

‘Honolulu Māori’

RACIAL DIMENSIONS OF DUKE KAHANAMOKU’S TOUR OF AUSTRALIA AND NEW ZEALAND, 1914–1915*



THE CHRISTCHURCH *STAR* observed in February 1915 that Duke Paoa Kahanamoku, the visiting Hawaiian Olympic swimming champion and world record holder, ‘would pass muster as a Māori; a rather big, handsome Māori, with all the outward and visible signs of the native islander’.¹ A few weeks earlier, while Kahanamoku was touring Australia, newspaper reports of the visitor also interwove racial epithets into stories of his aquatic prowess. The tenor and regularity of such comments in both countries suggest that race provided a significant sub-text to Kahanamoku’s tour, which was organized to provide a fillip to amateur swimming in the Antipodes and included swimming and surfing appearances throughout New Zealand and in New South Wales (NSW), Queensland and Victoria over three months in the summer of 1914–1915. While Kahanamoku’s biographers discuss the tour, and several commentators consider it seminal to the development of surfing in both countries, historians have not addressed the intriguing racial dimensions of a visit by a Hawaiian athlete to Australia during the era of the White Australia Policy and associated antipathy towards Pacific Islanders, nor commented on his visit to New Zealand in light of its own range of restrictive racial practices.²

In 1998 Daryl Adair highlighted the neglect of racial issues in considering the experiences of Pacific Islanders in Australian sport.³ Subsequent research indicates that race was crucial to understanding the reception, construction and memory of Pacific Islander aquatic athletes in Australia in this period.⁴ A ‘Nimble Savage’ stereotype concerning the supposed natural aquatic abilities of Islanders influenced constructions of visiting Pacific Islander watermen to Australia, in particular the Sydney-based Solomon Islander swimming champion, Alick Wickham.⁵ The stereotype also influenced the mythologizing of Kahanamoku as the ‘father’ of Australian surfing. New Zealand stereotyping of Pacific aquatic athletes is less well understood. However, if racial stereotyping is contingent upon culture, location and other contextual factors, as race scholars widely argue, varying responses between the two nations could be expected.⁶ Certainly, while Australia and New Zealand were physically proximate, imperially bonded and culturally akin in many respects, as incubators for racial ideologies they were markedly different.

This article addresses race, racial stereotyping and the applicability of the Nimble Savage stereotype in particular as factors in Duke Kahanamoku’s Australasian tour. How did the Australian and New Zealand press respond to Kahanamoku as a Hawaiian? What impact did pre-existing stereotyping of Pacific Islanders have in Australia, and did constructions of Kahanamoku as an exotic Islander help reify the Nimble Savage? Did the Nimble Savage stereotype apply in New Zealand and to what degree, relative to Australia? What interactions, real and imagined, occurred with Māori? These comparative racial dimensions help illuminate the

nuances of racial stereotyping and enhance understandings of the intersection of race with sport in the Pacific.

Sport abounds with racial stereotypes. The best known ascribe innate athletic skills, prowess and advantages to certain racial groups based on supposed physical, genetic and phenotypic differences. For example, Kenyan runners have been represented as ‘natural’ middle- and long-distance runners, and African–Americans as ‘natural’ track athletes.⁷ Grounded in culture rather than in biology, these notions are subject to revision over time and place. One such stereotype, which was current in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries but is now obsolete, concerned Pacific Islanders and swimming. This Nimble Savage stereotype explained, rationalized and celebrated the success and contributions of swimmers and surfers from the Pacific on racial lines.⁸ Belief in the aquatic prowess of Pacific Islanders emerged from early European forays into the Pacific, and descriptions of the abilities of Islanders in water-based activities as diverse as swimming, diving, canoeing, surfing and sailing appear as a recurrent trope in the logbooks and records of sailors, missionaries, travellers and writers throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. James King, Captain Cook’s lieutenant, typified the impact of Hawaiian surfboard riders and swimmers on the Europeans and provided the blueprint for stereotyping Pacific Islanders as being ‘at one’ with the water: ‘By such like exercises, these men may be said to be almost amphibious’.⁹ Four aspects of Islanders’ interactions with the sea specifically engaged the observers’ imagination: skills, endurance abilities, sheer novelty (especially surfing) and apparent fearlessness relative to European attitudes to the sea. As surfing writer Matt Warshaw colourfully described the latter, the ‘physics of balancing atop a floating wood plank was strange enough, but mostly it was the astonishing notion of play in an element that to the Western mind was just slightly safer than fire’.¹⁰

While the Nimble Savage stereotype arose from actual encounters with Pacific Islanders, and had more potency in describing some peoples and regions than others, it culturally pervaded the imaginary ‘South Seas’ and was bound up with ways in which the Pacific colonized the Western imagination as well as with the discursive themes of the ‘primitive’ body and the ‘natural athlete’. It served to denote an aquatically athletic cousin of the Noble Savage, with all of its romantic connotations. As a physical stereotype, the Nimble Savage was preoccupied with the male body and aligned with a masculine-engendered primitivism that was idyllic, regenerative and in harmony with nature.¹¹ It was located within a broader tradition of admiration for the physicality, grace and athleticism of Pacific Islanders.¹²

Although mostly positive in language and tone, the Nimble Savage is problematic in two fundamental ways. First, as a stereotype it essentializes and defines people based on the spurious tenets of racial difference. Second, its laudatory expression obscured negative undertones. As John Bale notes, the rhetoric of idealization used in the colonial era contained seeds of the rhetoric of negation.¹³ Several scholars have described a ‘law of compensation’, which Brett St Louis has defined as a ‘racially ascribed paradigm [in sport] where one is *either* physically capable *or* cognitively endowed’, but not both.¹⁴ According to this law, successful non-white athletes may be physically gifted but lack the intelligence, strategic ability

and tactical ingenuity of white athletes. This compensatory logic emerged to rationalize the success of black athletes and to preserve white privilege at the apex of social classificatory systems. Applied to the Nimble Savage, this allowed for a simultaneous admiration and subtle denigration of Pacific Islanders. Sydney newspapers, for example, applauded the stamina of Alick Wickham when he emerged as a champion in 1904, but cast him as a swimmer who lacked a strategic 'head' in races.¹⁵

Individuals such as Wickham helped reify the Nimble Savage stereotype in Australia, where the purported aquatic abilities of Islanders proved inspirational and instructional in the rise of swimming and surfing cultures in the early 1900s. Specifically, the stereotype shaped constructions, representations and memories of Pacific Islanders who were ascribed positions of great significance in the development of Australian aquatic sport. These individuals included both Melanesians and Polynesians, and it is worth noting that while the Nimble Savage developed in the context of racial hierarchies that privileged Polynesians as more noble than Melanesians — and favoured Māori as the most noble of all — as a stereotype it blurred these rhetorical distinctions.¹⁶ The novelty of Pacific Islanders in Australian water activities helped assure this. The most prominent individual examples are Wickham (1886–1967), who is credited with introducing the crawl stroke, and 'Tommy Tanna' (c. 1870–?), a Melanesian servant in Manly who inspired body surfing.¹⁷ While Wickham and Tanna do not exactly represent a water-borne Pacific vanguard, a surprising number of lesser known or unidentified Islanders played roles in the swimming culture prior to Kahanamoku's arrival and helped reinforce notions of natural aquatic ability. Among these were 'Prince Etoisi', a Melanesian brought to Sydney by Ben Boyd in 1847 and who expertly dived to inspect a ship's hull; 'Cooper', an unidentified 'Kanaka' who won a 300-yards race in Sydney in 1855 amid protestations of his 'unequal' abilities as an islander; ten Māori swimmers in Melbourne in 1863 who attracted spectators expecting 'to see these tawny natives . . . display great prowess in the foamy deep'; Ted Wickham, Alick's younger brother, who held national and state swimming championships from 1912 to 1914; and a succession of ships' crews, cricketers and choristers from Fiji, Hawai'i, the Ellice Islands and elsewhere, among whom several individuals were co-opted to perform water acts and fulfil audience expectations of Pacific Islander aquatic ability.¹⁸ It was in this context that Kahanamoku arrived and performed in Australia in 1914. While some exoticizing of a handsome, Hawaiian, Olympian and world swimming champion was inevitable and independent of pre-existing stereotypes, the Nimble Savage predicted an accentuated racialized emphasis, particularly on his swimming and surfing abilities.

Kahanamoku's Australian tour began in Sydney on 14 December 1914, and continued for the next two months. It took him to metropolitan and regional centres in NSW, Queensland and Victoria, where he competed in swimming carnivals, exhibited his technique and demonstrated surfing (Figure 1). Although he travelled with fellow Hawaiian swimmer George Cunha, who was of Portuguese heritage, and their manager Francis Evans, who was also an indigenous Hawaiian, press coverage concentrated on Kahanamoku. He was, after all, the 1912 Olympic champion and world record holder in the 100 metres, and an expert surfboard

‘shooter’. While his speed, technique and abilities attracted media attention, it was race that figured most prominently in Australian constructions of the visitor. Press reports of Kahanamoku emphasized racial difference, expressed in exotic, romanticized and overwhelmingly ‘positive’ ways.

Caroline Knowles argues that while race is understood as a social construct it is less examined in terms of the mechanisms of its production.¹⁹ She draws attention to the role of the body in the process of race making, arguing that the ‘physicality of bodies and their insignia’ along with ‘bodily comportment’, or the ‘ways in which people move through and occupy space’, are important aspects of racial construction.²⁰ In sport, one space where race is formed, the ‘how-tos’ of this production extend beyond mere corporeality. The case of Kahanamoku in Australia reveals how an extensive range of factors, including nomenclature, ethnic origins, skin colour, physicality and aquatic ability, contributed to Nimble Savage stereotyping.



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|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 1. Sydney 14 Dec.–11 Jan. ^ # | 7. Sydney 4–8 Feb. ^ # |
| 2. Allora, Qld 13 Jan. ^ | 8. Newcastle 10–11 Feb. ^ |
| 3. Brisbane 14–23 Jan. ^ | 9. Melbourne 12–15 Feb. ^ |
| 4. Maryborough, Qld 25 Jan. ^ | 10. Goulburn, NSW 17 Feb. ^ |
| 5. Rockhampton, Qld 27–28 Jan. ^ | 11. Sydney 18–19 Feb. (no program) |
| 6. Mt. Morgan, Qld 30 Jan.–1 Feb. ^ | |
| ^ swimming events | # surfing display |

Figure 1: Kahanamoku’s Australian itinerary 14 December 1914–19 February 1915.

Kahanamoku’s surname, described by his biographer Joseph L. Brennan as ‘freighted with the romance of distant places’, was a racial signifier that combined potently with ‘Duke’ to capture his exoticism and intrigue Australians.²¹ Commentators mangled it, for instance as ‘Cocoabanana’, ‘Kokobanana’ and

'Kahanetc'.²² These bastardizations of his surname were double-edged: while they represented a degree of racial negation, they also signalled fascination with his Hawaiian origins. Pigmentation also played an important role in constructions of Kahanamoku, and the Australian press produced a stream of epidermal adjectives that illustrate how skin colour was used as a racial signifier. Significantly, these were often paired with complementary terms about his swimming ability. For instance, he was a 'brown marvel', 'dusky champion', 'colored record breaker', 'wonderful kanaka swimmer', 'bronzed islander', and the 'dark-skinned Hawaiian'.²³ Reporters described his 'lithe brown body slipping through the water' and how he 'stood like an ebony statue' on his surfboard.²⁴

Physical appearance was another key factor in the positive racial constructions of the 24-year-old, 6 feet 1 inch, (1.85m) Hawaiian. John Bale and Michael Cronin have argued in their study of sport and postcolonialism that 'physique was a particularly important theme in the European construction of the athleticism of various groups of people in the colonized world'.²⁵ Kahanamoku's corporeal impact in Australia was sizeable. The press described 'this finely-built Hawaiian, with his powerful frame'; he was the 'embodiment of rubbery fitness'.²⁶ Advertising images of a surfing Kahanamoku emphasized his physicality.²⁷ They depicted him as smiling, charismatic, well-muscled, brown-skinned and near-naked, representations that emphasize exoticism, idealized masculinity and unfettered harmony with nature. Overall, he was constructed as possessing the body of a 'natural' swimmer and surfer, 'built for speed and graceful movement in the water'.²⁸

But it was the naturalization of his aquatic ability that was most significant in terms of understanding the racialization of Kahanamoku. His aquatic feats were interpreted through a racial prism that naturalized Pacific Islanders' swimming ability. Australian reporters described him as a 'swimmer born and bred'.²⁹ Other swimmers of the day were sometimes called 'fish', but in Kahanamoku's case references to his amphibious nature became a popular cliché. For instance, he had the 'zest of an amphibian', and was called the 'fastest two-legged fish afloat' and a 'human dolphin'.³⁰ In reality, of course, he trained like any other athlete, but reporters generally overlooked this.³¹ Coverage of Kahanamoku's surfing exploits in Sydney also naturalized his abilities. In these reports, what was novel and remarkable was not the fact that he surfed, but his 'innate' mastery of the board. His acrobatics on the board showed 'how much second nature it was to him'.³²

The 'law of compensation' subtly tempered responses to Kahanamoku, and a brain versus brawn binary is discernable in press reports. When Kahanamoku declined to swim in a 440-yards race or longer distance events in Sydney, for example, commentary included criticism of Pacific Islanders in general for being unwilling to overexert themselves; such criticism was more commonly directed at Melanesians, who were stereotyped as more lazy, indolent and dissolute than Polynesians.³³ Descriptions of his surfing exploits that infantilized his abilities, such as one in which he reportedly 'worshipped' his surfboard 'almost as much as a child its doll', also subtly bolstered paternalistic discourses about Pacific Islanders.³⁴ The shy Kahanamoku played his ukulele at receptions in lieu of speeches, which probably had a similar effect.³⁵

While containing seeds of negation, the tenor of Australian press constructions of Kahanamoku was largely positive and starkly contrasted with racial discourses

surrounding ‘Kanakan’ labourers in Australia. Located mainly in the cane fields of Far North Queensland, these Islanders were collectively characterized via negative constructions partially aligned with longstanding Ignoble Savage stereotypes of Islanders as deprived, indolent and savage.³⁶ And press reports of Kahanamoku certainly differed from discourses surrounding Aborigines, who were denied sporting opportunities and commonly caricatured at Sydney swimming carnivals in degrading, costumed representations that emphasized savagery, cowardice and subjugation by ‘white’ settlers.³⁷ As an individual, as a Polynesian, as a Hawaiian and as prototypic sporting star, Kahanamoku was, unsurprisingly, differentiated from Islander labourers and other non-white groups. What is remarkable about his racial constructions in Australia is their positive tenor, and the resonance of the Nimble Savage stereotype.

Whereas the Australian press constructed Kahanamoku as different — as an exotic Other — in New Zealand his reception was much more complex. Kahanamoku arrived in Wellington on 23 February 1915 and initiated his month-long tour with a private visit to Wellington College, where he raced against the best senior and junior boys at the school’s baths.³⁸ From there, he commenced a public and well-publicized tour of 11 cities and towns (Figure 2), sponsored by the various swimming centres affiliated with the New Zealand Amateur Swimming Association (NZASA). While New Zealanders had previously encountered Kahanamoku in the press, a few individuals had also observed the swimmer in action: Malcolm Champion had competed with the Australasian team against the Hawaiian in the 4x200m freestyle relay team at the 1912 Stockholm Olympics, and the All Blacks had seen him swim in California in 1913.³⁹

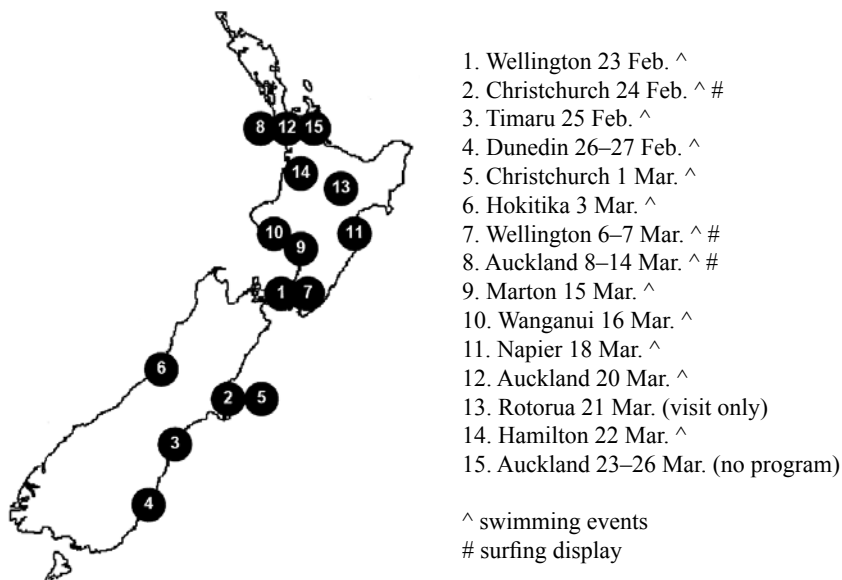


Figure 2: Kahanamoku’s New Zealand itinerary 23 February–March 1915.

As in Australia, a degree of racialized demarcation and exoticizing of Kahanamoku occurred in the New Zealand press, but this only occasionally

approached Nimble Savage stereotyping. The Pākehā press highlighted Kahanamoku's exoticness in racialized terms that corresponded in general nature to Australian descriptions.⁴⁰ Nominally, he was the 'swimmer with the unpronounceable names'.⁴¹ The *New Zealand Illustrated Sporting & Dramatic Review*, for one, described his 'bronze grey body', 'black head' and 'long brown arms'.⁴² Such epidermal adjectives frequently combined with favourable descriptions of his ability, hence 'the dark champion', the 'dusky champion swimmer of the world' and the 'sleek brown boy'.⁴³ As the 'dusky man of Hawaii', Kahanamoku was a 'product of the surf that beats eternally on the picturesque beach of Waikiki', where he 'revelled in the hot spray and limpid wavelets of his [sic] shimmering wastes'.⁴⁴

Fascination with Kahanamoku's physical appearance also assumed racial overtones in which physicality and corporeality linked with skin colour: 'Duke, who is 24 years of age, is very dark and is a fine specimen of an athlete, being over 6 feet in height and weighing about 13 stone'.⁴⁵ The *Dominion*, describing his victory in the 100-yards handicap at Wellington, similarly combined race with physicality: 'his brown body — a marvel of fitness — stood poised a moment, and then cleft the water'.⁴⁶ Other references were redolent of classical associations that underlay the Noble Savage and informed the Nimble Savage: Kahanamoku 'is as dark as a bronze statue and as perfect a fine specimen of an athlete'.⁴⁷ More directly: 'As a man, the man of the ancient Greeks and Romans, he is perfect'.⁴⁸

Kahanamoku's aquatic abilities were also naturalized and racialized. Kahanamoku, 'one could imagine, is a child of the surf, a brown islander, whose early days and every day, perhaps, found him disporting in the Pacific swell'.⁴⁹ On the Waikiki beaches, mused another newspaper, 'he learned all the arts of the swimmer, and almost unconsciously developed a style that gave him an extraordinary turn of speed in the water'.⁵⁰ This ability, like his style, was constructed as innate: 'No, Duke does not train specially; naturally fit and healthy, his competition swimming keeps him in form'.⁵¹ He possessed 'fish-like power' and 'shark-like swiftness'.⁵² While there was acknowledgement that New Zealand weather and conditions, often cold, would adversely affect his performances, his Pacific-born ability was assumed.⁵³ As in Australia, though, this racializing was not the sole emphasis in constructing Kahanamoku. He was also held up as an exemplary athlete, technical stylist and inspiration to budding New Zealand swimmers.⁵⁴

Where Kahanamoku's New Zealand reception differed most significantly from Australia's was in the existence of another strand of racial emphasis: on Kahanamoku as a Māori relation. The familiarizing process of Kahanamoku commenced on his arrival, when a columnist for the Christchurch *Star* observed the gap between expectation and reality: 'I expected something like a dark-skinned giant with huge hands and feet, with perhaps a fin or two here and there to account for his wonderful speed. I saw instead a tall, lithe form, very like a Māori, with a magnificent breadth of shoulder, and, for his stature, hands and feet that were entirely in keeping'.⁵⁵ Similar commentary would follow his tour. For example: 'Kahanamoku would pass muster as a Māori; a rather big, handsome Māori, with all the outward and visible signs of the native islander. Only he comes from different latitudes, from a little pearl of the North Pacific, the islands of Hawaii, which is to him home'.⁵⁶ The *Dominion* agreed, offering greater comparison and

commenting on Māori and Hawaiian cultural connectedness:

there is no doubt that the Duke would pass for a Māori anywhere, albeit on the land he has a slow and stately mien that is a contrast to his gait in the water, which resembles a tiger in its forcefulness. Conversing with Kahanamoku, I put the question to him: ‘Can you understand Māori?’ The answer was, ‘A little — not very much’. Considering, however, that he has not been with us more than a fortnight, and probably had few opportunities of testing the matter, it is evidence that the Hawaiians and the Māori have something in common that was perhaps more so in former times.⁵⁷

As suggested here by the word ‘mien’, the comparisons also alluded to character. The Christchurch *Star*, for example, attempted to explain Kahanamoku’s reluctance to be interviewed by citing his ‘inborn reticence that might be found in a King Country Māori’.⁵⁸ In referencing the Kingitanga movement, the comment alluded to royalty and humility and contrasted with more generic Australian explanations of Kahanamoku’s shyness.

A widely reported reception accorded to Kahanamoku by the Māori chief Tureiti Te Heuheu Tukino V reinforced Pākehā associations of Kahanamoku with Māori. Te Heuheu was a prominent identity, politician and paramount chief of Ngāti Tuwharetoa, whose home at Lyall Bay was a major centre for Māori visiting the capital for political business.⁵⁹ He sought Kahanamoku out at his Wellington carnival and reportedly asked, ‘Where is this Honolulu Māori you call a Hawaiian?’⁶⁰ He also organized a pōwhiri and dinner on 7 March 1915 when Kahanamoku visited the Lyall Bay Surf Club to demonstrate surfing. The all-day event included a haka, hongi, traditional Māori dinner, toasts, Māori and Hawaiian songs, and presentation of a Māori cloak [Figure 3].⁶¹ In its commentary on the fête, the *Dominion* speculated on cultural bonds between Māori and Hawaiians, noting for example that Kahanamoku’s middle name, Paoa, also featured in Māori legend: ‘To those who like to theorise on these matters, such particulars as the above must ever be of interest. At Lyall Bay on Sunday, at any rate, it was evident that Māori and Hawaiian, or the “Honolulu Māori” as Te Heu Heu christened him, with his ready wit, were getting on swimmingly as Paoa appeared clad in a Māori mat, and likewise his manager, Mr. F. Evans. Te Heu Heu en famille brought up the rear, as proud as could be of his new-found cousin from far Hawaii, or Hawaiki, whichever it may be.’⁶²



Figure 3: Duke Kahanamoku with Te Heuheu and unidentified woman, Lyall Bay, 7 March 1915.

Source: Lyall Bay Surf & Life Saving Club Collection. Photographer unknown.

An autograph in Māori from Te Heuheu to Kahanamoku perhaps best records the cultural bonds. The chief inscribed a partial translation in English in Kahanamoku's autograph book: 'Your people have never moved from the old country called "Hawaiki", the country where our old people were born and your mana like the rangatira has never changed from the olden days to the present time.'⁶³ The autograph and reception reveal that Māori recognition of cultural ties with Kahanamoku were deeper than the more superficial links generally acknowledged by the Pākehā press, which emphasized similar physical appearance, demeanour and linguistic associations. To Māori, Hawai'i, New Zealand and other Polynesian islands were all culturally and cosmologically tied to Hawaiki, and their response to Kahanamoku represented an act of kinship. I have been unable to locate any primary record of other meetings between Kahanamoku and Māori, such as one at Rotorua described by Brennan and a proposed rendezvous with Te Heuheu's family in Auckland, but the encounter at Lyall Bay indicates an additional racial and cultural dimension to the tour that familiarized Kahanamoku to New Zealanders more so than was possible in Australia.⁶⁴

Constructions of Māori as among the most noble of Pacific Islanders made redundant and unnecessary excessive emphasis on Kahanamoku as Nimble Savage.⁶⁵ The familiarization of Kahanamoku also lessened the applicability of the stereotype during his visit because sporting discourses about Māori and Islanders differed from those in Australia. There are several elements to this. Unlike in Australia, where Wickham, 'Tanna' and others had influenced the development of aquatic sports with their indigenous aquatic techniques and individual abilities, the impact of Pacific Islanders on the development of swimming in New Zealand was negligible. Wickham's Australian feats had been noted in the New Zealand press from 1902, the techniques and physiques of several unidentified Fijian swimmers at Dunedin's St Clair baths had caught the attention of the press in 1907, and a Fijian swimmer called Marama had made some impression on Wellington swimmers in 1915, but Pacific Islanders as swimmers had not otherwise captured the imagination of New Zealanders.⁶⁶

Nor had Māori swimming fuelled stereotypes within New Zealand. Despite long traditions, legends and well-documented evidence of Māori swimming, diving and surfing cultures, some of which were popularly known, Pākehā commentators mostly overlooked indigenous aquatic customs in the context of modern New Zealand swimming.⁶⁷ Certainly, the press did not raise this during Kahanamoku's visit or in references to his cultural bonds with Māori. There were also few known Māori competitors at this time: in carnival programmes for the 1914–1915 New Zealand national championships only one recognizable Māori name appeared, a R. Werata in a boy's race.⁶⁸ No Māori swimmers of note emerged in the modern era of New Zealand swimming until Billy Whareaitu, Riko Simon, Ruhi Pene, Hiwa Manahi, B. McRae and Katerina Nehua in the 1930s.⁶⁹ Popular associations of Māori swimming abilities were mostly limited to knowledge of boy coin divers at places such as Whakarewarewa at Rotorua.⁷⁰ Ironically, Māori water exploits helped reinforce the Nimble Savage stereotype internationally if not at home, including a Māori aquatic carnival in Sydney in 1910, Māori swimmers in

London in 1911, and Katerina Nehua’s endurance swims in Sydney in the 1930s.⁷¹ At home, Māori sporting stereotypes would become associated with rugby, a sport that could accommodate perceived Māori toughness, although Greg Ryan has rightly challenged assumptions about the prevalence and representativeness of Māori in rugby in this era.⁷²

Instead, by 1915 swimming and surfing were constructed as Pākehā sporting activities, divorced from any Māori antecedents. Although the emblem adopted by the NZASA in 1893 for its medals and certificates incorporated a Māori and a European swimmer, the sport was decidedly Pākehā in its participants, organization and Western sporting orientation.⁷³ This can, in part, be explained by the rural concentration of Māori at this time versus the urban development of amateur swimming. At least one Māori swimming club existed in the 1920s, the Ohinemutu Club at Rotorua, but attempts by the national body to foster a Māori competition failed.⁷⁴ A speaker at a Wellington reception for Kahanamoku who remarked that New Zealand ‘hoped to have a “Duke” of its own shortly’ no doubt envisaged a Pākehā Duke.⁷⁵ Swimming historians who have noted Māori swimming traditions, particularly long-distance endeavours, typically use this to preface Western achievements and separate Māori from Pākehā efforts: ‘Having thus paid a due need of reverence to tradition, we may pass to the more prosaic history of the Pākehā.’⁷⁶ Such sporting discourses, which decentred Māori aquatic traditions and, by extension, those of Pacific Islanders in general, further limited the growth of the Nimble Savage stereotype in New Zealand.

Ultimately, Kahanamoku’s experiences in Australia and New Zealand serve as a useful case study of race as a cultural construct. The varying national press responses to Kahanamoku underscore how race is socially, temporally and geographically situated.⁷⁷ As similar and proximate as Australia and New Zealand were, and as alike in nature as Kahanamoku’s respective tours appear, racial responses differed significantly between the two countries. The Nimble Savage stereotype, which was still embedded in fertile ground in Australia in 1914–1915, was less salient a factor than were Māori associations in understanding reactions to Kahanamoku in New Zealand. These differences reflect Michael Pickering’s observation on racial stereotyping as a ‘way of designating and reifying cultural “difference”’.⁷⁸ In Australia, Kahanamoku stood out as Other, but he could be accommodated and admired via the racial stereotype of the Nimble Savage. In New Zealand, where the stereotype was less prevalent, associations with Māori familiarized rather than differentiated. This trans-Tasman comparison of racial constructions reveals the nuances of racial stereotyping within the crucible of Antipodean swimming cultures.

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NOTES

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1 *Star* (Christchurch), 24 February 1915, p.5.

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13 John Bale, *Imagined Olympians: Body Culture and Colonial Representation in Rwanda*, Minneapolis, 2002, pp.84–92.

14 Brett St Louis, 'Sport, Genetics and the "Natural Athlete": The Resurgence of Racial Science', *Body & Society*, 9, 2 (2003), p.86. Emphasis in the original. See also John M. Hoberman, *Mortal Engines: The Science of Performance and the Dehumanization of Sport*, New York, 1992, pp.39–43.

15 *Sydney Sportsman* (SS), 20 January 1904, p.2; *Bulletin*, 24 March 1904, p.26.

16 For commentary on the ascribed nobility of Māori, see Malcolm MacLean, 'Of Warriors and Blokes: The Problem of Māori Rugby for Pakeha Masculinity in New Zealand', in Timothy J.L. Chandler and John Nauright, eds, *Making the Rugby World: Race, Gender, Commerce*, London, 1999, p.6.

17 Osmond and Phillips, 'Look at That Kid Crawling', pp.43–62.

18 *Heads of the People* (Sydney), 1 May 1847, p.24; 8 May 1847, p.37 (Etoisi); *Referee*

(Sydney), 1 March 1905, p.7 (Cooper); *Argus* (Melbourne), 12 January 1863, p.5 (Māori). It is likely that these men were members of ‘Dr. McGaurin’s Māori troupe’, a theatrical party of Māori men and women who performed in NSW and Victoria in this period. See also *Referee*, 1 April 1903, p.6 (ships’ crews); *Bulletin*, 19 December 1907, p.24 (Fijians); *SS*, 5 April 1911, p.3 (choristers).

- 19 Caroline Knowles, *Race and Social Analysis*, London, 2003, p.21.
- 20 *ibid.*, p.44.
- 21 Joe Brennan, *Duke of Hawaii*, New York, 1968, p.49.
- 22 Plum to Macdougall, 15 December 1956, Kahanamoku Files, Harbord Diggers’ Club, Sydney; *Sun* (Sydney), 22 December 1914, p.6; *Bulletin*, 28 January 1915, p.32.
- 23 *Bulletin*, 22 October 1914, p.26; *SS*, 13 January 1915, p.3; *Sun*, 3 January 1915, p.5; *Referee*, 23 September 1914, p.11; *Town and Country Journal* (Sydney), 13 January 1915, p.42; *Referee*, 17 February 1915, p.13.
- 24 *Goulburn Evening Penny Post*, 18 February 1915, p.2; *Referee*, 10 February 1915, p.1.
- 25 John Bale and Mike Cronin, eds, *Sport and Postcolonialism*, Oxford, 2003, p.2.
- 26 *Sun*, 24 December 1914, p.6; *Referee*, 20 January 1915, p.16.
- 27 For a full-colour copy reproduction of a poster that used this image, see Albie Thoms, *Surfmovies: The History of the Surf Film in Australia*, n.p., Noosa Heads, 2000, p.21. For an example of the advertisements, see *Brisbane Courier*, 20 January 1915, p.3.
- 28 *Daily Telegraph* (Sydney), 15 December 1914, p.9.
- 29 *Referee*, 13 January 1915, p.16.
- 30 *Sun*, 22 December 1914, p.6; *Bulletin*, 17 December 1914, p.26; *Referee*, 13 January 1915, p.16.
- 31 For references to Kahanamoku’s training, see Sandra Kimberley Hall, *Duke: A Great Hawaiian*, Honolulu, 2004, pp.33, 39.
- 32 *Sun*, 24 December 1914, p.6.
- 33 *Sun*, 30 December 1914, p.3.
- 34 *Referee*, 10 February 1915, p.1.
- 35 *Sydney Morning Herald* (SMH), 11 January 1915, p.6.
- 36 Raymond Evans, Kay Saunders, and Kathryn Cronin, *Race Relations in Colonial Queensland: A History of Exclusion, Exploitation, and Extermination*, 3rd ed., Brisbane, 1993; Smith, *European Vision and the South Pacific*, pp.5–6.
- 37 For an example, see ‘Program for Freshwater Surf and Life Saving Club’s First Grand Annual Gala Carnival, 26 January 1909’, E.S. Marks Collection 735, Mitchell Library, Sydney.
- 38 *Dominion*, 24 February 1915, p.7.
- 39 *Evening Post* (EP), 20 November 1913, p.2; *Star*, 24 February 1915, p.5.
- 40 The Māori press appears to have been silent on Kahanamoku.
- 41 *Wanganui Herald*, 13 March 1915, p.8.
- 42 *New Zealand Illustrated Sporting & Dramatic Review* (NZISDR), 11 March 1915, p.17.
- 43 *Hawke’s Bay Tribune* (HBT), 18 March 1915, p.2; *Truth* (Auckland), 6 March 1915, pp.3, 12.
- 44 *Waikato Times* (WT), 23 March 1915, p.4; *Dominion*, 24 February 1915, p.7; *Truth*, 6 March 1915, p.12.
- 45 HBT, 18 March 1915, p.2.
- 46 *Dominion*, 8 March 1915, p.7.
- 47 *Truth*, 13 March 1915, p.12.
- 48 *Truth*, 6 March 1915, p.12.
- 49 *Star*, 24 February 1915, p.5; WT, 20 March 1915, p.4.
- 50 *Dominion*, 24 February 1915, p.7.
- 51 NZISDR, 11 March 1915, p.17.
- 52 *Evening Star* (Dunedin), 27 February 1915, p.1; NZISDR, 11 March 1915, p.17.
- 53 *Truth*, 6 March 1915, p.12.
- 54 See, for example, *Dominion*, 8 March 1915, p.7; WT, 20 March 1915, p.4.
- 55 *Star*, 24 February 1915, p.5.
- 56 *ibid.* Versions of this are repeated in *Lyttelton Times* (Christchurch), 25 February 1915, p.9; *Canterbury Times* (Christchurch), 3 March 1915, p.55; WT, 20 March 1915, p.4.
- 57 *Dominion*, 9 March 1915, p.7.
- 58 *Star*, 24 February 1915, p.5.
- 59 Ken Te Huingarau Gartner, ‘Te Heuheu Tukino V, Tureiti’, in *The Dictionary of New Zealand Biography, Vol. Three, 1901–1920*, Auckland, 1996, pp.507–509.
- 60 *Dominion*, 9 March 1915, p.7.

61 *ibid*; *Dominion*, 13 March 1915, p.5; *Weekly Press: New Zealand Referee & Sporting Record* (Christchurch), 17 March 1915, p.87. See description in Brennan, pp.95–96.

62 *Dominion*, 9 March 1915, p.7.

63 *Dominion*, 13 March 1915, p.5. The newspaper also offered a full translation: 'We are very glad in our hearts to see you and to meet at our house. The Tupuna haere mai ra e Te Mareikura to country which our generations of great ancestors left when we came away from there to here, welcome! The Mareikura! Your foot "tapu" to be here in this new country. Your people have never moved from the old country called "Hawaiki", the country where our old people were born and your mana like the rangatira has never changed from the olden days to the present time.' The autograph and a translation, together with photographs, are contained in scrapbook souvenirs from the tour: 'Autographs, photos, memorabilia', Kahanamoku Collection, MS Group 354, Boxes 8–9, Bishop Museum Archives, Honolulu.

64 Brennan, p.96. Brennan does not mention individual Māori met by Kahanamoku in Rotorua. See also *Referee*, 16 June 1915, p.11. Announcements of Kahanamoku's visit to Rotorua were made in the following papers: WT, 20 March 1915, p.1; *Auckland Star*, 19 March 1915, p.2; *Auckland Weekly News*, 25 March 1915, p.59. No reference appears in *Bay of Plenty Times* (Tauranga) or *Te Puke Times* (Rotorua area), and other contemporary papers from Rotorua no longer exist. The Te Arawa/Rotorua oral history at the Alexander Turnbull Library (ATL) has no indexed reference to Kahanamoku. It is possible that Kahanamoku returned there after his final carnival in Hamilton on 22 March 1915, as his scheduled departure from New Zealand on 23 March was delayed by three days due to a damaged ship propeller and his activities in that period are unknown: see *New Zealand Herald* (NZH), 24 March 1915, p.4.

65 MacLean, 'Of Warriors and Blokes', p.6.

66 Unidentified newspaper clippings from Dunedin dated December 1902 to February 1903 (Wickham) and from Dunedin dated 7 January 1907 (Fijians), in scrapbooks, J.H. Nixon: Further papers of the Dunedin Amateur Swimming Club, MS-83-073, Hocken Library, Dunedin; EP, 6 December 1915 (Marama). The Fijian swimmers in Dunedin may have been the Fijian firewalkers who performed in Christchurch in January 1907: see Caroline Daley, *Leisure & Pleasure: Reshaping & Revealing the New Zealand Body 1900–1960*, Auckland, 2003, p.83.

67 For accounts of Māori swimming and surfing, see, for example: Elsdon Best, *Games and Pastimes of the Māori*, Wellington, 1976 (1925), pp.40–54; S. Percy Smith, 'The Use of the Surf Board in New Zealand', *Journal of the Polynesian Society*, 30, 1 (1921), p.50; I.W.T. Munroe, 'Māori Tell of Great Swimmers', *Weekly News* (Auckland), 12 December 1962, p.44; Olive Baldwin, *A Great New Zealand Adventure: Retracing the Legendary Swim by Hinepoupou from Kapiti Island, across Cook Strait to d'Urville Island via the Outer Marlborough Sounds*, Paraparaumu, 1990, p.10.

68 Souvenir Programmes for third and fourth days of New Zealand Amateur Swimming Championships 1914–15, Napier, John Victor Dooling Papers Related to Swimming, No. 73-141-1/22, ATL.

69 Korotangi, 'Māori as Swimmer: Billy Whareaitu Shows the Way', NZH, 10 January 1935, p.15; Caroline Daley, 'Women Endurance Swimmers: Dissolving Grease Suits and Decentring New Zealand History', *Sporting Traditions*, 21, 2 (2005), pp.29–55.

70 NZH, 15 March 1915, p.4; *New Zealand Free Lance*, 28 February 1934.

71 Paul Diamond, *Makereti: Taking Māori to the World*, Auckland, 2007, p.104; David Andrews, *The Two Worlds of Maggie Papakura*, n.p. (UK), 2005, p.184; Daley, 'Women Endurance Swimmers'.

72 Greg Ryan, 'The Paradox of Māori Rugby 1870–1914', in Greg Ryan, ed., *Tackling Rugby Myths: Rugby and New Zealand Society 1854–2004*, Dunedin, 2005, pp.89–103. For discussion of Māori stereotypes and rugby, see MacLean, 'Of Warriors and Blokes', pp.1–26; Brendan Hokowhitu, 'Tackling Māori Masculinity: A Colonial Genealogy of Savagery and Sport', *Contemporary Pacific*, 16, 2 (2004), pp.259–84.

73 Baxter O'Neill, 'History of Swimming in New Zealand 1880–1939', unpublished and undated manuscript, MS 421, ATL.

74 *ibid*.

75 *Dominion*, 8 March 1915, p.7.

76 O'Neill. See also Doreen Brown and Evan H. Williams, *New Zealand Amateur Swimming Association Inc. 75th Anniversary: A Short History 1890–1965*, Christchurch, 1965, p.17.

77 Burdsey, p.18; Rattansi, p.27.

78 Michael Pickering, 'Racial Stereotypes', in Gary Taylor and Steve Spencer, eds, *Social Identities: Multidisciplinary Approaches*, London, 2004, p.91.