Food and Agriculture (FAO) Declaration on Food Security as ‘leverage to start commercial whaling’ (FAO 1996; Komatsu 2004: 21). At this event, the Norwegian Whalers Union signed a joint declaration with other NGOs interested in ‘responsible’ aquatic resource use. Over 80 American Wise Use groups signed this

declaration, including the Alliance for America, People for the West!, and Putting People First (Rowell 1996: 370).

The High North Alliance was created to ‘provide alternative information to campaigns calling for a total ban on all commercial whaling and sealing [and] protect the rights of whalers, sealers, and fishermen to harvest renewable resources under the principle of sustainable management’. Members include the Alaskan Eskimo Whaling Commission, the Pilot Whaler’s Association of the Faeroe Islands, and the Japanese Small-Type Coastal Whalers’ Association. Its name was taken from the controversial documentary, *Survival in the High North*. Although the film was banned in many places for allegedly containing false information, a similarly themed film, *Behind ‘The Cove’: The Quiet Japanese Speak Out*, was screened at the Canadian international film festival and Japanese universities by the promotion of the Japanese Fishery Agency—despite the film’s shortcomings such as neglecting historical evidence and academic standards.

## 5. Conclusion

From one perspective, environmentalism and anti-environmentalism are like twins of opposing characters, two sides of the same coin, born of global capitalism and the exploitation of natural resources. However, as the above analyses have shown, the anti-whaling movement is much more complex than many researchers have analyzed. The ‘Save the Whales’ movement’s discourse must necessarily cover both the considerable effort by Stewart Brand and The Point foundation (among others) and the counterculture grassroots supporters, including the fissures that opened following accusations that the movement was xenophobic and anti-Japanese. This paper has covered, in some detail, the anthropological research and used for their ‘cultural’ argument applying Cultural Theory (Douglas 1970).

The whaling ‘culture conservation’ argument provided by the anthropologists has empowered pro-whaling actors. The right-wing Think Tanks and PR firms and lobbyists have bastardized the message to develop their pseudo-ecologist ‘greenwashing’ tactics and pursued ‘sustainable development’ around the world. (Greenwashing is why the Global Climate Coalition sounds like agreeing with those of the Climate Council. The GCC was an international lobbying organization using ‘junk science’ to deny the reality of global warming, while CC is an NGO providing independent, science-based information on climate change and pushing for political and business leaders to reduce greenhouse gas emissions). To understand the power structure of the whaling issue, we need to recount anthropologist James Clifford’s (2003) recollection of Roland Barthes’s essay on the Bunraku puppet theatre:

One group of masked puppeteers is moving the limbs of the bodies with rods, and another group stands on the side, speaking, intoning the voice; so speech and body are disconnected, but then reconnected in the entire performance, where the power, the evocative power of the body, is multiplied precisely by its being visibly in pieces (Clifford 2003: 49).

Barthes's original essay identified popular culture as a false copy of history, an impression of reality colored by framing and perspective. Morikawa (2009) might identify the 'masked puppeteers' as bureaucracy, the whaling industry, and the political sphere. To this, I would add 'speakers' or even the discourse itself. On the whaling issue, therefore, to ask 'Which side are you on?' is an absurd question that weakens our understanding of the calamities the world faces today.

Lastly, I would like to acknowledge two anthropologists who significantly contributed to the 'Save the Whales' movement. Gregory Bateson, a social scientist fascinated by systems theory and cybernetics, known for his work *Steps to An Ecology of Mind*, as well as *Mind and Nature*, worked with Stewart Brand and Jerry Brown to amplify their message. Lyall Watson was the South African commissioner for the IWC and instrumental in the whaling moratorium 1982. His works such as *Supernature*, *Lifetide*, and *Whales of the World: A Field Guide to the Cetaceans* have stimulated the way of how people perceive other creatures. We need to remember that their vital message was the spirit of the Stockholm Conference in 1972: 'everything is connected'.

## Notes

- 1) Japan Times 'Japan resumes commercial whaling after three decades'. 1 July 2019.
- 2) BBC News 'Japan resumes commercial whaling after 30 years'. 1 July 2019.
- 3) Guardian 'Japan resumes commercial whaling for the first time in 30 years'. 1 July 2019.
- 4) This is what Steven Luke argued on Foucault's power analysis. Foucault argued that 'individuals are oriented to roles and practices and they are culturally and socially given in normative control', If this is true, Luke argued, we are not able to escape from binary relation (Luke 2005: 64).
- 5) Youtube: 'Long Live Life part 1–9 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment Stockholm, Sweden 1972 United Nations Conference on the Human Environment Stockholm, Sweden 1972' <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ptmXV-Ow-4> (part 1) (accessed 10 August 2019)
- 6) BBC News 'Stockholm: Birth of the green generation' 4 June 2012.
- 7) 'JWA I, supra note 64, at 3'
- 8) The American law calls for an automatic reduction of 50 percent in the amount of fish in violation of an international agreement.
- 9) The Town Tampered by the Great Power. *The Stories of Whales in Japan*, aired on August 4th, 10:25 am~1:50 pm. (『日本クジラ物語 第一回 大国に翻弄された町』『知る楽—歴史は眠らない』)
- 10) <https://www.city.uda.nara.jp/udakikimanyou/yukari/jinmutennou/denshouchi.html>  
Uda city has provided the information that after the success of the invasion, the younger brother was awarded the higher position in the imperial system: taking charge of religious practice. Masaaki Ueda, a historian and an expert on Japanese mythology, pointed out that the 6th shrine servant at the Kamo (賀茂 or 鴨, meaning duck) Shrine was named 'kuchira' (久治良, meaning long governing well) (Ueda 1970: 114). This historical line is intriguing for the study of religion and power in Anthropology. At the ritual of the inauguration in 2019, the new emperor visited the Kashihara shrine in Nara. This is the place where the emperor Jinmu was

- enshrined, and at this ritual, a ‘duck’ was offered at the altar, as we could see it on TV.
- 11) *Koho Kamaishi*. (The PR information of Kamaishi City) V. 63 Whaling Base.1979). While the history of whaling was not openly talked about, the history of iron mines in Kamaishi became the symbol of the modernization of the steel industry and registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site in 2015.
- 12) Nihon Suisan Keizai. ‘Explicit stance of confrontation with the extremist organization’. 29 September 1994. (cited by Rowell 1996: 368)

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