

# **Ecological Ethics in the Debate about Norwegian Whaling**

- An Ethical Discussion of our Relationship with More-Than-Human Nature and How this Discussion is Applied in the Public Debate concerning Norwegian Whaling

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# Preface

Humans and whales have shared the same planet for approximately two hundred thousand years. Yet despite our lengthy and at times tenuous cohabitation, fewer than one millionth of one percent of the human population will ever experience contact with whales in such an intimate and transformative way – in their natural habitats and on their own terms. Our estrangement with nature will lead to the demise of many whale species - “out of sight, out of mind”, as the saying goes (Austin 2013:12).

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# Introduction

For as long as human beings have walked the Earth, they have lived in relationship with each other. And where there are relationships there is ethics. Ethics concerning how one ought to live and act in relation to other humans is deeply grounded in our society. It is practiced as a discipline all over the world across religions and cultures, it is taught in schools, and to use the field of ethics as a platform for arguments in a discussion is accepted as a central part of public debates. People often speak of ethical dilemmas, or ethically difficult choices, and ethics is an integrated part of the thought process when people choose how to live and act - it is not only practiced as an academic discipline. Virtually all humans agree that ethics is highly important. But other human beings are not the only ones we humans live in relationship with. We also live in relationship with the rest of nature - with other animals, plants, and non-living natural entities such as rivers and mountains. From individuals to species and ecosystems – they are all a part of our human lives. However, ethics concerning how one ought to live and act in relation to more-than-human nature is not so widely practiced as a discipline. It is seldom taught in schools and, as we will see, when people consciously use ecological ethics as a platform for discussion they are not always taken seriously. Ecological ethics then, as opposed to traditional human ethics is not an integrated part of the thought process when deciding how to live and act in relation to nature. The question remains, since human ethics is such an important part of our everyday lives because we live in relationship with other humans, should not ecological ethics also be important because we live in relationship with more-than-human nature?

This thesis will address the debate concerning Norwegian whaling in an attempt to critically investigate the role of ecological ethics in a debate involving non-humans. Furthermore it will look at why ecological ethics seldom is consciously used as a platform for discussion, even though the issue discussed involves non-humans. After a general introduction to ethics, part one of the thesis will present an overview of ecological ethics by presenting some of the main views and discussions in this field, in addition to discussing the necessity of ecological ethics. Part two includes four chapters. The first chapter is a brief history of Norwegian whaling, the second is about minke whales (which is the species of whale that is commercially hunted in Norway) and the third presents “Vågehvalen – valgets kval”, a book published with support from the Norwegian government in 1993, and three of the arguments it presents for continuing whaling. It also discusses why these arguments are relevant to use when discussing whaling today. The fourth, and main, chapter in part two uses ecological ethics to discuss these three central arguments presented in “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” that support continuing whaling. It will also be discussed why, according to the book, those who argue in the light of ecological ethics have a ”legitimisation” problem, and why they often are not taken seriously in the debate. In the end some concluding thoughts will be presented.

## **Limitations**

Ecological ethics is an immensely vast field, and this thesis cannot nearly cover every aspect of it. There are countless views and approaches, critiques of these views and approaches, and even critiques of these critiques. I have chosen to present an overview of some of the different ecological ethicists in some detail, representing views from both ends of the scale and some in

between, instead of trying to cover as much as possible or only a limited number of them in more detail.

The debate about Norwegian whaling, like the field of ecological ethics, is also too comprehensive for me to cover every aspect of it in this thesis. I have therefore chosen to discuss what I argue are the three main arguments “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” presents. There are also other arguments in the book that needs a more thorough discussion, but these will not be dealt with in this thesis. An example is the cultural aspects of whaling in small coastal communities. It is also worth mentioning that whaling is, obviously, not the only thing harming and killing whales. They are heavily affected by climate changes, heavy boat traffic, plastic and fishing gear in the ocean and seismic search for oil and gas. However, these are all human-made threats, and to discuss one of them in the light of ecological ethics should hopefully lead to discussions of the other issues as well. In my opinion, whaling is a good place to start this discussion because in contrast to the other influences it is a relatively straight forward matter.

The goal of this thesis is not to cover every aspect of ecological ethics, everything that threatens whales or even every aspect of the whaling debate. Neither is the goal to come to any conclusions as to what ethics to “follow”, or whether Norwegian whaling is morally right. The goal is rather to present ecological ethics as a field, in an attempt to make more people familiar with it. I will be using the debate about whaling as an illustration of how different a discussion regarding non-humans could be if one acknowledges the need for ecological ethics and consciously use the field as a platform when discussing these matters. Hopefully it will inspire more people to reflect upon their relationship with the rest of nature, and encourage them to bring these thoughts with them when issues regarding non-humans are discussed in the

public. It is meant as an introduction and as a starting point, presenting different thoughts which the readers then may individually develop further.

# Part One – Ecological Ethics

Part one consists of three chapters. First a short introduction to ethics, second a chapter concerning the need for ecological ethics, and finally an overview of some of the central approaches and discussions in ecological ethics. It is concluded with a short summary.

## What is Ethics?

The philosophical discipline of ethics has been practiced in the West during the last 2500 years (Light and Rolston III 2003:3). The word ethics comes from the Greek word “ethos” which means “custom”, but it now refers “not to how people actually *do* behave in their dealings with each other, but to how they *ought* to live and act” (Curry 2011:28). But how people think they *ought* to live and act are of course often reflected in the ways they *do* behave. Ethics is thus fundamental for how people chose to behave in relation to each other. In this chapter I will introduce ethics as a discipline, and present what, according to Curry (2011), are the three main approaches to ethics. It will be a rather brief presentation, with the purpose to introduce the field of ethics before introducing ecological ethics.

Ethics asks questions about how one should live in relation with others. Typical ethical questions can be whether or not we should lie in a given situation, whether we should be charitable to those less fortunate than ourselves or whether those who have taken a human life should be punished by having their own life taken. “Ethics extends to all our duties and

obligations, virtues and vices, as we interact with each other” (Light and Rolston III 2003:3). Curry argues that the fundamental ethical question was asked by Socrates about 2500 years ago: “How should one best live, or what should one best do?” (Curry 2011:28). There are different approaches of how best to meet these important questions. According to Curry it is possible speak of three main approaches to ethics in philosophy: deontology, consequentialism and virtue ethics. I want to emphasise that this is only an example on how to categorise ethics, and that there are many different approaches and opinions on how it should be done. For instance, Light and Rolston III divide ethics into six parts: the general study of goodness, the general study of right action, applied ethics, metaethics, moral psychology and metaphysics of moral responsibility (the study of free will) (Light and Rolston III 2003:3). However, I have chosen Curry's presentation because it gives a simple and brief overview of the main approaches, and in the following sections his categories will be presented in more detail.

The first approach is deontology, or rights, which was founded by Immanuel Kant. Kant was determined to come up with a rational definition of ethics, whose principles should be categorical (unconditional and binding for any rational being) as well as universal (applied without any exception). Rights and duties are inseparable, Kant says, because one persons right to be treated the right way is another persons duty to treat him or her the right way, and vice versa. It is these rights and duties that are the focus of deontology, and actions fulfilling duty are morally right regardless of their consequences. In Kant's deontology individual humans are seen as the only rational beings, and therefore only they are morally considerable. Hence rights and duties apply only to them. However, some, like Tom Regan, have extended deontology to include other animals, while some, such as Paul Taylor, also includes plants (Curry 2011:39-42).

The second category is consequentialism, or effects, founded by Jeremy Bentham and developed further by John Stuart Mill. Here, in contrast to deontology, the value of an action is not the action itself, but the consequences of it. Happiness for the greatest number of people is seen as the goal, making the ethical question whether or not an action is “useful in advancing the general happiness of humanity” (Curry 2011:43). The principal school of consequentialism is utilitarianism, and utilitarianism can be either hedonistic (a general definition of happiness is applied) or based on preference. Another distinction from deontology is therefore the collectiveness of consequentialism. Here, social well-being trumps individual rights, and while individuals matter, it is only to contribute to the general happiness of humanity. Some, like Peter Singer, extends consequentialism to other animals, but he limits this to sentient beings, Curry says, because those are the only ones who can experience happiness (Curry 2011:43-45).

While the first two approaches are relatively recent, developed a few centuries ago, the last approach derives from the ethics of Aristotle; virtue ethics. Here the central focus is on developing a virtuous character, “such that good or right actions result naturally from its dispositions” (Curry 2011:45). There are four classical virtues – temperance, justice, courage and wisdom. These characterise what Aristotle called “eudaimonia”, which can be translated into “happiness” or “well-being”. A virtuous person should know what is good or right, and spontaneously do it. Virtue ethics has been criticised for not offering any universal “rights” to follow, but according to virtue ethics what is right to do will vary in different situations. There is no universal one answer that covers everything. “Virtue ethical behaviour is not about knowing *what*, but know-*how*, and we learn that through the lived experience of finding ourselves in concrete situations of ethical challenge” Curry 2011:48). Although virtue ethics focus on individual characters, it is not individualistic like deontology, as “eudaimonia cannot be developed in isolation” and “a person who

embodies it will also promote it in relation to others” (Curry 2011:45-46). Curry claims that there is nothing in the theory of virtue ethics itself limiting who or what can be the object of virtuous behaviour, so it can also be extended to other animals as well as non-animal nature (Curry 2011:45.46). All of these three approaches can, as we have seen, be perceived in a way that could include more-than-human nature. Deontology can be extended to non-humans, as can consequentialism and virtue ethics. Why then, is there a need for ecological ethics?

### **Why is there a Need for Ecological Ethics?**

Although ethics is about how we *ought* to live and act, for most people, their ethical values are reflected in the ways they choose to behave. The same is the case with ecological ethics – how one thinks that people *should* behave in relation with the rest of nature, has a lot to say on how one actually *does* behave. However, if a person has never been introduced to ecological ethics, and for this reason has never really reflected upon their relationship with more-than-human nature, then that could indeed affect the way someone acts in relation to it. In this chapter I will try to illustrate why ecological ethics as a discipline is important, that is, why it is important to reflect upon how one best should live and act in relation with the rest of nature.

### **Anthropocene - The Human Era**

Even though I, personally, would never characterise humans as superior to other entities present on Earth, it seems obvious that the human species has



gained quite a unique *position* on this planet. Never before have humans had such a great impact on the world around us, and we are now in the process of shaping and affecting the Earth to an unprecedented extent (Tønnessen 2013:17). The human species, *homo sapiens*, has colonised practically all land areas except for Antarctica, and has brought with them (among other things) livestock, companion animals and food crops as well as parasites and other "blind passengers". Human activity "has no doubt shaped the recent history not only of our species, but of our entire living planet" (Tønnessen 2010:101). As an example, humans are significantly altering the cycles of carbon, nitrogen, phosphorus, sulphur and water, and are likely the force behind the sixth major extinction in Earth history (Crutzen et al. 2011). These trends, Crutzen et al. argue, are strong evidence that humankind "now rivals some of the great forces of Nature in its impact on the functioning of the Earth's system" (Crutzen et al. 2011:843). Humans have thus gained a very special position as a species, evident by their ability to alter the ways of nature, including everything from its ecosystems and its climate, to the lives of billions of individual non-human animals.

Humans have such a profound impact on the Earth and its inhabitants that some scientists argue that, as a result, we have entered a new geological era. From finding ourselves in the geological era of Holocene since the last ice age, an increasing number of scientists are now speaking of a new era called Anthropocene – the era where humans constitute a geological force on a global level (Tønnessen 2013:17-18). The concept was first formally introduced by Paul Crutzen in the year 2000, but similar thoughts and terms were used more than a hundred years before that. Some examples of early works are "Man and Nature; or, Physical Geography as Modified by Human Action" by G.P. Marsh, written as early as 1864, and "Man as a Geological Agent" by R. L. Sherlock in 1922 (Crutzen et al. 2011). When environmental problems came into focus in the 1970's and 1980's, more and more scholars

were exploring the concept of a human-shaped geological era, although not using it in their works. In 1992 A. C. Revkin wrote in a book about global warming that “perhaps earth scientists of the future will name this new post-Holocene period for its causative element – for us. We are entering an age that might someday be referred to as, say, the Anthrocene” (Crutzen et al. 2011:843). Revkin was right. Eight years later Crutzen (adding two letters) formally introduced the concept of Anthropocene, and now it is a well-known term among earth scientists and others. But even though it has become more common to talk of the Anthropocene era, it is still a relatively informal term. However, there has been formed an Anthropocene Working Group as part of the Subcommission on Quaternary Stratigraphy whose job it is consider whether the term should be formally recognised as a new era in Earth's history (Crutzen et al. 2011:843). This makes it evident that there is a broad agreement that we are entering, or already have entered, a human-shaped era. Crutzen himself, together with the other authors of “The Anthropocene: conceptual and historical perspectives” writes that the term Anthropocene suggests that “the Earth is now moving out of its current geological epoch, called the Holocene” and that “human activity is largely responsible for this exit from the Holocene, that is, that humankind has become a global geological force in its own right” (Crutzen et al. 2011:843). How did we get there? When did the Holocene end?

In their article Crutzen et al. describe how human beings have affected the environment they live in for thousands of years, but that up to the industrial revolution the effects have been relatively modest, and only at a local level. Not everyone agrees with them. Some describe the wave of extinctions during the last ice age, where a large number of mammals on at least four continents went extinct, as the start of the Anthropocene. Others highlight agriculture, especially when humans started clearing forests and converting it to crop lands, and the development of irrigated rice cultivating about 8000 and 5000

years ago, as possible beginnings of the new era. However, it is not clear that humans were the only reason for the mass extinction or if it had a real global effect, nor if the agriculture at that time really had any impact on the environment on a global level (Crutzen et al. 2011:846-847). Crutzen et al. thus advocate that the Anthropocene only started when the human activities were evident on a global scale. The discovery and exploitation of fossil fuels was an important starting point for this, as “exploiting fossil fuels allowed humanity to undertake new activities and vastly expand and accelerate the existing activities” (Crutzen et al. 2011:848). It can be said then, according to Crutzen et al., that humans affecting the environment on a global level first became evident during the industrial revolution, and that therefore this is when the new era of Anthropocene started. During this period, from around 1750 to 1850, the energy use rose sharply, and for the first time humans truly affected the global environment. Even though the Anthropocene can be said to have started during the industrial revolution, there is one more period that is important to mention, namely the last half of the twentieth century. By then, the mark left by human activities on the global environment had already exceeded the patterns of Holocene variability in several important ways, but this imprint sharply increased after the second world war. The change was so dramatic that the 1945 to 2000 period has been called the “Great Acceleration” (Crutzen et al. 2011:849). During this period of half a century, the human population grew from three to six billion people, there was a high urbanisation-rate and a high conversion-rate of natural ecosystems to human-made landscapes. Economic activities grew by 15 times and the consumption of petroleum by 3.5 times, and from 1950 to 2000 the concentration of CO<sub>2</sub> in the atmosphere rose from 311 ppm to 369 ppm (Crutzen et al. 2011:849-852). Today humans account for roughly 0.5% of the total biomass of the earth, but are consuming directly or indirectly between 24 and 39% of the total net products of its terrestrial and aquatic photosynthetic energy, along with about 50% of the accessible runoff of fresh water (Curry 2011:210). These examples illustrate the sharp rise in human activities during the last decades, that has

caused the Earth system to “clearly [have] moved outside the envelope of Holocene variability” (Crutzen et al. 2011:850). Curry's example shows how much “space” humans take up on Earth today.

Exactly when the new era started is not as relevant as to acknowledge the fact that the human era is here. After acknowledging that we find ourselves in a human-shaped world, in the Anthropocene, where practically all others are affected by our human actions, a pause for reflection is due. Does our special position in nature somehow make us morally responsible towards the rest of it? If the fundamental ethical question is “how should one best live, or what should one best do”, is it not time that the rest of nature is added to this question, considering the impact humans have on it? Should we not question how one should best live and act in relation to the rest of nature before we decide how to act, which is in fact what we do when deciding how to act in relation with other humans? An ecological ethical framework does not exclude conventional ethics or make it redundant, but instead both become aspects of a more comprehensive ethical imagination. Humans live in relation with other humans *as well as* in relation with the rest of nature, and how we treat more-than-human nature should therefore be reflected upon as a part of our ethical framework - even if the wrongs done to more-than-human nature is not global or if the number of individuals affected is not billion-fold, as characterised by the Anthropocene. Therefore, ecological ethics is always needed as long as humans find themselves living in relation with the rest of nature - just as conventional ethics always will be needed as long as humans live in relation with each other. However, I have chosen to present the concept of the Anthropocene for all those who never really have given much thought to ecological ethics or the importance of it. The Anthropocene era illustrates in quite an extreme way the special position (or “power” if preferred), humans have gained, and the fact that it under consideration to become the official name of a new geological era should highlight the importance of reflecting on

the way we use this position or power. When acknowledging the era of Anthropocene we can no longer isolate ourselves from the rest of nature, or refuse to deal with anything but our own species. We cannot pretend that we are not affecting others, and it must also be emphasised that this impact is experienced as negative by many of those we share the planet with. Our power is often used to exploit and to use other parts of nature for our own interests, leading, for example, to extinction of species, pollution of ecosystems, the suffering of non-human animals in captivity and climate change. Curry highlights this current (human-made) “ecocrisis” as a primary reason why ecological ethics is needed (Curry 2011:15). So even though living in relation with more-than-human nature should be enough to ethically reflect upon this relationship, knowing that we are affecting others on such a large scale should absolutely lead to questioning the ethical implications of such a way to behave.

### **Is a *New Ethics* Needed?**

So far I have argued that ecological ethics is needed for reflecting upon how we should behave in relation with the rest of nature. But why is this “new” concept of ecological ethics needed? Is it not possible for conventional ethics to be used for this purpose?

In his article “Is There A Need for a New, and Environmental, Ethic?” Richard Sylvan argues that the conventional approaches to Western ethics are inadequate when dealing with the question of how to live and act in relation to the rest of nature. “The dominant Western view is simply inconsistent with an environmental ethic; for according to it nature is the domination of man and he is free to deal with it as he pleases (...), whereas on an environmental ethic

man is not so free to do as he pleases” (Sylvan 1998:18). He emphasises that prevailing ethics does deal with human's relation to nature, but it only scratches the surface of the issue, and harming more-than-human nature is only seen as wrong if it somehow affects other humans. In the words of Sylvan, in conventional ethics man is free to deal with nature as he pleases, insofar as it does not affect others (Sylvan 1973/1998:17). “Others” here are mainly restricted to other human beings. He argues that we need to rethink the ground pillars of ethics, by asking questions like *who has rights?* Or *what has value?* The answers to these questions have traditionally been human beings. Ecological ethics challenges this view. Sylvan thus concludes: “A new ethic *is* wanted” (Sylvan 1998:19). It can be discussed whether humans are the only rational beings in deontology, whether consequentialism only can include sentient beings, or as Curry argues that there is no limit as to who or what can be the object of virtuous behaviour in virtue ethics. But when doing so, we are in fact entering the field of ecological ethics. Ecological ethics is challenging the view that only humans count in ethics, and the most important question is, perhaps, who or what has value other than humans? Curry argues, for example, that virtue ethics can be extended to more-than-human nature, and he calls this a green virtue ethics - but then it becomes necessary to discuss whether there is any ethically significant difference between humans and the rest of nature (Curry 2011:51). Asking a question like this is outside the field of conventional ethics, and Curry dedicates several chapters of his book “Ecological Ethics – An Introduction” to discuss value. By stating that “our ethics needs to change, because our behaviour, as influenced by ethics, needs to change”, it seems as though Curry agrees with Sylvan – a new, and ecological, ethic is needed.

Not everyone agree with Sylvan, though. As we will see in the next chapter, Bryan G. Norton does not think that a new ethics is needed at all, as he argues that more-than-human nature can be protected without giving it value in its

own, and thus there is no need to discuss who or what has value. An ethics based on anthropocentrism can also protect the environment, he says (Norton 2013). But is not this discussion a part of ecological ethics? He does in fact discuss who or what has value in its own (in his case the answer is humans) and what this implies (for example that this does not mean that humans are free to do as they please with more-than-human nature). By doing so, has he not already left the field of conventional ethics and entered a new one?

Perhaps Norton and I have different opinions on what constitutes ecological ethics. He may argue that in order for an ecological ethics to exist one has to state that more-than-human nature has value, while I would state that one only need to discuss the matter to enter the field of ecological ethics. And discuss it, Norton does. This is why Norton's view will be presented in the next chapter, which is an overview of some of the main discussions in ecological ethics. There we will see that his view can only take us so far in protecting more-than-human nature, as the only way of ensuring that something is given moral consideration is to give it a value on its own. However, whether Norton likes it or not, I would still argue that his views are part of “a new ethic” - a platform that opens up the opportunity to discuss who or what counts in ethics and what this has to say on how we should live and act in relation with more-than-human nature.

## **Ecological Ethics – An Overview**

Acknowledging that we are currently in the geological era of Anthropocene, or just the admitting the fact that we live in relationship with the rest of nature, should lead to acknowledging that ethical questions not only should concern how to live and act in relation to other human beings, but also how to live and act in relation to the rest of nature. We, as humans, have power over most other entities on Earth, and that should encourage reflection on how and in

what ways we should use this power, or if we should use it at all. As we have seen, conventional ethics does not offer a sufficient platform to discuss this, and therefore ecological ethics is needed.

“Put at its simplest, ethics is the question of how one should best live and act” and ecological ethics is “the view that ethical questions can no longer be restricted to how to treat other human beings, or even other animals, but must embrace the entire natural world” (Curry 2011:1). Ecological ethics is a broad discipline, representing both the views of those who think more-than-human nature should be valued only as a means to human need and use of it, and those who find intrinsic value in everything – from the Earth itself to its non-living entities, ecosystems, species and every single individual organism. And of course everything in between. Even though the views of what we should value and in what ways we should value it differs a lot even within ecological ethics, what those discussing these matters have in common is the view that ethics should not just be about how humans live and act in relationship with each other – as a part of nature, both affected by it and affecting it, we also have to discuss our relationship with more-than-human nature. In this chapter I will present an overview of ecological ethics – some of the main thoughts when reflecting upon our relationship with more-than-human nature. However, as ecological ethics is a vast discipline of different thoughts including their criticisms, this overview can only mention a few views among many. It will mainly focus on value - what value we should give to more-than-human nature and what this implies - which I see as the most central questions in ecological ethics.



## Value

Who counts in ethics? “Who deserves moral recognition such that we can meaningfully claim that they have suffered a moral harm?” (Light and Rolston III 2003:5). The fundamental questions in ecological ethics are related to value. Why? When something has value it becomes morally considerable, hence it deserves moral recognition and our ethics should strive to serve their interests. The main question is of course who or what has value? And what kind of value? There is a distinct separation between those who give more-than-human nature instrumental value and those who give it intrinsic value. Instrumental value is when someone or something has value as a means to something else. For example, a rainforest can have value because people call it their home, because we are dependent on it for keeping our climate stable or because we might find the cure for cancer among its plant species. Or, it can have value in its own, for its own sake. When someone or something is valued for their own sake, “without any reference to its usefulness in realising some other goal”, it has intrinsic value (Curry 2011:52-54). One can also chose to give some parts of more-than-human nature intrinsic value, for example non-human animals, or even just a few chosen species like mammals or those species we call companion animals, like dogs and cats. If one gives intrinsic value to, say, only mammals, then they are valued for their own sake, but the environment they live in is only valued as a means to sustain these animals. As an example, panda bears would be be given intrinsic value, and so humans would strive to give the panda bears the best kind of lives. That implies for example making sure there is enough bamboo for them to eat and enough space for them to live in, and so their natural habitat including its bamboo plants would be given value, but only an instrumental one.

Must something have intrinsic value to be morally considerable? Not necessarily at all times. As an example, the parents of a family can feel that they are morally obligated to treat the family's cat in a good way because the cat means a lot to their children, not because they give it intrinsic value. But what happens if the children get tired of the cat and do not wish to keep it anymore? Then the cat is no longer a moral consideration for the parents, who perhaps did not want a cat in the first place. Soon the cat might end up in a rescue shelter or on the streets. Another example is a waterfall valued by humans, not intrinsically but because they enjoy watching its beauty, use it as a hiking destination, etc. As long as watching this beauty is humans' top priority the waterfall will remain protected. However, if more electricity is needed, soon the waterfall might end up in pipes, as electricity and the comfortable lifestyle it provides usually are valued over the beauty of a waterfall. As with the example with the cat, human priorities, preferences and beliefs can always change. If the cat or the waterfall were valued intrinsically, then the human preferences would have had no impact. To be sure that something is morally considerable then, independent of human views over time, one has to value it intrinsically. This is why value is so important in ecological ethics.

Different views on what has intrinsic value will be discussed in the next chapters. But first it is also of interest to discuss *who can value*. Rolston III discusses this in his chapter "Value in Nature and the Nature of Value". He asks if human beings are the only ones who can value something intrinsically, and whether something can have value without humans giving it to it. Bryan G. Norton has said that valuing always occurs from the viewpoint of a conscious valuer (Rolston III 2003:143). This means that conscious animals are the only ones who are able to value, and that something cannot have value without someone from this group valuing it. Rolston III, on the other hand, does not agree. Did the Grand Canyon have no value before the arrival of

humans? Is there no value located independently in this spectacular natural phenomenon? When Norton argues that there can be no value without a valuer, Rolston III adds that there neither can be no science without a scientist or no religion without a believer. However, there *can* be physics without a physicists, stories without storytellers and history without historians – and he argues that there can also be value without valuers (Rolston III 2003:152). A sentient valuer is therefore not necessary. Rolston III also disagrees with Norton on the matter that only sentient beings are able to value. Like animals, plants are able to value their own existence intrinsically, by growing, reproducing, repairing wounds and resisting death. By being insentient, things may not matter *to* them, but they can matter *for* them. Species can also value themselves intrinsically, by the ability to reproduce. So can ecosystems, who are a matrix of interconnectedness between valuers. The Earth itself, Rolston III argues, also values by producing all earthbound values. “We commit the subjectivists fallacy if we think all values lie in subjective experiences, and, worse still, the anthropocentrist fallacy if we think all values lie in human options and preferences” (Rolston III 2003:146). Even though it might be the case that others than conscious animals also are able to value intrinsically and that value may exist without anyone giving it, this thesis will focus on what human beings choose to value, as humans most likely are the ones who are able to act freely on the basis of values, and it is human choices that affect the rest of nature the most. The question is then: what in nature do humans value?

### **Anthropocentrism**

The view that more-than-human nature only has instrumental value is called anthropocentrism. This is a human-centred way of ethical thinking. Curry defines anthropocentrism as “the unjustified privileging of human beings, as such, at the expense of other forms of life, analogous to such prejudices as

racism or sexism” (Curry 2011:55). But why is anthropocentrism a part of ecological ethics, then? Having an anthropocentric world view does not necessarily mean that one does not care about anything other than human beings. It means that one may care because it is in human interest to do so. Curry calls this way of thinking a light green ethics (opposed to a dark green one), and Arne Næss calls it a shallow one (opposed to a deep one). Claire Palmer emphasises that anthropocentric approaches do not necessarily encourage reckless exploitation of more-than-human nature, but “may instead maintain that natural resources should be very carefully managed for human benefit – including for the benefit of the poor and future human generations” (Palmer 2003:18).

Norton is one of the ecological ethicists who argue for a light or shallow kind of ecological ethics. He says that the distinction between anthropocentrism and non-anthropocentrism, and hence instrumental and intrinsic value, has been given too much importance. Instead, he distinguishes between what he calls strong and weak anthropocentrism. To explain the difference between these, he introduces two concepts: “felt” and “considered” preferences. “A *felt preference* is any desire or need of a human individual that can at least temporarily be sated by some specifiable experience of that individual”, while a “*considered preference* is any desire or need that a human individual would express after careful deliberation, including a judgement that the desire or need is consistent with a rationally adopted world view”, where scientific theories, a metaphysical framework and moral ideals are included (Norton 2003:164). Anthropocentrism is strong, Norton argues, if all value is explained by satisfaction of felt preferences of human individuals. It is weak, on the other hand, if the value is explained by *some* felt preferences or by considered preferences (Norton 2003:165). Norton then concludes that “within the limits set by weak anthropocentrism as here defined, there exists a framework for developing powerful reasons for protecting nature” (Norton 2003:165).

When distinguishing between strong and weak anthropocentrism, it can be argued that weak anthropocentrism is enough to treat more-than-human nature well, and this view is in fact the most common among those who call themselves environmentalists, including most environmental non-governmental organisations and green political parties. Even though weak anthropocentrists may have the belief that they should protect more-than-human nature, the only ones who are morally considerable are still human beings, and the reason for protecting it is thus human well-being. But if more-than-human nature is treated well, does the reason *why* really matter? Norton uses an example with Hindus and Jains, who often keep from killing other animals, to illustrate that the reason *why* we treat more-than-human nature well does not matter. He emphasises that when Hindus and Jains restrain from killing insects, they “show concern for their own spiritual development rather than for the actual lives of those insects” (Norton 2003:165). I am quite sure that the insects who get to live do not care whether it was because the humans in question avoided doing it for their own sake or for the sake of the insects themselves. However, this argument can only take us so far. Far from every human being on Earth is concerned with his or her spiritual development, and as we saw in the example with the cat and the waterfall earlier, who humans think are morally considerable can always change if they have no intrinsic value. Using human well-being as the only motivation for moral consideration of more-than-human nature then, is unstable and uncertain, and it completely overlooks giving moral consideration to what has no effect on human well-being. Because even though an act does not affect other humans or even future generation of humans, it may affect other beings. An example here is using other animals for food. It is well known among environmentalists that the modern livestock sector is one of the largest emitters of greenhouse gases in the world as well as one of the leading contributors to the loss of biodiversity. In developing countries it is also one of the leading sources of water pollution (FAO 2006:267). The livestock sector thus puts human well-being at risk, and the solution offered by a weak anthropocentric approach would most likely be

to find a way to produce meat and other animal products that do not destroy the environment. Options can be more small scale, locally and organically produced animal products, or even sustainable hunting of wild animals, including fishing. For a weak anthropocentrist, if the food is produced in a way that does not negatively influence human well-being, it does not matter whether these animals were killed or not, or perhaps even suffered during their lives. No humans will be harmed by this today or in the future. Using considered preference, informed by science, we know that non-human animals for example have the capacity to suffer the way humans do. But without giving intrinsic value to other animals, what kind of incentive will a weak anthropocentrist have to stop the suffering of a non-human animal? This is why many ecological ethicists argue that what has intrinsic value, or who is morally considerable, cannot be limited to human beings. The treatment of individual non-human animals, like those in the livestock industry, is often the first place to look when arguing that other natural entities than human beings have intrinsic value. As we shall see, other animals are usually the first ones who are welcomed inside human's moral circle.

### **Expansion of the Moral Circle**

In conventional Western ethics, a line is drawn between human beings and the rest of the world. This line decides who has intrinsic value and hence who is (unconditionally) morally considerable. This circle can expand, however, to include others. It is a relatively new development that all human beings are considered to have intrinsic value. For example, not too long ago people who were put in the category “slaves” were only valued as working force, and not for their own sake. Today almost everyone agrees that all human beings have intrinsic value and that they belong inside the moral circle. This means that all human beings are “moral patients”, or, “beings whom we consider that we

owe ethical obligations” (Light and Rolston III 2003:6). The United Nation's Universal Human Rights Declaration illustrates this. Now, picture every human being on Earth standing in a group with a circle drawn around them. The rest of the world is outside this circle. This is the world view of anthropocentrists. As we have seen, this does not necessarily imply that those who are outside the circle can be treated in whichever way, but that what they only have an instrumental value to those who are inside the circle. In ecological ethics, one starts to discuss if perhaps other natural entities than human beings have intrinsic value and should be included in this circle. In that case who does, and on what conditions?

Where human beings draw their moral circle, is, of course, not any definitive answer to how the world really is or should be. It is the view of one among millions of species on the planet, not even shared by all individuals of that same species. As we have seen, some, like Rolston III, argues that all living organisms, and even species and ecosystems are able to value. If any other natural entities, say the squirrels or a pine tree, were to make their own moral circles I am sure it would look quite different, and I would guess that humans would no longer find themselves in the middle of the circle, but rather in the periphery. Who humans choose to include in their expanding circle is in no way universally right, and should therefore not be of great importance. Still, it is. Squirrels or pine trees are not in the unique position humans are, with power over most other entities in nature. In fact, no other species or natural entities are. Therefore, how humans construct their moral circle is important and influential for the rest of the planet, and for some - like ecosystems affected by oil spills or animals killed in experiments - it is vital. “We humans hold up the lamp that lights up value, although we require the fuel that nature provides” (Rolston III 2003:144). If we hold the lamp, then we also decide what should be in the light and what should remain in the dark. What to

include then, if the circle of moral considerability should expand and not just include our own species? What are the criteria for being included?

### **The Moral Circle Expands**

The first ones to gain intrinsic value when the moral circle starts to expand are those who are most like ourselves, namely non-human animals. The capacity to feel pleasure and pain is for many a criterion to be included. Peter Singer states that if a being suffers, the fact that it is not a member of our own species cannot be a moral reason for not taking this suffering into account. He compares the white slaveowners' denial of the black slaves' interests on the basis of their "race" to humans' denial of other animals' interests on the basis of their species. The white racists limited their moral concern to their own "race", and thus the suffering of a black did not have the same moral significance as the suffering of a white. "We now recognize that in doing so they were making an arbitrary distinction, and that the existence of suffering, rather than the race of the sufferer, is what is really morally significant" (Singer 2003:57). If "species" is substituted with "race", Singer argues, then the logic of racism and the logic of what he calls "speciesism" are indistinguishable, and if one wishes to reject racism then one must also reject speciesism (Singer 2003:57). Speciesism is a term first introduced by Richard D. Ryder in 1970, but it was made known by Singer in his book "Animal Liberation" from 1975. Like the example above shows, speciesism is discrimination on the basis of species, which is comparable to racism or sexism. In Singer's own words, speciesism "is prejudice or attitude on bias in favor of the interests of members of one's own species and against those of members of other species" (Singer 2009:6). For Singer, the criterion for being morally considerable is thus not which species one belongs to, but the capacity to feel pleasure and pain, or as he calls it, the capacity to have interests.



According to Singer, only a being with subjective experience, such as the experience of pleasure or the experience of pain, can have interests in the full sense of the term, and everyone with such experiences has at least one interest – the interest of experiencing pleasure and avoiding pain. “Thus consciousness, or the capacity for subjective experience, is both a necessary and a sufficient condition for having interests” (Singer 2003:57). Mammals and birds clearly have interests in Singer's term, as do other vertebrates. When it comes to some insects, crustaceans, mollusks etc. however, it becomes more uncertain. Singer draws no clear line here. If asked whether plants have interests Singer would say no. He compares a plant's interest to have enough water so that it can grow with a car's need to be taken care of if it is to run properly. If we do not give consciousness to plants, which basically no one does, then they do not have any interests, and therefore, according to Singer, “nonconscious life lacks intrinsic value” (Singer 2003:60) and consequently stands outside the moral circle. This also includes species and ecosystems. The treatment of non-animal nature is not insignificant, however, as treating their environment badly would affect the lives of sentient animals. Singer thus gives non-animal nature instrumental value.

The fact that all sentient beings have intrinsic value in Singer's position does not mean that everyone should be treated the same way, as the interests of one being might be greater than those of another. Singer says that if one has to choose between saving, say, a human and a dog, then, according to this approach, the being with greater interests should be saved. Under most circumstances, Singer argues, the human should be saved, as a human is more aware of the situation than the dog and therefore would suffer more from being killed, as the human has a greater potential for future happiness, and, in addition, as the human most likely has friends and family who will suffer if the human dies. Here, the balance of interests favours the human, and it is this balance of interests that Singer argues should form the basis of decision

making. “This decision would be in accordance with the principle of equal consideration of interests, for the interests of the dog get the same consideration as the those of the human” (Singer 2003:58). The loss to the dog is not discounted for the reason that it is a member of another species than our own. This implies that in a different situation the outcome could be different. For example, “if the human were grossly mentally defective and without family or anyone else who would grieve for it, the balance of interests might favor the non-human” (Singer 2003:58). As we know, a dog may have many happy years to come, as well as friends and family, human or non-human, that would grieve its death. Singer's most important point is that the species a sentient being belongs to should not decide how it is treated, but rather its interests.

A similar position is animal rights, fronted by Tom Regan. Those in favour of animal rights argue that individual human rights should be extended to include all animals. This view is very similar to Singer's animal liberation, and they share the same goal - liberation for all animals. However, Regan does not agree with Singer that the egalitarian interpretation of interests automatically leads to animal liberation. To illustrate this, he uses an example with human slaves. If one were to count the interests of the slaves and the slaveowners equally before deciding whether or not to end human slavery, there would be no guarantee that the slaves would be liberated, Regan says. Instead of first counting their interest to then see if they should be liberated, we should first recognise the moral imperative to liberate them. “The interests of those who profit from slavery should play no role whatsoever in deciding to abolish the institution from which they profit” (Regan 2003:69). Further he states that “It is the right of slaves *to be free*, their right *not to be treated as another's property*” and that “it is these basic moral *rights* that a system of chattle slavery systematically violates, not the principle that we must count equal interests equally” (Regan 2003:69). Regan says that what an animal rights

approach recognises is “the prima facie right of individuals not to be harmed, and thus the prima facie right of individuals not to be killed” (Regan 2003:71). Regan agrees with Singer that animal liberation is the goal, but advocates for the recognition of the *rights* of non-human animals not to be exploited by humans. He argues that this is a better way of understanding animal liberation than the way provided by an egalitarian interpretation of interests. “When viewed in this lights, Animal Liberation is the goal for which the philosophy of animal rights is the philosophy. The two – Animal Liberation and Animal Rights – go together, like a hand in glove” (Regan 2003:69). Singer and Regan also share the view that it is only individual beings who are morally considerable, and thus only individual sentient beings are entitled moral rights (Regan 2003:71). “All adult animals, at least, are self-aware, and they therefore have a right to live, including a certain quality of life” (Curry 2011:74). This first expansive position, including individual non-human animals as morally considerable, is known either as pathocentrism, or as sentientism.

### **The Moral Circle Continues to Expand**

Singer is not alone when arguing that having interests is the criterion for being welcomed inside the moral circle. However, not everyone agrees on what having interests implies. Gary Varner argues that having interests means that something “has a welfare or good of its own”, something he argues that all individual living things have (Palmer 2003:20). In his sense of the word interests then, sentient beings are not the only ones who have intrinsic value and should be inside the moral circle. However, even though Varner states that all individual living things have intrinsic value, he creates a hierarchy among them, based on desires. Those who have purely biological interests, such as a plant's interest for sunlight or water, do not have desires, while many animals,

such as mammals and birds, do. Among those who have interests, those who have long-term desires that require satisfaction across a lifetime, or what Varner calls *ground projects*, take priority over the others. He argues that with perhaps a few exceptions, humans are the only ones with ground projects. So even though non-animal living beings have interests, their purely biological interests must be put aside for human's ground projects, which for example must include eating. Most non-human animals do not have ground projects, but they do have desires. Therefore, humans should achieve their ground projects for example by eating non-desiring plants, which are lower than non-human animals in Varner's hierarchy (Varner 2003:20-21). However, by having interests, plants also belongs inside the moral circle, and when their well-being do not stand in way for anyones ground projects or desires, they should be treated well.

Far from every ecological ethicists agrees that having interests is the only criterion for being morally considerable. Robin Attfield for example, does not speak of interests as a prerequisite for being included into the moral circle, but instead of the ability to flourish – “to exercise the basic capacities of a species” (Palmer 2003:20). An organism with the ability to flourish will have the interest of doing so. According to Attfield, inanimate objects are the only ones who cannot flourish, an hence all living organisms are morally considerable. Like Varner, Attfield also creates a hierarchy among those who are morally considerable. He puts organisms with a higher psychological complexity over those with a lower one, and place humans at the top and plants at the bottom. He also puts basic and survival needs over preferences (Palmer 2003). But still, as with Varner's view, all living organisms, by the ability to flourish, belong inside the moral circle.

Jonathan Beever and Morten Tønnessen also argue that all living things should be morally considerable and hence included in the moral circle. They argue that “all living beings, even unicellular beings, have subjective experience by having semiotic agency, the capacity to navigate in a world of signs” (Beever and Tønnessen, forthcoming). Moral status should be attributed to all living beings, they argue, as they all have semiotic agency. This implies that “there is a world of experience that means something to each living creature”, and that “all living beings are capable of distinguishing between what is attractive to them, what is repulsive to them, and what has no function for them by means of relating to sign relationships” (Beever and Tønnessen, forthcoming). These positions are different versions of what is called biocentrism, where all individual living organisms are seen as morally relevant, but where other entities are not.

### **The Moral Circle Expands even Further**

So far, every individual living organism on Earth has been welcomed into the moral circle. Some by being sentient, others by having interests, the ability to flourish or semiotic agency. Whether deontological; giving rights to non-humans or even non-animals, or consequentialist; with the goal to achieve the best life for the highest number of beings, all these views are individualistic, concerning individual beings only. In addition, none of them include inanimate entities. But the world consists of more than living beings and individuals. What would the world be without mountains, oceans, rivers, beaches or winds? Without species and ecosystems? Is it even possible to think of individual living creatures outside the context of their relationships with other entities?

One prominent approach to ethics concerning the land as a whole is Aldo Leopold's "land ethic", developed in the first half of the twentieth century. The land ethic concerns itself with human's relation to land, and emphasises that we humans should not, and cannot, control the land in our own favour. On the contrary, Leopold argues, we must recognise ourselves as a part of nature, not outside or above it. Leopold himself first became aware of this during an encounter with a dying wolf he had participated in killing. At that time he was a wolf hunter, thinking that "because fewer wolves meant more deer, that no wolves would mean hunters' paradise" (Leopold 1949:130). But after watching the "fierce green fire" dying in the wolf's eyes, he suddenly understood that this was not right. After that episode, he started to notice the consequences of killing the wolves - "I have seen every edible bush and seedling browsed, first to anaemic desuetude, and then to death (...) In the end the starved bones of the hoped-for deer herd, dead of its own too-much" (Leopold 1949:130-132). The complex interconnectedness of nature, as well as humans' role in it became clear to him, and he realised that there was no existing ethic dealing with this relationship between humans and the land. Leopold writes that ethics until his time had rested upon the premise that the individual is a member of a community, and that ethics can guide these individuals on how to live together or cooperate in this community.

The land ethic simply enlarges the boundaries of the community to include soils, waters, plants, and animals, or collectively: the land" (Leopold 2003:39). In short, he says, a land ethic "changes the role of *Homo sapiens* from conqueror of the land-community to plain member and citizen of it. It implies respect for his fellow-members, and also respect for the community as such (Leopold 2003:39).

This implies that one have to value the land, he says. Not only economically, but in a "philosophical sense" (Leopold 2003:46). Or, one could put it, not only instrumentally, but intrinsically. The problem of only valuing the land economically is as relevant today as it was in Leopold's time. He noticed that everything about conservation of nature was for the sake of humans, and that economic incentives were central if conserving more-than-human nature. He

illustrates this with an example of disappearing songbirds in a particular area at the beginning of the twentieth century. The songbirds were starting to disappear, and the ornithologists became worried. The songbirds were valuable to them, but not in an economic sense. Therefore they had to come up with a reason for the government to save them. The reason had to be economic, or else very few would have bothered saving them. In the end, they told the government that if the songbirds disappeared, there would be so many insects left that they would “eat us up”, hence an anthropocentric reason for saving them. (Leopold 2003:41). In his land ethic, Leopold, the way I see it, makes two main points. The first point is that we must learn to understand the complex interconnectedness of nature, and start to see the land as the base of the pyramid of life (Leopold 2003:43). Everything is dependent on the land, including ourselves, and everything on the land is connected. Therefore it neither makes sense only to value individual organisms, nor to only value humans. Leopold's second main point is that this value must be, in his words, philosophical, not only economical. Many elements of the land community lack commercial value, he says, but are essential to the healthy functioning of it (Leopold 2003:42). Based on these two main points he developed an ethical statement, which says that “A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise” (Leopold 2003:46). The land ethic thus values ecological communities as a whole. This position is known as ecocentrism. and not just individuals, unlike the other ethics explored so far.

J. Baird Callicott is another ecological ethicist who develops an ecocentric position. Callicott describes the effect upon ecological systems as “the decisive factor in the determination of the ethical quality of actions” (Katz 2003:86). Thus the primary object of moral concern is the ecosystems, or as Leopold puts it, the biotic community. If ecosystems are included in the moral circle, and even the primary concern, how should we then treat individual

beings? If all individual organisms as well as ecosystems are morally considerable, will we not experience some conflicting views? Eric Katz reflects upon this. He asks if we can treat individuals however we like as long as it is in the interest of the ecosystem, or as long as it does not affect, in Leopold's words, the integrity, stability or beauty of the biotic community. This would imply, he says, that a flower of a threatened species is more important to save than a critically ill or harmed human being. A human dying has no negative effect on the ecosystem as a whole. In fact, judging by the way humans act in relation to more-than-human nature today, it may on the contrary have a rather positive effect because it would lessen the pressure human beings put on the rest of nature. Katz thus experiences difficulties to see why we should adopt this kind of ethics when it is rather clear that nature would be better off without humans in it (Katz 2003:86-87). If we want an ethic where humans are seen as a plain member of nature, like Leopold states, and at the same time does not demand the extinction of humans, then where should we draw the line for what humans can do that affects the rest of nature? Is it OK to clear a forest to provide housing? What about damming up a river to provide electricity? "The crucial point to remember is that this form of an environmental ethic claims that humans are no different than any other species; the measure of their worth and the worth of their activities is decided by the overall well-being of the natural community" (Katz 2003:87). It is perhaps easy to overlook the part where Leopold says that a land ethic also implies that humans respect their fellow-members of the community, and it may seem like Katz has done this mistake. Respecting other members does not only mean other humans, but also other individual beings. As Callicott puts it, the land ethic not only has an holistic aspect, "it is holistic with a vengeance" (Callicott 1998:109). And so, Leopold and Katz seem to agree after all that individuals cannot be treated with indifference. Leopold's land ethic was meant to supplement already existing ethics, not to take value away from humans or other individuals. However, Katz's concern for how one should live and act in accordance with a holistic ethic like the land ethic in practice,



remains. In which case is it OK to save an individual even though it is not in the best interest of the biotic community as a whole? And how comfortable can a human live before his or her impact on nature is unacceptable? These and similar questions is the reason why many ecological ethicists argue for some kind of hierarchy in nature, like Singer's focus on interests or Varner's focus on ground projects, as it is impossible to treat everything in the same way, as well as it is impossible to live without hurting anything. Even by walking and breathing we may technically harm others. For this reason Katz questions whether ecosystems should be the main concern for moral considerability after all, and if not, what should? "(...) is the unit of our concern the individual ant, the anthill, the family, the species, or the ant's habitat?" (Stone 2003:194). Katz discusses whether species should be our main concern then, but comes to the conclusion that a view like this would be difficult to defend:

Either a species is important because it fulfils an ecological function in the natural community, in which case the community model of an environmental ethic will explain its preservation; or a species is important because the individual members of the species are valuable, in which case an individualistic model of an environmental ethic will explain the act of preservation (Katz 2003:89).

Species then, cannot be our primary concern. What about individuals? As discussed earlier, individuals can also include plants and other living organisms. But what about inanimate nature? What can moral consideration of non-living entities be based on? Only as a part of a community, Katz argues. And then we are back to ecosystems. On the basis of this discussion, Katz concludes that ecosystems are to be put first, and that individuals and species must be added as a secondary concern. The focus must be on both of these groups, as valuing ecosystems is the only way of including every entity, and because by only focusing on ecosystems, the treatment of individuals does not matter as long as it does not affect the well-being of an ecosystem. He therefore states that the overall good of the ecosystem is the primary concern, but that "this communal good should be supplemented by a consideration of

natural individuals and species, so that in cases where ecosystemic well-being is not an issue, the protection of endangered species or natural individuals can be morally justified” (Katz 2003:91).

Not everyone agrees that we have to put anything first. Is really an ecosystem worth more than the species or individuals it consists of, animate or not? Or the other way around? Does it make any sense to value one entity more than another, or to exclude anything? David Abram, another ecocentric ethicist, disagrees with Katz that moral consideration of inanimate nature is difficult to defend, and argues that all entities have intrinsic value, including the non-living and non-individual. His overlying argument is that there is an interconnectedness in nature, where the existence of one entity is made possible by the existence of other entities. As a part of nature, humans take part in this interconnectedness, or as he calls it, reciprocity. He argues for a moral recognition of all entities, on the basis that they all have a mind, or knowledge, on their own. Why, Abram asks, when it today is acknowledged that mind and body are two different aspects of the same thing, is mind exclusive to human beings? Or even to non-human animals? The earlier distinction between mind and body has changed course – now the distinction is between the sentient human (or animal) and the rest of nature which remain as objects, stripped of all intelligence. Abram says that because we, the human body and mind, are dependent on and shaped by nature, it does not make more sense to split them than it does to spilt the human mind and body. Our body and minds cannot be seen as isolated from nature, as our sentience emerges from our ongoing encounter with nature. “Do we really believe that human imagination can sustain itself without other shapes of sentience”? (Abram 2010:128-129). With these arguments, Abram argues for an ecocentric approach to ethics, where all parts of nature are connected and sustain each other, and also each others' minds. “Not only does it [more-than-human nature] have intrinsic value (...), but agency, intention, emotion: attributes

which some arrogantly claim as solely human, but which result from, and are properties of, the entire web of life” (Curry 2011:2).

Another ecocentric position is “deep ecology”, founded by the Norwegian philosopher Arne Næss. The term deep ecology was first mentioned in his paper “The Shallow and The Deep, Long-Range Ecology Movements” from 1972. Like Abram, Næss argues for an ethical approach where all natural entities are morally considerable. He states that all life on Earth, including the richness and diversity of life forms, have value in themselves, independent of the usefulness for humans. He also has the same strong focus on nature as a whole as Leopold and Abram. “Deep ecology thus strives to be non-anthropocentric by viewing humans as just one constituency among others in the biotic community, just one particular strand in the web of life, just one kind of knot in the biospherical net” (Fox 2003:253). Deep ecology is both a philosophical and a socio-political activist movement, and according to Stephan Harding it is primarily the emphasis on action that distinguishes deep ecology from other ecocentric ethics (Harding 2006:50). It was first presented as a challenge to the anthropocentric way of discussing the environmental challenges, where all the arguments were human-centred. The central question was (and still is): how can we continue business-as-usual without running out of the resources we need to do so? Næss calls this a “shallow ecology”. By shallow ecology he means the view that it does not matter how more-than-human nature is treated as long as it is of no threat to the well-being of humans. In other words, more-than-human nature matters, but not for its own sake. It only has instrumental value. Næss mentions the different views on use of natural resources as an example. The shallow ecological approach, he says, claims that the natural resources of the earth belong to those who have the technology to exploit them, i.e. to humans. Plants, non-human animals and natural objects are only valuable as resources for humans. Over-exploitation is not encouraged, but only because humans then would have to live without

those resources. “If no human use is known, or seems likely ever to be found, it does not matter if they are destroyed (Næss 1998:200). In deep ecology on the other hand, no natural object or life-form is conceived solely as a resource, and it is acknowledged that humans are not the only ones dependent on the natural resources. However, humans, like others, *are* dependent on using some resources. Deep ecology therefore encourages us to ask ourselves *why* we use resources and what we really need to live life fully, and to reflect upon our relationship with non-humans who also are in need of these resources. Næss argues that humans should only use resources to satisfy their vital needs. When non-vital needs conflict with the vital needs of non-humans, the humans should defer to the latter (Næss 1998:202). To ask questions like these, for example what resources we really need and why, instead of how we most effectively can use them to our benefit, is a central part of deep ecology and is called *deep questioning*. Together with *deep experience* and *deep commitment* it constitutes what Harding calls “the three senses of deep” in deep ecology. Deep experience is a sense of “profound waking up”, a feeling of deep connection with more-than-human nature. Næss had this deep experience the first time he looked upon the mountain Hallingskarvet at the age of seven, and Leopold when he saw the fierce green fire die in the wolf's eyes. Having a deep experience with nature makes one react when it is treated badly. Deeper questions may then be asked - like why someone or something is treated this way, who benefits from it, and if it is really necessary. This again may lead to a deep commitment to act - to bring about change in peaceful and democratic ways. Business-as-usual, as mentioned earlier, is treated as an obvious goal, even at conferences discussing environmental challenges. But if we have a deep experience with more-than-human nature, and see the wrongs that is done to it by continuing with business-as-usual, we may start to ask deeper questions than how we best can continue the way we do. Those who advocate for business-as-usual, why do they want it? Does more money and more things make us happier? Are my non-vital needs more important than others' vital needs, human or non-human? After a deep question process like this, does the

statement about business-as-usual as the goal still stand? If it does not, what does this imply? At least it can be argued that it implies that what is presented as the goal, and thus the centre of discussion, in fact may not be the goal at all. Harding present these three senses of deep as interconnected, as each point is reinforced by the others (Harding 2006:50-52).

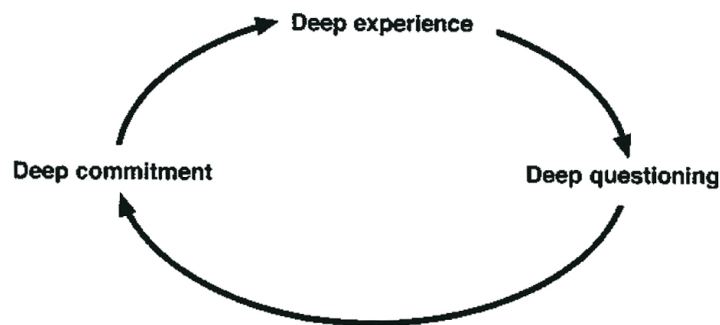


Figure 1: “The Three Senses of Deep” (Harding 2006:51).

Together with George Sessions, Næss developed an eight point platform, with key terms and phrases, proposed as a basic to deep ecology. Together with the three senses of deep, this eight point platform is seen as “the heart of deep ecology” (Sessions 1998:172-173). It states that:

1. The well-being and flourishing of human and non-human life on Earth have value in themselves (synonymous: intrinsic value, inherent worth). These values are independent of the usefulness of the non-human world for human purposes.
2. Richness and diversity of life forms contribute to the realization of these values and are also values in themselves.
3. Humans have no right to reduce this richness and diversity except to satisfy vital needs.
4. The flourishing of human life and cultures is compatible with a substantially smaller human population. The flourishing of non-human life requires a smaller human population.

5. Present human interference with the non-human world is excessive, and the situation is rapidly worsening.

6. Policies must therefore be changed. These policies affect basic economic, technological, and ideological structures. The resulting state of affairs will be deeply different from the present.

7. The ideological change will be mainly that of appreciating life equality (dwelling in situations of inherent value) rather than adhering to an increasingly higher standard of living. There will be a profound awareness of the difference between bigness and greatness.

8. Those who subscribe to the foregoing points have an obligation directly or indirectly to try to implement the necessary changes

(Næss 1998:196-197).

Even though deep ecology can be seen as an ethic in itself, it is primarily developed as a tool, aiming to “help individuals to explore the ethical implications of their sense of profound connection to nature, and to ground these ethical insights in practical action in the service of genuine ecological sustainability” (Harding 2006:50). Næss' goal is thus not to present an ethic that everyone should follow, but to encourage others to use deep ecology as a tool for reflecting upon their relationship with more-than-human nature. In a way, it seems like his goal is to highlight the importance of ecological ethics and to engage more people in it.

Ecocentric approaches may cause, as we have seen, some confusion as to how it is possible to live in accordance with these views. What if one does not wish to make a clear hierarchy in nature but still wants to take all of nature into moral consideration while still live a satisfactory human life? How is it possible to find an ethic that takes all these aspects into consideration?

## Moral Pluralism

Some ecological ethicists, like Christopher D. Stone, argues that finding an ethic like this is not possible. Instead, he looks to moral pluralism. “Moral pluralism is the view that our ethical life consists of a number of different principles or values which can conflict, and which cannot be boiled down to just one” (Curry 2011:150). When we face a variety of ethical dilemmas, regarding such different things as a lake, a spider, the Amazon forest or the species of blue whales, why should there be only one universal ethical framework, answering how one best should act in every situation? Is this even possible? Stone thinks not. He states that his own view “is that monism's ambitions, to unify all ethics within a single framework capable of yielding the one right answer to all quandaries, are simply quixotic” (Stone 2003:196). Stone does not think that an ecological ethicist's task is to put forward and defend a single overarching principle, but to use the different principles of ecological ethics to discuss the best solutions for different situations. Curry says that moral pluralism implies that different considerations can *validly* be applied in different cases, and each case can be *properly* viewed in different ways. “And those taking the decisions must therefore take responsibility for them, rather than hiding behind supposedly transcendental truths” (Curry 2011:153). Stone agrees, emphasising that accepting moral pluralism does not mean that we as a moral community are relieved from striving to find more universal and better answers, nor that we can “flip a coin” when we face difficult choices. Rather, it gives us the opportunity to exercise our freedom and define our characters (Stone 2003:201), a central part of developing a virtuous character in virtue ethics.

(...) ethics is not, and never can be, like mathematics or the so-called exact sciences. It cannot provide a watertight set of rules, to be applied mechanically, that will save anyone the time and trouble of some hard thinking, and feeling, when confronted with a real, specific and unique situation that presents an ethical dilemma (Curry 2011:10).

Moral pluralism, Curry emphasises, means that every view must be heard, also anthropocentric views, as no view is universally right. Moral pluralism might therefore be hard for many ecological ethicists to accept, and it is according to him a minority view among ecological ethicists today. However, he reminds us, it also means that the most common view - that when human interests conflict with the well-being of others, the latter must give way - cannot be taken for granted (Curry 2011:154-155).

Callicott agrees with Stone and Curry that a monistic system fails to integrate our diverse moral concerns. However, he does not argue for moral pluralism:

The moral pluralists' inability clearly to articulate a criterion for choosing among several inconsistent courses of action, indicated by several incommensurable moral theories, is not itself a terribly serious problem (...) Rather, in my opinion, it is a symptom of a deeper, more distressing malaise – the disengagement of ethics from metaphysics and moral philosophy (Callicott 2003:214).

As mentioned earlier, ecological ethics presents us with as diverse issues as an individual cow or butterfly, a coral reef, endangered species and the ozone layer. Aware of the diversity of these issues, and that a monistic systems is not sufficient to tackle this, Callicott still feels that we must maintain a coherent sense of self and world - a unified world view. “Such unity enables us rationally to select among or balance out the contradictory or inconsistent demands made upon us when the multiple social circles in which we may operate overlap and come into conflict” (Callicott 2003:214). And even more importantly, he argues, a unified world view like this “gives our lives purpose, direction, coherency, and sanity” (Callicott 2003:214). Callicott thus advocates for a third alternative, that is neither entirely monistic nor entirely pluralistic:

[A] *univocal* ethical theory embedded in a coherent world view that provides, nevertheless, for a *multiplicity* of hierarchically ordered and variously “textured” moral relationships (and thus duties, responsibilities, and so on) each



corresponding to and supporting our multiple, varied, and hierarchically ordered social relationships (Callicott 2003:215).

If we accept this, he says, then we can discard the competing and inconsistent metaphysics of morals. He is aware that some might find his view pluralistic, but argues that it is not, as it involves *one* metaphysics of morals:

one concept of the nature of morality (as rooted in moral sentiments), one concept of human nature (that we are social animals voyaging with fellow creatures in the odyssey of evolution), one moral psychology (that we respond in subtly shaded ways to the fellow members of our multiple, diverse, tiered communities and to those communities *per se*) (Callicott 2003:216).

Callicott's view seems like a hybrid between monism – the idea that we have to have *some* unity in our world view - and pluralism, as he emphasises that different ethical choices demand different ethical frameworks. There is no universal answer to every ethical dilemma.

## **Multicentrism**

Some ecological ethicists would say that the expanding moral circle-principle in itself is anthropocentric, even though it gives room for intrinsic value of more-than-human nature. The line is first drawn around human beings, then it expands in several wider circles around those we chose to value the most. That humans place themselves in the middle is in a way anthropocentric in itself. Those who argue for a more holistic view, like Leopold, Abram or Næss, would not chose to draw any circles like these. They would instead draw one huge circle around the entire Earth, with every entity inside. Even though this seems like a more ecocentric view, it is difficult to be completely de-centred, and Curry even argues that it is impossible. As a human it would be difficult, if not impossible, not to perceive the world as a human. It is only natural that in our perception of the world, we are the centres. However, if it is anthropocentric to discuss who should be included in the moral circle, but

impossible to be completely de-centred and view the world as an outsider or as anyone else than who we are, what then, is the alternative? Curry advocates multicentrism as a third option. It is neither anthropocentric nor demands us to view the world as de-centred from ourselves. A multicentric view “encourages the awareness that that life consists of many centres, not only human ones” (Curry 2011:157). A human is the centre of his or her own life, as is a dolphin and a cactus. Or as Bergljot Børresen puts it: “The human is born human-centred, *anthropocentric*, as the lion is *leocentric*, the wolf *canocentric* etc.” (Børresen 2007:55, my own translation). Anthony Weston also argues for a multicentric view like this, saying that we cannot have an adequate idea of another being until we have offered them the space, time and possibility to enter a relationship with us (Weston in Curry 2011:156). “[O]nce other centres are acknowledged, always somewhat opaque to us as we are to them, there is no alternative but to work things out together, as far as possible, when all are affected by the decisions taken” (Weston in Curry 2011:156-157).

## **A Summary of Part One**

As we have seen, ecological ethics is an immensely vast field, consisting of a variety of very different views concerning how we should live and act in relationship with more-than-human nature. What all of these views have in common, though, is the acknowledgement that how humans live and act affects the rest of nature in some way, and hence that ethics should not just deal with how to treat other humans. By discussing what has value, intrinsic or instrumental, we can expand our moral circle to include more and more parts of more-than-human nature, from other animals, plants and inanimate entities to species and ecosystems. However, the more entities included in the circle, the more difficult it is to live in accordance with our ethics in practice. How should we prioritise, when every entity in nature has intrinsic value? As we

have seen, some argue that we should make hierarchies based on interests or other criteria, while others argue that it makes no sense to put one entity above another, as every entity is a part of nature's reciprocity and is thus sustained by each other. It is difficult to navigate through every ethical dilemma we face with only one ethical framework. We should therefore discuss whether we should strive to find this one universal ethical framework, or if we should use pluralism, or perhaps a hybrid version. It can also be discussed whether humans are the only centres, or the only ones who can value anything intrinsically, and thus whether the constructed moral circle-principle is of any use at all. Why should we, as only one among millions of other species, decide what is right? As Curry argues, it is extremely difficult, if not impossible, for an individual to view the world as not centred around themselves. It is difficult enough to imagine how other humans perceive the world, and even more difficult to imagine the world from the perspective of an ostrich or a shark. How can we, as human beings, even try to imagine how a tulip, a plankton or a mountain perceives the world? Detaching ourselves from our human centres should perhaps not be the goal, and multicentrism offers a view where this is acknowledged – as long as we also acknowledge that non-humans are also centres and have a perception of the world on their own.

As we have seen, human beings have a very special position on Earth today, where we can control and influence most other entities and where our actions affects other parts of nature on a huge scale. While the purpose of ecological ethics perhaps is to find the answers to how we best should live in relation with more-than-human nature, I think the most important goal at this stage is to discuss it at all - to give room for non-anthropocentric views in discussions regarding the treatment of more-than-human nature, and to ask deeper questions, both to others when discussing and to ourselves. In part two of this thesis, the discussion about Norwegian whaling will be used as an example to illustrate how most discussions about issues involving non-humans do not use

ecological ethics consciously as a central part of this discussion. As we will see, sometimes those who actively try to do so are at times even made fun of. However, if we *do* use ecological ethics as a platform when discussing issues regarding non-humans – in this case whaling - and ask deeper questions about intrinsic value and our relationship with the rest of nature, would we be satisfied with the same answers we received before we applied these ethical approaches to the discussion? If not, what would this imply?

## **Part Two – Norwegian Whaling and Ecological Ethics**

Part two consists of four chapters. The first chapter is a brief presentation of the history of Norwegian whaling. The second is about minke whales, which is the type of whale that is commercially hunted in Norway. The third chapter is presents “Vågehvalen – valgets kval”, the book which will be the main source of discussion in the last chapter of part two. In this chapter it is also explained why this book is still relevant for the discussion about whaling and other issues regarding non-humans today, even though it was published in 1993. The fourth, and main, chapter of part two discusses three main reasons for continuing whaling that is presented in “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” and discusses these further, in the light of ecological ethics. After asking deeper questions about how we should live and act in relationship with whales and other natural entities involved in the discussion about whaling, will we be satisfied with the reasons presented for continuing whaling in the book? This last chapter of part two also discusses why it is stated in the book that those who ground their arguments for protecting more-than-human nature in ecological ethics have a legitimisation problem. Why does it seem like the contributors of the book and others which its views represent try to tie down a thorough ethical discussion about whaling?

### **A Brief History of Norwegian Whaling**

Along the long Norwegian coastline, the relationship between whales and humans can be traced as far as 10,000-12,000 years back in time (Ringstad 2011:5) Petroglyphs and bone discoveries as well as texts written more than a

thousand years ago tell us that whales were both worshiped as “God-given” animals but also seen as a valuable resource and source of food (Hoel et al. 1993B:77-79). The hunting methods used so far back in time are not determined, but finding stranded whales and chasing whales towards the shore to then kill them were probably the most common ways. Harpoons, spears and poisonous arrows may have been used to kill the whales (Ringstad 2011:9-13).

Even though Norwegians have hunted whales for hundreds, and perhaps even thousands of years, it was not until the middle of the nineteenth century that Norway started to become what some like to call a “whaling nation”. At that time the Norwegian Sven Foyn combined the newly developed grenade harpoon with motorised ships, and made large scale whaling possible for the first time. His whaling company started its business along the coast of Finnmark in northern Norway in the 1860's. Other companies followed, and by the beginning of the 1880's, an industrial whaling business had emerged in this area. By the turn of the century, over-exploitation had led to a lower profitability, and many of the whaling companies looked for other places to catch whales (Hvalfangstmuseet.no). In addition to this, many fishermen were not pleased with this whaling along the Norwegian coast. The minke whales were known to help the fishermen by driving the fish towards the shore, and they argued that hunting minke whales was disturbing this process. After an argument between fishermen and whalers that lasted for over 30 years, the government saw that the conflict could become dangerous and decided to step in. They sided with the fishermen, (Martinsen 2013:104-105), and as a result whales along the coast of Nordland, Troms and Finnmark (the northern part of Norway) were protected from whaling for ten years from 1904 (Ringstad 2011:22).

By this time, the Norwegian global whaling business had already started, and especially after these incidents, the whaling companies searched outside Norwegian waters for business. During the time between the 1880's and the first world war, Norwegian whaling companies caught whales outside all the world's continents and oceans, and especially in Antarctica. Here, the populations of large whale species such as blue whales, humpback whales, fin whales and sperm whales were large. Together with a few other countries, Norway took part in the large scale Antarctic whaling during the majority of the twentieth century. The whales were hunted with Svend Foyn's methods; grenade harpoons and motorised ships (Hvalfangstmuseet.no). The main product was whale oil, but the baleens were also used (Martinsen 2013:104). Thus, at this time whale meat was not the main reason for commercial whaling, as it is today. Land stations where whale blubber was cooked to make oil were built, and this way of whaling, with cooking stations on land, was used until 1965. However, a more common and effective way was floating cookeries, developed in 1905 (Regjeringen.no:A) The whale bodies were processed in the water, tied along the side of the boat, that was either moored to land or stayed in calm waters. A new technology developed in 1925 made it possible to pull the whale bodies up on deck, where it could be processed more efficiently. This enabled the boats to stay out in the open sea, which was beneficial as the risk and difficulty of processing a whale tied to the side of the boat in rough sea was no longer there. “The cookeries were now converted into floating factories and contributed to an industrial expansion that in addition to Norway included nations such as England, Germany, The Soviet Union and Japan” (Hvalfangstmuseet.no, my own translation). With such a large scale and effective whaling process, the whale populations decreased sharply, and when Norway ended its whaling in Antarctica after the 1967/1968 season, several of the whales species were threatened with extinction (Regjeringen.no:A)

Scientists around the world expressed concern for the rapid decrease in the number of whales as a result of whaling. In 1946 the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling was signed as a result of this. The International Whaling Commission was then founded, and the commission has since 1949 met annually to discuss everything from hunting quotas, hunting areas, minimum sizes of the whales hunted, conservation policies, etc. Its intention is to “provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whale industry” (IWC:A). They do have authorisation, but only over member states, and states are free to end their membership or to make reservations against decisions they do not agree with, which obviously restricts their actual power (Ringstad 2011:42).

Today the only species of whale that is commercially hunted in Norway is the minke whale. The modern Norwegian whaling of minke whales began in the 1920's. Until then highly ineffective ways of killing the minke whales were used, such as poisonous arrows. With this method, the whales were trapped in bays and then shot with arrows saturated in bacteria, causing them to die of blood poisoning. This process could take several days. Ringstad says that one reported death took 17 days, but that so many days was unusual (Ringstad 2011:12). Sometimes arrows without poison were used. With this method, the movements of the whale caused the arrow to penetrate slowly deeper into its body, and eventually enter its bones to cause gangrene and death (Ringstad 2011:12). These methods were extremely painful. In the 1920's more modern methods for catching minke whales came into use. According to Hoel et al. fishermen from the Western part of Norway developed this new method, using the knowledge they had of whaling which they had acquired at the land stations along the coast, and their knowledge of the minke whales and their whereabouts acquired through fishing. They used small harpoon canons used for hunting bottlenose whales. “They combined technology and knowledge, and after a few years this way of hunting had spread all along the coast.



Whaling of minke whales was eventually conducted from nearly all parts of Norway” (Hoel et al. 1993B:81, my own translation). The number of boats involved were at its highest in 1948, when 350 boats participated in catching almost 4000 minke whales (Hoel et al. 1993B:85). Harpoons without gunpowder in the grenades, called a “cold harpoon” were used. Most of the whales did not die momentarily when shot with a cold harpoon, but had to be shot several times before they died. This method was used until 1984, when a new type of harpoon grenade which exploded inside the whale came into use. From 1985 this new harpoon was required to use (Regjeringen.no:A) In 2000 yet another new grenade, also exploding, was introduced, and this is the one that is in use today. As a result of this development of new methods, in 2000-2002, 80% of the whales died momentarily, compared to only 17% in 1981-1983. The average time it takes a whale to die is now down to two minutes (Regjeringen.no:A). Still, 20% of the whales suffer for several minutes before they die, and 10% of the whales shot suffers for more than ten minutes. In addition, it is difficult to decide the exact amount of time it takes because the whales are in the water when they die. IWC has set the time of death to the time when the pectoral fins retract and become motionless, the mouth opens up and all movement ceases. These observations need to be seen in connection to observations of damage to the organs, but as this is difficult due to the circumstances, the time of death is most often set to the time when the whale stops moving. However, the minke whale's body is adapted to a life with long dives, which gives its body the ability to “turn off” large, energy-demanding organs. Some therefore suspect that the average time it takes a whale to die may be longer than claimed, while the whalers point out that it may be the other way around, as waves may cause movements in the dead whale's body, making it looking alive (NOAH – for animal rights).

The hunting quotas set by the IWC decreased further and further up to the 1980's, and in 1982 they decided to set a moratorium against all commercial

whaling from 1986. Norway did not support this decision and used their reservation right. However, Norway decided to end commercial whaling temporarily from 1986 to count the minke whale populations, and to make sure that to continue whaling was sustainable. Years of research resulted in numbers that estimated that the North-East Atlantic minke whale population was 86.736. This number was approved by the IWC in 1992 (Schweder 1993:61), and the numbers were used to set sustainable hunting quotas. In 1993 Norway started commercial whaling again, without approval from the IWC. Since the IWC moratorium in 1986 Norway has killed more than 10.000 whales (Martinsen 2013:105).

Norwegian whaling today is not a large industry. While whaling earlier in history was mostly run by whaling companies with rich investors such as Svend Foyn employing the whalers, whalers today are usually fishermen some parts of the year and whalers other parts of the year, and they have to have ownership of the boat to get a whaling licence. In 2008, 30 boats were given licence to hunt minke whales, and 27 of them took part in whaling, with a crew of four to eight people on each boat. The hunting quota was set to 1052 whales, and 535 whales were caught. The number of participating boats and whales caught has declined during the last years, and as illustrated with the 2008 numbers, the quotas are much higher than the number of whales caught. In 2013 the number of participating boats had decreased to 17, and whaling was described in an NRK article as a “dying industry” (Andersen and Lysvold 2013). During the period from 1998 to 2003 the economic value of the whaling industry was between 21 and 27 million Norwegian kroners (NOK) per year. Compared to the fishing industry, which had an economic value of around ten billion NOK per year at the same time, the whaling industry is small. For whalers, who, as mentioned, are usually fishermen some parts of the year and whalers other parts of the year, whaling constitutes around 20% of their income (Regjeringen.no:A and Regjeringen.no:B). However, in 2010

less than 1% of fishermen took part in activities related to whaling (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge et al. 2011:12). Today, the main whale product is the meat, not the oil or baleens. As most countries are opposed to whaling, export of whale meat is to a great extent not possible, and the biggest market for the meat is the Norwegian one. Even though the Norwegian government claims that the whaling industry is non-subsidised, there are several costs that are directly linked to the maintenance of the whaling industry, which are paid directly or indirectly through governmental financing. For example, the state-owned company Innovasjon Norge spend 1-2.5 million NOK every year on marketing related to whaling. Some years the money spent is as much as 4-5 million NOK. The destruction of whale blubber is another example. To get rid of 1200 tonnes blubber in the years 1999, 2000 and 2007 the government spent 11 million NOK. Another example is the DNA register of all minke whales caught, which is a way of securing “safety and control” over the whale meat on the market. From 2001 to 2007 this DNA register cost around 14.1 million NOK. Other public expenses regarding whaling are spent on inspections, electronic monitoring systems, memberships in IWC and NAMMCO (the North Atlantic Marine Mammal Commission), tax reliefs for whalers, scientific research like the whale counting programme (around 8 million NOK per year) and to give information about the sustainable Norwegian whaling to the international community (around 3.18 millions per year from 1992-2010). EFTEC, an independent environmental economics consultancy based in the UK, researched these costs on behalf of three animal rights organisations, and came to the conclusion that the total economic support that is provided from the government to maintain the Norwegian whaling industry (that we know of) is almost as high as the total revenues generated by the whaling industry. “That means that the total impact on the Norwegian economy, after deduction of the expenses of the whaling, must be negative” (Dyrebeskyttelsen Norge et al. 2011:6-8). At the same time they found that whale watching, even though not a large investment and a small focus in Norway, has an economic value of at least 12.3 million NOK per year

(Dyrebeskytelsen Norge et al. 2011:2). From this report, it seems like whale watching actually would be a more profitable industry than whaling. The Norwegian whaling today takes place in the Norwegian economic zone, in the Fish Protection Zone around Svalbard, in the Fishing Zone around by Jan Mayen and in international waters (Smotthavet). The whaling season is from April to August/September each year. All the boats have an electronic monitoring system installed that registers all hunting activity on board. In addition to this, there is a group of inspectors who ensures that the regulations are being followed. The whalers must take a course each year where accurate shooting and safety is in focus (Regjeringen.no:B).

Even though the IWC does not allow commercial whaling, they do grant permission to catch some species of whale for scientific purposes, called “scientific permit whaling”, and to indigenous people, called “aboriginal subsistence whaling”. IWC states that:

In several parts of the world, whale products play an important role in the nutritional and cultural life of native peoples. Since its inception, the IWC has recognised that indigenous or ‘aboriginal subsistence’ whaling is of a different nature to commercial whaling. It is thus not subject to the moratorium (IWC:B)

Together with commercial whaling, scientific permit whaling and aboriginal subsistence whaling constitute the three different forms of whaling which the IWC operates with. The former is as mentioned earlier not allowed. Norway and Iceland are the only countries that practice commercial whaling today, both under objection to the moratorium or under reservation to it. These countries establish their own catch limits, but they must provide information about those catches as well as associated scientific data to the IWC. Russia has also registered an objection to the moratorium, however they do not exercise it (IWC:C) According to The Norwegian Whaling Museum, in the season 2007/2008 the following countries caught whales, for one of the three purposes mentioned above: Japan (912), Faroe Islands (856), Norway (595),

Russia (132), USA (64), Iceland (45) and St. Vincent (1).

(Hvalfangstmuseet.no). Japan has hunted whales under a scientific permit whaling. However, in the end of March 2014 the United Nation's International Court of Justice came to the conclusion that Japan's whaling is not scientific in nature, and could rather be seen as commercial whaling. Japan has now been ordered to stop hunting whales (Lee 2014). Whether they intend to abide by this decision, or to continue commercial whaling like Norway and Iceland, remains to be seen.

There is no doubt that the Norwegian government is taking their self-appointed role as a manager of their so-called “whale resources” seriously. They are members of the IWC even though they do not agree with the moratorium, they ensure that the whaling is sustainable by counting the populations and setting strict hunting quotas and rules that needs to be followed to be granted permission to catch whales, it is required to use the most effective killing methods and they spend time and money to develop new methods so that the whaling is as humane as possible. The government and others who are pro-whaling may not want to repeat what took place in Antarctica where several whale species were hunted almost to extinction, but they do seem proud of their history as a whaling nation and of the, according to themselves, sustainable and responsible way of whaling that takes place today. However, the number of participating boats and whales caught are declining because of the declining popularity of whale meat, even though the Norwegian government spend millions of NOK every year to maintain what they see as an important part of Norwegian tradition. As stated by two NRK journalists regarding the small number of boats taking part in whaling during the last years: *An honourable part of Norwegian history is reclining* (Andersen and Lysvold 2013).

## The Minke Whale

The minke whale is a species of whale within the suborder of baleen whales. Together with toothed whales, baleen whales constitute the two main groups of whales. There are around 70 species of toothed whales and 14 species of baleen whales (Havforskningsinstituttet). Minke whales are one of the smallest baleen whales. While the main food source for toothed whales is fish, and for baleen whales zooplankton, minke whales eat both fish and zooplankton, and are for this reason often called omnivores. They live in temperate and polar waters in both the northern and southern hemisphere, and there are three different known types of minke whales: Those who live in the northern hemisphere (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*), those who live in the southern hemisphere (*Balaenoptera bonaerensis*) and dwarf minke whales (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) who live in the southern hemisphere. The northern minke whales can grow up to 9.1 meters long and weigh four to five tonnes. The southern minke whales are longer, with a maximum length of 10.7 meters, while the dwarf minke whales have a maximum length of approximately 7.4 meters. Minke whale females are a bit larger than males. They reach maturity at the age of seven to eight years. Females have a 10-11 months gestation period, and usually give birth to one calf a year. Minke whales can live up to 60 years (Hoelzel and Stern 2000).

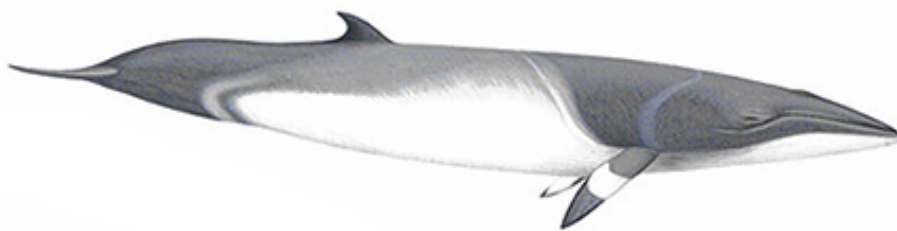


Figure 2: “Minke Whale” (MarineBio Conservation Society).

Minke whales are one of the least studied baleen whales, and there are aspects of their behaviour that humans do not know. They appear to be mainly solitary, most often observed alone or in small groups. However, recent research on dwarf minke whales reveal a more social and communicative behaviour than previously assumed (WCD). More information about individual calling behaviour is important to obtain to increase understanding of the social interactions between these marine mammals. They make very loud sounds, up to 152 decibels, which is as loud as a jet taking off. According to the MarineBio Conservation Society they “make series (trains) of grunts, thuds and raspy sounds”, which may be used in communication with other minke whales and for echolocation (MarineBio Conservation Society). By using passive acoustic monitoring to track minke whales in the northwest Atlantic, scientists quite recently (the research was conducted from 2009 to 2011) found clues in the individual calling behaviours and movements of these whales. Although the specific behavioural function of the call patterns still is unknown, they discovered that the sound sequences may be important in social interactions between individuals, or may reflect age or sex differences. “The whales seem to regularly use different patterns of calling when in hearing proximity of one other. We don't know yet what purposes these patterns serve or which sex is producing the calls” (Risch 2014). A lot is still unknown to humans concerning minke whales, and to obtain more knowledge, for instance of their social behaviour, they need to be studied further.

### **Vågehvalen – Valgets Kval**

“Vågehvalen – valgets kval” is a book on Norwegian whaling of minke whales and why this whaling can be argued to be responsible. The title translates into something resembling “The minke whale – a tough choice”. The title

contains a pun, as “kval” can mean both “choice” and “whale” in one of Norway's two official written languages. The book was published in 1993 with support from among others The Ministry of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs (now The Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Fisheries), and includes chapters written by the Minister of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs and the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Biology, zoology, economics, social anthropology, veterinary medicine and environmental NGO's are among the fields of the other contributors of the book. The many chapters address whale biology, minke whale population and how to count it, sustainable resource management, how the whales are being hunted (both earlier in history and more modern methods), economic perspectives, international perspectives including information about the IWC, cultural perspectives, recipes with whale meat and the claimed health benefits of eating it, and the debate about whaling, including a chapter about ethics.

As mentioned earlier, the Norwegian government chose to use their reservation right against the IWC moratorium and to continue commercial whaling in 1993, after a seven year break to count the North-East Atlantic minke whale population. The public protests against this decision were large and received a lot of attention in the media, both within and outside Norway. It is not a coincidence that this book was published the same year as the whaling started again. As the editors state in the preface: “This book project has been finished in a hurry. The actuality of the topic has made a fast production necessary” (Hoel et al. 1993A:18, my own translation). The government and others who were pro-whaling obviously felt the need for a book that would “calm the population down” by arguing, through every chapter, that to continue whaling was, indeed, the right choice to make. The editors themselves write in the preface that the purpose of the book is public education. “The book is written with a hope that it can contribute to public education about the political ”hot potato” which the minke whale issue has



become” (Hoel et al. 1993A:17, my own translation). Siri Martinsen, leader of the Norwegian animals rights organisation “NOAH – for animal rights”, writes that the Norwegian government worked hard in the beginning of the 1990's to make the Norwegian population identify themselves with whaling. “The immediate reason for politically creating a “whaling nation” was obviously a wish to gather support from the people before the political decision to resume whaling against the will of the international community” (Martinsen 2013:108, my own translation). An alliance whose purpose was to promote whaling, called “Høge Nord Allianse”, was established in 1990. It received almost all its funding from the Norwegian government (Martinsen 2013:109). Their (and the government's) goal was to improve the international media coverage, and to be a voice in international arenas such as the IWC, “to reduce the pressure from opponents towards the Norwegian government, and hence to increase the probability of more pro-whaling resolutions” (Frøvik and Jusnes in Martinsen 2013:109, my own translation). This book thus represents the government's as well as other pro-whaling views on Norwegian whaling, and even though it tries to do the other side justice by presenting some other views and discussing some arguments against whaling, in all the chapters the purpose of the book shines through - it is a 346 pagelong argument for continue whaling.

“Vågehvalen – valgets kval” is interesting because it was published with support from the government, and includes chapters written by government representatives. It thus represent Norway's official views. The fact that it was meant as public education also adds an interesting element to it, because it means that this was intended as a universal standpoint. As we shall see in the next chapter, the main reasons for continue to hunt minke whales presented in the book are that ending whaling will mean more whales (who eat fish) and therefore less fish for the fishing industry, that the whales do not suffer more than many other animals we kill, and that the Norwegian whaling today is a

sustainable way of managing our resources, as the minke whale is not a threatened species. Even though the book was published 21 years ago, it is still highly relevant for a discussion about whaling and ecological ethics today. I base this claim on two main arguments. The first one is that the arguments used in the books are exactly the same arguments that are being used today. For example, in a white paper from 2003-2004 about Norwegian politics regarding marine mammals (St.meld. nr. 27 (2003-2004) Norsk sjøpattedyrpolitikk) it is mentioned that whaling is more humane than many other ways of killing non-human animals. Some demand a guarantee that all whales are killed momentarily, it says. Further it states that “This is a wishful target, but unfortunately impossible in practice, and it is not known in any business where animals are killed, including in the slaughtering of farmed animals” (regjeringen.no:A, my own translations). It is stated that the killing method for minke whales in Norway today is far more effective and humane than in any other form of hunting (perhaps except in seal hunting they add – another issue where the Norwegian government experience pressure to end hunting), and also that to compare the killing methods of whales to killing methods of farmed animals is not very useful because farmed animals are under physical control when the killing happens. “But in contrast to farmed animals, most whales in Norway die without any stress and without knowing that they are being hunted” (regjeringen.no:A, my own translation). The same white paper also mentions that whales constitute a threat against the fishing industry by eating fish that we rather would prefer to eat ourselves. The minke whale’s consumption is 5.5 million tonnes biomass per year, it is said. “To compare, altogether the Norwegian fishing industry harvested 2.74 million tonnes from the same ecosystem in 2002. This reflects the competitiveness that must be accounted for when managing the species” (regjeringen.no:A, my own translation). In a more recent white paper about the same subject from 2009 (St.meld. nr. 46 (2009-2009) Norsk sjøpattedyrpolitikk) it is highlighted that the Norwegian whaling is a responsible and sustainable way of managing our ocean resources:

The harvesting of our living marine resources is based on scientific documentation and follows international law. Norway's right to harvest the living marine resources, including the marine mammals, in our huge and rich seas, is based on taking seriously the principle of sustainability, based on the best available scientific knowledge (regjeringen.no:B, my own translation).

These arguments, used since “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” was published, are still applied whenever the topic of whaling is discussed. Even Yngve Ekern, journalist in one of Norway's largest newspapers and one of the country's best known food writers, who is usually an advocate for animal welfare and critical of the modern food industry, use these arguments when he encourages people to buy whale meat. “Just for the record: Our whaling is undeniably sustainable. Animal welfare? Yes, the whales sing their way through life. Chickens do not. The killing is humane. No other form of hunting is monitored as intensely” (Ekern 2013, my own translation). In this quote, Ekern continues to argue that whaling is good because it is sustainable, and that it is OK because other animals (in this case chickens) are treated worse. Another example can be found in an online news article, also from 2013, announcing that the Norwegian whaling season has started. In a short summary of some facts about whaling it says that the methods used in Norwegian whaling are fully abreast with those used in other big game hunting. “This is the case both regarding how fast death occurs and regarding the number of animals who are wounded but do not die of the shots. The killing methods are no worse those used for farmed animals in the slaughterhouses” (Andersen and Lysvold 2013, my own translation). It also says that “Norway has set its own quota for minke whales within responsible sustainable limits” (Andersen and Lysvold 2013, my own translation). In the article the Minister of Fisheries and Coastal Affairs at that time, Lisbeth Berg Hansen, highlights this argument, saying that the quota set gives “adequate certainty for a sustainable catch of the minke whale population” (Hansen in Andersen and Lysvold 2013, my own translation). One of the pictures included in the article shows a whale stomach and its content. The text below the photo says that “The stomach of the minke whale reveals that it feeds on fish” (Andersen and Lysvold 2013, my own translation). In this article, all of

the three arguments from “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” are mentioned – the killing methods are not less humane than the methods used in the killing of many other kinds of animals, the whaling is sustainable, and it highlights that the minke whales consumes fish. The arguments has thus not changed much since the book was published, more than 20 years ago.

The second reason why the book is still highly relevant for a discussion on whaling and ecological ethics today, is that the awareness of ecological ethics' role in this discussions concerning non-humans is still missing, and the lack of acceptance for arguments consciously based on ecological ethics is as evident today as it was when “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” was written. While the public debate on whaling has been relatively quiet for many years, a related debate about fur farming is alive and well. This debate, which is mainly about whether Norway should continue to allow fur farming or not, is a good example to illustrate that also ongoing public debates about non-humans lack the acceptance of arguments based on ecological ethics - also from government representatives. Ola Borten Moe, Minister of Petroleum and Energy at the time, said in an online news article in September 2013 that the arguments against the fur industry are based on feelings, and that people to an increasing extent have a “Walt Disney-like view on animals” (Hegvik 2013). What does he mean with a “Walt Disney-like view on animals”? Does it mean that one should not “anthropomorphise” other animals by giving them human characteristics, the way Disney does? In this case, what kind of human characteristics does he question? That mice wear clothes and travel the world as detectives, or a baby deer's grief over the loss of his mother? If he means the former, this is an irrelevant statement, as no animal right activist claims this. If he means the latter, does this mean that he does not acknowledge that humans and other animals share the ability to experience stress, pain, grief, joy, love, and other feelings? If he thinks that consciousness and the ability to experience emotional feelings are ascribed to humans alone, he is on very thin

ice. In 2012 an international group of cognitive neuroscientists, neuropharmacologists, neuroanatomists and computational neuroscientists gathered to reassess the conscious experiences of non-human animals. As a result “The Cambridge Declaration of Consciousness” was signed, stating that humans are not unique among animals in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness:

We declare the following: “The absence of a neocortex does not appear to preclude an organism from experiencing affective states. Convergent evidence indicates that non-human animals have the neuroanatomical, neurochemical, and neurophysiological substrates of conscious states along with the capacity to exhibit intentional behaviors. Consequently, the weight of evidence indicates that humans are not unique in possessing the neurological substrates that generate consciousness. Non-human animals, including all mammals and birds, and many other creatures, including octopuses, also possess these neurological substrates.” (The Cambridge Declaration of Consciousness 2012).

Critique towards those who acknowledge that humans and other animals share the ability to experience a variety of emotional feelings can also be found in “Vågehvalen - valgets kval”, where it is said that some give whales “human characteristics” (Olsen 1993:314). Bergljot Børresen reflects upon this anthropomorphism argument, concluding that the statement itself is highly anthropocentric. To acknowledge that humans and other animals share many of the same abilities “does not mean that the animals are given “human characteristics”, but rather that humans acknowledge their profound “animalism” (Børresen 2007:53, my own translation). She says that non-human animals cannot resemble humans, just as a granddad cannot have a characteristic from his grandchild. It is the grandchild who is like its ancestry. “The human is chimpanzee-like, the chimpanzee is not human-like” (Børresen 2007:53, my own translation). In addition to basing his argument on an anthropocentric view, it seems like Borten Moe by using the term “Walt Disney-like” even tries to make fun of those who do not share his anthropocentric world-view. In the article he also expresses his concern for what will happen if the animal rights activists get their will and the fur farms are closed. He says that if the fur farms are closed the animal rights activists will not stop there, and he is, in his own word, *afraid* that the chicken farm he

owns with 30,000 animals will be the next to go (Hegvik 2013). It thus seems to me as though his arguments for continued fur farming is that those who argue that the animals kept in fur farms share with us a variety of “human characteristic” for some reason have a Walt Disney-like view on animals (whatever this means) and should therefore not be taken seriously. And *if* they are taken seriously, other highly questionable ways of exploiting non-human animals also might come into focus. It seems as though he is afraid of Næss' challenge to question deeper, and what this may lead to. In this particular debate with Borten Moe there is clearly no room for fact-based arguments about the animals themselves and their well-documented feelings and needs, nor about the ethical questions about keeping non-human animals locked in small cages and exploiting their lives to make luxury products.

Many of the arguments for continuing fur farming found in public debates are similar to the arguments for whaling. For example, a common argument for continue fur farming in Norway is that the conditions for animals in the fur farming industry are worse in China and other parts of the world. This is similar to the argument used to defend whaling that says that other animals are treated even worse than the whales, and therefore whaling is OK. In the fur farming debate it is also said that fur farming is sustainable, especially compared to other ways of making clothes – another argument that is also used in the whaling debate. This claim, however, is wrong. In fact, fur is among the least environmentally friendly materials for making clothes. There is a considerable amount of transportation involved when processing the fur, often across the globe, and toxic chemicals are used in the process. “The chemicals used are toxic, and may cause both respiratory problems and cancer, in addition to environmental problems” (Dyreveralliansen). The production of one kilo mink fur causes an emission of around 140 kilos of CO<sub>2</sub>, while the production of one kilo wool emits around 20 kilos CO<sub>2</sub>. Polyester, which fake fur often is made of, has a significantly lower CO<sub>2</sub> emission than wool, and is

thus a much more environmentally friendly material than fur (Dyrevernalliansen). A final central argument is that the animals in fur farms eat leftovers from other farming industries, so the fur farming industry does us a favour by making it easier to farm fish and other animals as the leftovers do not need to be taken care of in other ways:

Both foxes and minks are predatory animals, and the animals in fur farms eat food that to a large extent is made of bi-products from the slaughterhouses and the fish farming industry. Thus, the fur farming industry works as a renovator for the food industry and the society at large, because the industry can make use of most of the raw materials that the food industry cannot use (Landbruk.no).

This argument is similar to the argument that says that the whaling industry does the fishing industry a favour.

The example with the fur industry is mentioned to illustrate that other issues regarding non-humans often are debated in the same way as the whaling issue. The same kind of arguments are often used to defend the exploitation of non-humans, and there is often a lack of awareness of how ecological ethics is used in the discussion, and even a lack of acceptance for those who use ecological ethics consciously as a platform for the debate. This shows that “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” and the views it represent are still highly relevant to use when discussing matters regarding non-humans, such as whaling. The next chapter addresses three of the most common arguments for defending Norwegian whaling, as mentioned earlier, and discusses them in light of ecological ethics, before discussing why ecological ethics are not accepted as a central part of the debate.

## Norwegian Whaling and Ecological Ethics

Ecological ethics is a platform that enables us to discuss who or what counts in ethics and what this has to say about how we should live and act in relation to more-than-human nature, not only to other human beings. Even though whaling clearly involves human/more-than-human relations, and the choices we make regarding this relation affect more-than-human nature, ecological ethics has traditionally not been used as a platform when discussing whaling, and arguments that are consciously grounded in ecological ethics are often not welcomed in the debate – sometimes they are even made fun of. But what happens with the arguments when they are discussed consciously using ecological ethics as a platform for the discussion? Do they still appear as valid arguments for continued whaling?

When the Norwegian government decided to continue whaling despite the IWC moratorium, several countries strongly objected this decision. Bill Clinton, president of the United States of America at that time, said that this action “justified the use of sanctions”, and all over the world Norwegian products were boycotted. The protests from animal rights organisations and environmental organisations were huge, and fronted by celebrities such as Paul McCartney (Pedersen 2011). There were also protests in Norway. However, following this, the public debate about whaling in Norway slowed and has been relatively quiet for many years. There was some media coverage around the Norwegian Green Party's wish to end whaling and seal hunting before the election in 2013, and then there is the occasional demonstration from animal rights organisations and some articles, for instance about the declining participation in whaling. There are currently no significant public debates about Norwegian whaling, and if something comes up from those who are pro whaling, like Ekern's call to buy whale meat, the same arguments are



used as when the public debate was still strong. Thus, the debate has not really changed, developed or progressed since the publication of “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” was published and Norway resumed whaling in 1993. The whales are still hunted for the same reasons as described in the book, and the awareness of ecological ethics in the debate is still low. Thus it seems like the debate has not become quiet necessarily because those who wish to continue whaling have the best arguments, but because non-anthropocentric arguments concerning the intrinsic value of more-than-human nature are not discussed thoroughly, and are often as good as dismissed before the discussion has even started. Perhaps the debate would become less stagnant, and even change course, if ecological ethics was added as central part of the debate?

In “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” the Norwegian whaling industry is defended with the same arguments one is met with today when discussing the issue. The first main argument is that more whales equals less fish for us to hunt and eat, because the minke whales eat some of the same species of fish as humans like to eat, and therefore whaling is important. The second argument is that whaling is not less humane than most other forms of hunting or killing non-human animals. For example is it more common that the animals shot do not die momentarily in hunting on land. In addition, whales live their entire lives in freedom unlike farmed animals who often are held in small enclosures or cages. The third argument is that whaling is a sustainable way of managing our natural resources, as the minke whale is not an endangered species. These reasons have been used since, as seen among other places in the white papers from 2003 and 2009 and in more recent public statements, like Ekern's writings. Those who oppose whaling must therefore “prove” that more whales does not equal less fish, that whaling is less humane than other ways of killing non-human animals, and that whaling is not a sustainable way of managing our resources. Peter Sandøe, the author of the chapter “Ethics and whaling” in the book, says that because it seems like the supporters of whaling have the

arguments on their side, those against it may use ethics as a last resort in their attempt to end whaling. Sandøe in fact initiates the ethics chapter by saying that those who use ethics to argue against whaling have a “legitimation problem” (Sandøe 1993:151).

This situation, where those who oppose whaling have to prove why whales should be given moral consideration, is known in philosophy as “the burden of proof”. This phenomenon is not only evident when discussing whaling, but when discussing any matter regarding non-humans. Because anthropocentrism is the dominant world view in the Western world, the burden of proof lies with those who wish to widen the moral circle to include anyone other than human beings. Those who wish to continue business-as-usual do not need to “prove” their arguments in the same way, as the current situation - where humans are in the middle of the moral circle, and usually the only species within it - is taken as a given. It is up to those who do *not* agree with this world view to prove why, not the other way around. Martin Gorke writes about the burden of proof in the book “The death of our planet's species: A challenge to ecology and ethics”. With the protection and preservation of species as the example, he says that “(...) opponents of measures for protecting species should be aware that the reason they are usually the winners in public debate is that in the context of anthropocentrism the burden of proof usually rests with those interested in protecting species” (Gorke 2003:198). Further he states that “Opponents of species protection are not the ones who must explain why their economic interests or personal preferences justify endangering a species” (Gorke 2003:198). Gorke argues that explaining why species should be protected is not only an ethical challenge, but also a practical challenge because there are three prerequisites that must be met before those who have defined this burden of proof accept the case for protection. First, the utility of the species must be known. Second, this utility must be quantifiable. And third, “when subjected to a cost-benefit analyses it must be shown to weigh

more than potential costs or competing utility values” Gorke 2003:137-138). Gorke describes the job of satisfying all of these three prerequisites as “an almost insurmountable hurdle” (Gorke 2003:138). Those with an anthropocentric world view defines this burden of proof where everything is measured by their instrumental value for humans, and to argue for the protection of more-than-human nature is difficult when the arguments for protecting it must meet prerequisites like these to be accepted as legitimate. When discussing whether or not to end whaling, the burden of proof lies with those who wish to end whaling – they must prove why the arguments in “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” are wrong. However, to prove that whaling does *not* result in more fish for humans to eat, that whaling *is* worse for the whales than for example hunting is for the deer, or that whaling is *not* sustainable may not be the main concern for those who oppose whaling. This is because their arguments may be grounded in ecological ethics, and they may be interested in others' interests in addition to those of humans, and in addition to those of whales as well. Instead of arguing about killing methods and minke whale populations, they may ask deeper questions such as: Is it right to kill whales so that we then can kill even more fish than we already do? Is it right to harm whales because other animals are harmed even worse or because they do not belong to an endangered species? Is it right to kill other animals at all? And is it right to describe whales and other natural entities as “our resources”?

The rest of this chapter discusses the main arguments from the Norwegian government and other contributors of the book “Vågehvalen – valgets kval”. In contrast to most of the discussion in the book this discussion will consciously be based on ecological ethics, using the overview in part one as a platform to discuss Norwegian whaling, and engage the readers in some deep questioning. After discussing the same arguments in the light of ecological ethics, asking deeper questions about intrinsic value and our relationship with more-than-human nature, will we come to the same conclusions?

**More whales equals less fish for the fishing industry. (Or, is it OK to kill whales so that we can kill even more fish?)**

The first main argument presented in “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” is that the minke whales, by eating large amounts of fish, compete with the human fishing industry. Therefore, whaling is important as it leads to more fish for the fishing industry. This is mentioned numerous times throughout the book. It is for example said that the minke whales’ menu is comprehensive and that they therefore “are real competitors against humans in the use of ocean resources” (Schulz 1993:240, my own translation) and that “The minke whale eats large amounts of fish, the same fish as humans also eat. If the whale population becomes large, humans will not be able to harvest the fish populations to that extent that is necessary and desirable” (Holst 1993:319, my own translation). The book states that whaling itself is not a big industry with high a economical value (Schulz 1993:240), but we have to put economic value on the fish the minke whale consumes (Holst 1993:319), as it constitutes an indirect cost for the Norwegian fishing industry (Longva 1993:115). It is said that the value of the fish the minke whale consumes may be much larger than the value of the whaling itself. “This is one of the central arguments that has been used from the governments side to justify Norwegian whaling” (Longva 1993:115, my own translation).

However, a growing body of research now shows that whales and other marine mammals may have a different role in their ecosystems than previously assumed, as their presence may in fact increase fish populations. This research has been conducted by among others J.J. McCarthy and J. Roman in 2010. They state that while microbes, zooplankton and fish have been given a lot of attention, marine mammals have largely been ignored or dismissed when studying the cycle of nitrogen in coastal waters. Their research found that

marine mammals such as whales can enhance primary productivity in their feeding areas by concentrating nitrogen near the surface through the release of flocculent fecal plumes. It is well known that zooplankton, invertebrates and fish contribute to a downward transport of nutrients (nitrogen, phosphorus and iron) from the euphotic zone (the upper water column, which receives sunlight). Fish and invertebrates through the downward flux of aggregates, feces and vertical migration, and copepods and other zooplankton by producing sinking pellets, respiring and excreting at depth during migration cycles (McCarthy and Roman 2010). This process is called “the biological pump”. It has been presumed that the fecal matter of whales is lost to deep waters, and that they are therefore also contributing to the biological pump. However, several pieces of evidence indicate that most of the nitrogen released by marine mammals actually stays in the euphotic zone, and so they play a different role in nutrient recycling than others in their ecosystem. In contrast to fish and other creatures in these ecosystems, by diving deep and often feeding in deeper waters and releasing nitrogenous compounds that stay in shallow waters, whales “effectively create an upwards pump, enhancing nutrient availability for primary production in locations where whales gather to feed” (McCarthy and Roman 2010). This is called “the whale pump” (see figure 2).

These findings should have important implications for whaling policies, McCarthy and Roman say. As we have seen, an important argument from supporters of whaling, including the Norwegian government, is that minke whales should be hunted to limit their competition with humans for certain species of fish. McCarthy and Roman says that no data have yet been forthcoming to support this logic. On the contrary, marine mammals provide important ecosystem services that most likely increases the fish populations. “In coastal areas, whales retain nutrients locally, increasing ecosystem productivity and perhaps raising the carrying capacity for other marine

consumers, including commercial fish species” (McCarthy and Roman 2010). Thus, an unintended effect of whaling, they say, could be “reduced availability of nitrogen in the euphotic zone and decreased overall productivity” (McCarthy and Roman 2010).

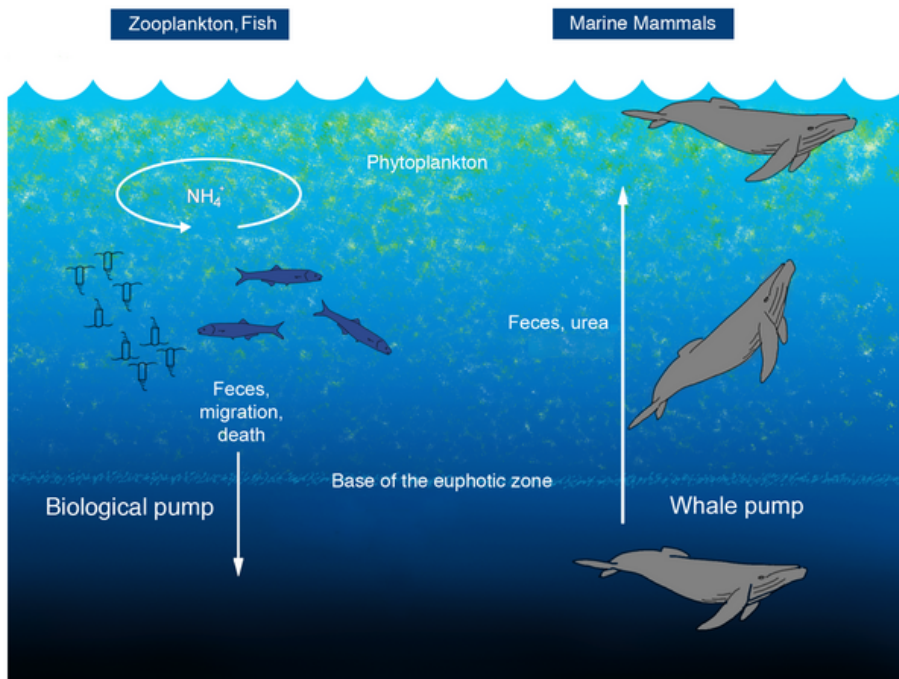


Figure 3: “A Conceptual Model of the Whale Pump” (McCarthy and Roman 2010).

This particular study was, of course, not available when “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” was published. However, already in 1983, ten years before the publication of the book, research with results that pointed in the same direction had been conducted. Kanwisher and Ridgeway noted in 1983 that whales could play an analogous role to upwelling, “lifting nutrients from deep water, and releasing fecal material that tends to disperse rather than sink when it is released” (Kanwisher and Ridgeway in McCarthy and Roman 2010). Even though “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” mentions that it is *assumed* that more whales equals less fish, other alternatives are not presented or discussed,

even though relevant research indicating otherwise had been conducted years earlier. By presenting uncertain facts as public education, not taking into consideration research revealing other results, it certainly seems like a balanced treatment of existing knowledge was not the intention when writing the book. And defenders of whaling still use this argument today.

Even though it seems like one of the main arguments for supporting whaling is no longer legitimate (or at least highly questionable) to use because of scientific results, the argument should also be discussed in the light of ethics, as it is highly anthropocentric - the reason for killing whales is to be able to kill more fish than we already do. This argument shows no moral concern for either the whales or the fish. This brings us back to the discussion about intrinsic value that was dealt with in part one of the thesis, and whether it is morally OK to kill other animals when one has a choice. “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” does bring about the question of whether or not it is morally OK to kill whales, and this will be discussed in further detail below. However, there are no questions about killing fish. The statement in the book saying that “Hardly anyone wants to protect the fish for their own sake. Everyone is interested in as much fish as possible” (Roll-Hansen 1993:286, my own translation) tries to sidestep an ethical discussion about killing fish. However, the discussion of whether it is morally OK to kill whales must also include other animals such as fish, who, like whales and humans, are sentient beings. In “Fiskenes ukjente liv” Bergljot Børresen reviews existing scientific knowledge about the brain capacity of fish, including their learning abilities and different social behaviours. She says that research on the behaviour of fish has convincingly documented that fish have a well-developed social intelligence. For example, the interaction between wrasses and their costumers is viewed as one of the highest developed communication systems between species that we know of (Børresen 2007:93). Børresen explains that the brain of all the fish's descendants on land, including humans', is in principle

inherited from fish as a “package-deal” with the same design (Børresen 2007:11). Further, she states that the whole spectre of “human emotions”, including pain, hunger, appetite, disgust, curiosity, happiness, sorrow, safety, anxiety, anger, hatred, sexuality, intense love and even religious feelings originates from the oldest parts of the human brain – which is the part that is inherited from fish, and which all vertebrates have in common (Børresen 2007:26). Newly conducted research also found that fish can show signs of depression in the way it is experienced by humans. “Salmon who experience stress over time have physiological changes and a behaviour that is not unlike the physiological changes and behaviour found with depressed human beings” (Forskning.no, my own translation). Fish should in no way be let out of the ethical discussion on how to treat other animals. Børresen says that because fish have such a different appearance than humans and are difficult to make personal contact with, they have been largely ignored when discussing their ethical status. For example is it difficult to make eye contact with a fish. “Almost nothing about the fish' appearance and behaviour can be a social trigger for a human. Fish have an extremely low “Bambi factor” and if they swim in herds, the actual amount becomes an additional problem” (Børresen 2007:57, my own translation). However, the fact that fish seem highly different from us does not mean that humans should disclaim a discussion about the ethical consideration of fish – and especially now that we know that there are more similarities between us than many assume. By taking for granted that killing fish is morally OK, the burden of proof here lies with those who wish to give fish moral consideration and therefore do not think that more fish for the human fishing industry is a good argument for continuing whaling.

In addition to taking for granted that it is morally OK to kill fish, the argument about killing whales so that we can kill more fish is similar to the thoughts of Aldo Leopold, before developing the land ethic. As a forester, Leopold viewed himself as a manager of the land, with the view that humans could control it as



they pleased. He started to hunt down wolves as he thought that less wolves meant more deer for humans to hunt - or in his own words “hunter's paradise”. In “Thinking Like a Mountain” Leopold reflects upon these thoughts and describes how he became aware of the interconnectedness of nature, and how humans, in his opinion, should not view themselves outside or above nature, controlling it as they please. As seen in part one of the thesis, an encounter with a dying wolf made him realise that controlling the wolf population like this was not the right thing to do, and after this deep experience he became aware of the destruction this caused the land. “I realized then, and have known ever since, that there was something new to me in those eyes – something only known to her and the mountain (Leopold 1949:1)”. Humans are too occupied with securing their own well-being to pay attention to what is really happening as a consequence. Leopold challenge us to think more like a mountain:

I now suspect that just as a deer herd lives in mortal fear of its wolves, so does a mountain live in mortal fear of its deer. And perhaps with better cause, for while a buck pulled down by wolves can be replaced in two or three years, a range pulled down by too many deer may fail of replacement in as many decades. So also with cows. The cowman who cleans his range of wolves does not realize that he is taking over the wolf's job of trimming the herd to fit the range. He has not learned to think like a mountain. Hence we have dustbowls, and rivers washing the future into the sea (Leopold 1949:2).

“Only the mountain has lived long enough to listen objectively to the howl of a wolf” (Leopold 1949:1). Whales, like wolves, are so-called keystone species in their ecosystems. A keystone species is “A species on which other species in an ecosystem largely depend, such that if it were removed the ecosystem would change drastically” (Oxford Dictionaries). Humans do not yet know how “managing” the minke whale populations affects the rest of the ecosystem, and as we have seen, research revealing that more whales may in fact may lead to more fish - the opposite of what was previously thought - shows that there are things humans do not understand about the interconnectedness of nature. Until we do (if we ever will), should not the precautionary principle be our first priority? Perhaps we should learn to think more like a mountain, or in this case, like the ocean?

**Whaling is not less humane than the way we treat many other animals.  
(Or, is it OK to harm whales because other animals are harmed even worse? Is it right to kill other animals at all?)**

“Vågehvalen - valgets kval” presents several examples of how humans treat other animals worse than they treat minke whales. For example is it mentioned that animals in the modern farming industry live miserable lives compared to whales, who swim free their entire lives. Arguing against whaling while accepting how animals are treated in for example the farming industry is thus illogical. Therefore, the book states, if one still choses to argue against whaling it means that whales must be given a special status among the animals – perhaps even rights? This is however argued against, and it is highlighted numerous times that minke whales are not more special or more intelligent than many other non-human animals. In this way, “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” tries to convince the readers that it is arbitrary to argue against whaling because mistreatment of other animals is approved of. Again a burden of proof is defined, taking for granted that mistreatment of non-human animals, for example those in the farming industry, is morally OK. Instead of discussing why not all animals should be given intrinsic value (which implies that humans have to re-think their treatment of all of them), it is discussed why whales have gotten such a special status and why it is arbitrary to give whales the right to live when other non-human animals do not have this right. One may instead ask: Is it right to kill whales because other animals are treated worse? Should we not rather discuss moral consideration for all animals? And is it right to kill other animals at all?

Arne Kalland presents his concept of “the super whale” in the book. He says that we often talk about *the* whale - the whale is the world's biggest animal, it has the largest brain in the world, it is social and friendly, it sings, it is

threatened to extinction, etc. These are characteristics that belong to different whale species, and to talk about the whale as one “super whale” is thus misleading, he says. Whales are also often perceived as mystical creatures as they live in the ocean and can be viewed as part mammal and part fish, which may reinforce this thought of a “super whale” (Kalland 1993:188). Kalland thinks that this perception of the super whale is probably the reason why there has been such a large focus on the protection of whales compared to the protection of most other animals. Several pages of the book are spent to argue against this super whale view, and to assure the readers that minke whales in fact are not special at all in the animal kingdom. This is among other places illustrated in the chapter about minke whale biology, in a fact box about whales' intelligence:

For most whales, as the minke whale, the brain is not particularly large compared to the size of its body, nor particularly complex. The brain of the blue whale is for example only six times as large as the human brain, while the whale's body is 15 times longer and 750 times heavier than humans'. The whales have in general, and minke whales in particular, a very small brain compared to its body size. It is not necessarily any correlation between intelligence and brain size, neither absolutely nor relatively. The brain size is, relatively speaking, much smaller for whales than for example for rats and mice. Further on, the brain structure itself is not very complex. Closer studies show that the whale brain is rather primitive and simple. Some of the characteristics found in more primitive mammals, like hedgehogs and bats, can also be found in whales. However, we do not find any of the characteristics we find in more advanced mammals, like primates, the group we belong to. What about the claimed large learning abilities of whales? First of all, not all whale species have abilities like these. The minke whale does not. Dolphins have some of these learning abilities, but is probably unique among the whales. Second of all it is also many other animals – for example shepherd dogs, sea lions and parrots – who have the same kind of learning abilities without being ascribed any special higher intelligence for this reason. Whales are also often claimed to be a group with a complex and advanced social system. However, closer studies show that whales as a group do not have any unique social behaviours beyond what we find for example with moose and deer (Lid and Stenseth 1993:43, my own translation).

First of all, to separate the brains of whales and primates (including humans) in this way, saying that no similar characteristics can be found, and to call the whale brain primitive and simple, is misleading. As written earlier, many of the characteristics that often are described as “human characteristics”, like happiness, sorrow, safety, anger, love, etc. are shared by all vertebrates. The

neocortex, which is the largest part of the human brain, was previously believed to be the driving seat for all these “human characteristics” because humans have a very large neocortex. However, scientists have found that these characteristics do not originate from the neocortex, but from the oldest parts of our brain, the part which all vertebrates share. Børresen calls this “the common brain”. What the neocortex does, is that it modifies the feelings that originate in the common brain. Often these feelings are *curbed* by the neocortex. Animals with a large neocortex are therefore able to curb and to control their feelings more than those with a small. Because of this, Børresen says, our common perceptions are turned upside down: The old assumption that a large neocortex equals intense feelings, must be replaced with the fact that the smaller it is, the more intense the feelings experienced may be. It is also worth mentioning that the neocortex is as good as useless without the common brain (Børresen 2007:24-31). Similar characteristics can therefore absolutely be found in all vertebrates, also mice, hedgehogs, parrots and other animals mentioned. Another misleading term used here is “primitive”. Børresen reminds us that the term “primitive” in biology does not mean “simple”, “stupid” or “rough”, even though it often is used to describe these characteristics. Rather, when using the word primitive to describe an animal, it means that this animal has many similarities with *earlier* or *primordial* links in the development chain. An example is the python snake, which is considered as more primitive than other snakes. This is because the remains of a pelvic bone and hind legs can be found in their skeletons, originating from the lizard-like animal all snakes have developed from. This does not mean that pythons are less intelligent than other snakes (Børresen 2007:25). Second of all, yet again a burden of proof is defined by those who only wish to include human beings inside the moral circle: It is taken for granted that because minke whales have the same brain-size ratio as rats and mice – and rats and mice are seen as unintelligent creatures – minke whales are argued as equally unintelligent. Because similar characteristics can be found in the brains of whales and in the brains of hedgehogs and bats – who are also assumed to be

unintelligent - minke whales are argued as equally unintelligent. Because whales do not have any larger learning abilities than shepherd dogs, sea lions or parrots – which is not considered as a great learning capacity - minke whales are argued as equally unimpressive. Because whales do not have a more advanced social system than moose and deer – which is not considered as very sophisticated - minke whales are equally unsophisticated. Because all other living creatures are measured by our particularly *human* style of intelligence, this list of features presents whales as equally *unimpressive* and *unintelligent* as the rest of the animals mentioned, instead of equally *impressive* and *intelligent*. The possibility that there may be other forms of intelligence than our particularly human style of intelligence is not considered. As the saying goes: Everybody is a genius. But if you judge a fish by its ability to climb a tree, it will live its whole life believing that it is stupid. Also, the perceived biological superiority is here taken as a justification for moral consideration, yet another burden of proof defined.

After emphasising that whales should not be perceived as more special or more intelligent than other non-human animals (giving the readers another incentive for not bothering to care about whale protection) “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” makes it clear that the way we treat many other animals is worse than the way we treat the minke whales. Sandøe for example highlights the (human caused) miserable lives of pigs and other animals in the meat industry: “It is worthwhile noting that pigs, cattle and other farmed animals are exposed to a significant amount of stress during transport, that often takes a whole day or half a day, and during handling in the slaughterhouses” (Sandøe 1993:159, my own translation). Sandøe continues by describing the stressful experiences of the animals in the slaughterhouses, including, but not limited to, being placed in large enclosures with strangers. He also mentions that most pigs, as an example, live in enclosures that in very limited ways can give the animals the possibility to unfold themselves freely. In many countries pigs spend most

of their lives in a very small space without the possibility to do other things than to lay down and stand up, Sandøe points out (Sandøe 1993:159). He also mentions hunting on land to illustrate another group of animals who are treated worse by humans than the whales. He says that a large percentage of the animals do not die momentarily when they are shot - a much larger percentage than in whaling. Many of the animals are harmed but not killed by the shots, he says, and they often run off never to be found. "Many of those will experience a slow and agonising death" (Sandøe 1993:160, my own translation).

Further, Sandøe describes the unequal treatment of different species of animals as if it was a matter of course. For example, he says that because chimpanzees are more "highly developed" than other non-human animals, chimpanzees used for vivisection sometimes get a special treatment when they are no longer needed in the laboratories – they get a good "retirement". He describes how a research institute in USA has created a pension fund for their chimpanzees, securing that their last years will be good ones. For example are some placed on islands uninhabited by humans, where they are fed regularly and where they can live until they die of natural causes. Animals belonging to other, "less developed", species such as mice, rats and rabbits however, are killed when they are no longer of any use to us in the laboratories (Sandøe 1993:158). Here Sandøe defines a burden of proof, by taking for granted that different species of animals should be given a different amount of moral consideration, and again, that all ought to be judged in comparison with the most "highly evolved" among them - ourselves. He does not question why it is OK to treat for example chimpanzees and mice in such different ways, nor does he question whether it is morally OK to use both what according to him are lower and higher developed non-human animals for vivisection at all.

Another burden of proof is defined by Sandøe when stating that there is nothing that indicates that whales are higher developed than for example pigs and cattle, so if one wishes to include whales in the moral circle, then one has to include several other species as well. Some do, he says, like Singer and Regan who are vegetarians. But after stating this, he ends the discussion. Thus, he takes for granted that all animals cannot be included in the moral circle and that vegetarianism is not an option for most people, by not bothering to discuss it any further. He is not asking any deeper questions, but concludes that because pigs and cattle are as intelligent (or perhaps in his words as little intelligent) as whales, and because most people do not view pigs and cattle as morally considerable, then whales cannot be morally considerable either. And because most people accept that pigs and cattle are treated badly, it must be accepted that whales are treated badly as well. In addition, as stated earlier, pigs and cattle are treated *worse*, he says. Instead of arguing who suffer the most – whales or pigs? - one can discuss whether it is morally ok to harm any of them at all. Why are pigs and cattle not morally considerable? When one starts asking deeper questions like these, the fact that other animals are treated worse than the minke whales becomes an arbitrary argument. It is also worth mentioning that there will always be others who are treated worse, also when speaking of humans. Should we for example accept poverty in Norway because the situation of poverty is worse in other parts of the world? Should we not strive for as little poverty as possible? Sandøe's argument can be compared to accepting poverty in Norway for the reason that poverty is worse other places – but without a call to discuss the ethical implications of and how one could better the situation of poverty in these other places. Whaling is OK because other animals are treated worse – but he does not challenge us to discuss the ethical implications of treating pigs badly in the farms or mice badly in the laboratories.

Even though Sandøe sidesteps an ethical discussion about the rights of the animals he mentions in his examples, like pigs and cattle, he *does* in fact discuss whale rights. This is one of the few places in the book where ecological ethics is used consciously when discussing, and whether whales should be assigned rights, like humans, is the main issue discussed regarding ethics in “Vågehvalen – valgets kval”. As we saw in part one, Tom Regan defines animal rights as “the prima facie right of individuals not to be harmed, and thus the prima facie right of individuals not to be killed” (Regan 2003:71). The main argument for defenders of whale rights, Sandøe says, is that whales are in many ways like humans and should therefore in the same way be given the right to a good life as well as the right to life itself. Whaling is of course not consistent with these potential rights, and must therefore be stopped. Sandøe says that when considering this argument, supporters of whaling have to find a relevant difference between humans and whales that explains why it is morally OK to take the life from whales but not from humans. What then, can this difference be? Sandøe presents different arguments:

A difference in intelligence is one of these arguments, and as we have seen, throughout the book it is highlighted several times that whales are significantly less intelligent than humans. Sentences like “(...) whether whales – as the intelligent creatures they (wrongly) are claimed to be (...)” (Stenseth 1993:325, my own translation) can be found, as well as quotation marks around the word intelligent when speaking of whale intelligence. “(...) myths about the whales' “intelligence” (...)” (Hoel et al. 1993C:146, my own translation). It is said that most whales, like the minke whales, do neither have a particularly large brain relative to their size nor a particularly complex one, but rather a quite primitive and simple brain (Lid and Stenseth 1993:43). And when speaking about whale communication, the word communication is also put in quotation marks as it cannot compare with the complexity of human communication (Lid and Stenseth 1993:41). Still, Sandøe says, even though



whales are not as intelligent as humans, this may not be a relevant argument for not giving whales any rights. He asks what this argument will imply for human infants, mentally impaired persons, etc., as they may be less “intelligent” than most whales. Should they not have any rights, then? Unless one agrees that they should not have rights, the intelligence argument is irrelevant for arguing that whales should not have rights.

Another argument is that those who have rights must also have duties. No duties, no rights. Again, the same group of people as discussed in the last argument come into focus. Infants or mentally impaired persons do not have duties in the same way as other people. This does not mean that we do not think they should have any rights. In fact, Sandøe emphasises, many think that this group of people should be given even more ethical considerations and protection than others (Sandøe 1993:155). Why should this not include whales and others who do not have duties? In fact, many ethicists accept a distinction between moral *agents* and moral *patients*. Moral patients are beings whom we consider that we owe ethical obligations, and moral agents are beings who are held morally responsible for their actions. All moral agents are moral patients, but not all moral patients are moral agents (Light and Rolston III 2003:6). The most common example of moral patients who are not moral agents, Light and Rolston III says, are human infants and mentally impaired persons. “For example, we respect their rights as humans against torture (and codify this in law), even though we do not worry about how they exercise their rights or behave responsibly” (Light and Rolston III 2003:6). The argument saying that whales do not having duties is thus irrelevant as an explanation for why they are not given rights.

Yet another argument is that humans have a mutual interest in cooperating, and that human rights and mutual respect between humans acts as a kind of

safety net for trusting others to do their part of the cooperation and respect you back. People respect others so that they in turn are respected by those others. If we transfer this argument, it means that we do not need to be respected by whales, so we do not have to respect them. This is an egoistic argument Sandøe says, and it still entails that a group of people - those whose cooperation and respect we can manage without - is left outside. "Those who think that other people are entitled moral consideration even though this does not serve their egoistic interests, cannot accept this reason for not giving rights to whales" (Sandøe 1993:156-157, my own translation).

After discussing these arguments, Sandøe says that it is difficult to come to the conclusion that whales have no rights at all. However, he argues, most people will probably think that this discussion is rather black and white. Is it really a question between the right to live and not any rights at all? "To give whales the same rights as humans is taking it too far. On the other hand, it cannot be accepted that whales are inflicted with unnecessary suffering" (Sandøe 1993:157, my own translation). But is it possible to argue for a middle-statement, where whales to a certain extent have the right not to be inflicted with unnecessary suffering but do not have the right to live, like humans? Yes, Sandøe argues. Whales and humans have some things in common, for example the ability to suffer, which makes unnecessary harming of whales morally wrong, but there are also some main differences that makes killing them morally OK, he says. He claims for example that whales do not plan for the future and that they are not self-conscious. Even if these claims were true (which in light of scientific research among other places illustrated in the Cambridge Declaration of Consciousness is at least highly doubtful), there are still human beings without these capacities, and Sandøe once again compares their right to live with whales' right to live. What about people who cannot plan for the future or those who are not self-conscious? Do not heavily mentally impaired people or those who have very limited time left of their

lives have the right to live? They do, Sandøe says. However, this time he does not defend the whales right to the same moral consideration as this group of human beings. He acknowledges that the arguments saying that every human being has the right to live, not just those with a higher “intelligence”, the ability to plan for the future, those whose mutual respect we can manage without etc., may seem inadequate for many, as long as whales are not assigned the same right to live. “The way I see it, this is the price one has to pay for getting an intellectual satisfactory answer to what the relevant ethical difference between whales and humans is” (Sandøe 1993:157, my own translation). Thus, even though Sandøe claimed so, it does not seem like one can argue for a middle-statement like this from an ethical perspective. Sandøe obviously did not succeed in this task doing so, as he acknowledged that an insufficient answer “is the price one has to pay” to argue that is not morally OK to unnecessarily harm whales, but it is OK to take their lives. One might ask who has a legitimisation problem now?

This is another example where a burden of proof is defined. Sandøe has already decided, before his discussion even started, that there *is* an ethical difference between humans and whales. However, Sandøe might have a point that there is a relevant difference between harming and killing. He is not alone among ethicists when claiming this. Peter Singer, even though advocating for veganism and thus opposing both the harming and killing of animals, emphasises that there in fact *is* a difference between harming someone and taking their life. His reasons for why it is morally wrong to unnecessarily harm whales or other non-human animals are similar to Sandøe's: there are no relevant differences between humans and other sentient animals that makes it OK to harm them, just as it is not morally OK to harm human beings who for various reasons are “less intelligent”, who cannot plan for the future, who are not self-aware, etc. However, Singer says, “the wrongness of killing a being is more complicated” (Singer 2009:17). He says that while self-awareness, the

capacity to think ahead, to have hopes and aspirations for the future, to have meaningful relations with others and so on are not relevant to the question of inflicting pain (“since pain is pain, whatever other capacities, beyond the capacity to feel pain”), these capacities are relevant to the question of taking a life (Singer 2009:20). “It is not arbitrary to hold that the life of a self-aware being, capable of abstract thought, of planning for the future, of complex acts of communication, and so on, is more valuable than the life of a being without these capacities” (Singer 2009:20). To illustrate this difference between inflicting pain and taking life, he asks us to consider how we would choose within our own species. If we had to choose between taking the life of an intellectually disabled person, who did not have the capacities mentioned above, and a “normal” human being, most people would choose to take the life of the former. However, if the question was pain, and one could only prevent pain from being inflicted to one of them, it is not so clear which one we would spare this pain. “The evil of pain is, in itself, unaffected by the other characteristics of the being who feels the pain; the value of life is affected by these other characteristics” (Singer 2009:20-21). But as mentioned in part one of the thesis, for Singer this does not mean that a human life always is valued higher than other animals' lives, as for example a healthy dog may have more of the mentioned characteristics than a heavily mentally impaired human. However, it is worth noting that his main point after discussing this is that this ethical discussion is only relevant if one *must* choose between two lives. If both the mentally impaired and the “normal” human can live, is this not the best solution? If both the mentally impaired human and the healthy dog can live, is this not the best solution? And if both the whale and the whaler can live, is this not the best solution? There are in fact very few situations in which one actually has to choose between lives like this. In Norway it is not the whale's lives or the lives of the whalers or the human consumers of whale meat. All can live. Sandøe's argument saying that there is an ethically relevant difference between inflicting unnecessary pain and taking lives is thus quite different from Singer's argument stating the same, as Sandøe does not take

into account that taking lives is only morally OK if one *has to* choose. For this reason Sandøe's argument that there is an ethically relevant difference between unnecessary infliction of pain and killing is not relevant in the discussion of Norwegian whaling, according to Singer, as one does not have to choose. In his ethics chapter Sandøe also failed to explain why it is morally OK to take the life from a healthy whale and not a human being who is not self-conscious or able to plan for the future. As discussed in part one, according to Singer those in possession of capacities like these must always be chosen over those without, no matter what species they belong to. That is, if one *has to* choose.

Further on, one can discuss what “unnecessary harm” means. Sandøe's conclusion that it is not morally OK to cause a whale unnecessary pain is in fact embodied in Norwegian law. The Animal Welfare Act (§ 3 General requirement regarding the treatment of animals) states that “Animals have an intrinsic value which is irrespective of the usable value they may have for man. Animals shall be treated well and be protected from danger of unnecessary stress and strains” (Animal Welfare Act). One needs not discuss the term intrinsic value any further to come to the conclusion that this has very little meaning in practice. Millions of animals are exploited, mistreated and killed each year in Norway for vivisection, entertainment, for their meat, eggs, milk, wool, fur, or for other purposes, exclusively because humans desire these products. “Intrinsic value” are little more than words on paper. But what does it imply that whales and other non-human animals have a right not to be caused *unnecessary* harm? In whaling, we know that with today's killing methods, the average time it takes a minke whale to die after being shot is (assumed to be) two minutes. These are two minutes of intense pain. 10% of the whales shot suffers for more than ten minutes before they die. When Sandøe wrote his chapter in “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” in 1993 the average time was even longer, as the harpoon grenade used today came into use in the year 2000. In addition one can ask: Is killing not a harm? And is harming

necessarily worse than killing? For instance, killing another human is seen as a more serious crime than causing another human pain. Why is this different regarding non-human animals? And is killing whales really *necessary*? Is it necessary to kill other animals at all? “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” states that humans actually *have to kill*, and that there is no other choice if we wish to live:

We humans need to kill other species – plants or other animals. They constitute our food. We must therefore take lives. In our culture that does not mean that we can kill other humans - no matter how mentally or physically challenged they may be. But we can kill all other species, unless it puts the future existence of the species in danger (Stenseth 1993:329, my own translation).

As Curry emphasises, “an ecological ethics does not demand starvation” (Curry 2011:86). However, he makes it clear that “when pure survival is not the issue, nothing absolves individuals and communities of the ethical responsibility, when choice is still possible, to choose less rather than more destructive means” and when mass cruelty, highly sentient animals and endangered species are involved, “the killers must first be stopped” (Curry 2011:83). Humans must kill, yes, but they do not have to kill sentient beings for food. Also, by eating animal products more plants are killed than by eating plant based food because the animals must be fed (often large amounts of) plants to produce meat, milk, and eggs. The book mentions the word vegetarianism a couple of times, but without any further discussion. Sandøe does not question this cultural “given” that it is OK to kill other sentient animals. Curry on the other hand does, and in his discussion about eating other animals he came to the conclusion that “Without any doubt, it [veganism] is the ethically most irreproachable position in relation to food and thence the major impact of humanity on other animals” (Curry 2011:89). Curry's statement will not be discussed any further here, but it is an important point to make that what Curry “without any doubt” sees as the most ethical solution is not even discussed as a serious option by Sandøe. This shows that the topic of food needs to be discussed in more detail, and as minke whales are being killed for their meat, it should be a central part of the whaling debate.

By emphasising that minke whales are not more intelligent or more special than many other animals, that many other animals are in fact treated worse by humans than the whales, and that humans *have to kill* other species, the authors of “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” tries to sidestep an ethical discussion about the intrinsic value of whales. However, when one *does* ask deeper questions about the intrinsic value of whales and other non-humans, the argument that whaling is OK because other animals are treated worse than whales becomes arbitrary. Not even Sandøe could find a relevant ethical difference between humans and whales explaining why it is morally OK to kill whales but not certain groups of human beings. And why does it matter that other animals are treated worse? Should we not strive for as little mistreatment as possible? This argument is also arbitrary if one does not agree that treating a human being bad is OK because other human beings are treated worse.

**As long as we manage the “resource” whale sustainably, we can continue whaling. (Or, is it OK to harm minke whales because they do not belong to an endangered species? Is it OK to describe whales as resources?)**

If you could ask the respectfully and sustainably hunted animal whether it minded being killed, it would almost certainly say, 'Yes!' (Curry 2011:86-87).

The third and final main argument for catching minke whales in “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” that will be discussed is that, because the minke whale is not an endangered species and that strict hunting quotas are set, whaling is a sustainable way of managing our resources. A lot of pages are spent on explaining how the counting of the North-East Atlantic minke whale population was conducted and it is ensured that the population today is large enough to continue whaling, without any risk of threatening it. If the minke whale was a threatened species of whale, hunting it would not be an option

and Norwegian commercial whaling would not exist today. As Stenseth writes, “(...) we can kill all other species, unless it puts the future existence of the species in danger” (Stenseth 1993:329, my own translation). As seen when discussing the argument about fish, humans do not yet know enough about the ocean as an ecosystem to with certainty say that the Norwegian whaling is sustainable or how it might affect the ecosystem. However, the argument stating that whales and other more-than-human nature are “our resources”, as the book does with whales, fish and other non-human animals - both entire species and the individuals they consist of - as well as the sea as an ecosystem, also need a thorough ethical discussion, as it is highly anthropocentric. By “our” it is clearly meant us humans, not us animals, or us earthlings. However it is not seen as morally OK to drive a species to extinction. Does this focus on protecting the minke whale as a species mean that the authors of the book are moving towards a more ecocentric position after all?

Throughout the book the minke whale is primarily described as a resource. “The minke whale is a common resource in the sense that no single person, group of persons, country or group of countries have exclusive rights to exploit them (Hoel et al. 1993A:17, my own translation). This sentence initiates the preface of the book. On the first page of the introduction chapter, the word resource is mentioned as many as 13 times. On this page it is for example stated that “whales are natural resources that travels over vast areas” (Hoel and Stenseth 1993:19). The chapter “About Non-Consuming Use-Value of Whale Populations” highlights that the whales should be perceived mainly as a resource. The author, Leif Longva, presents some of the different ways in which whales can be used by humans, by creating different categories of use-value. First, he makes a distinction between use-value and non-use-value. His interpretation of non-use-value will be discussed in more detail later. The category use-value is divided into three categories: consuming use-value, indirect use-value and non-consuming use-value. Whaling is the best example



of consuming use-value. Whale products, today mainly the meat, are directly consumed by humans. Examples of indirect use-value of whales can be listening to records with sound recordings of whales, or watching documentaries about them on television. Whales can also be used indirectly as a sales promoting object, for example as a symbol in a logo. Longva also mentions that the way minke whales eat make them an object of (a negative) indirect use-value, as they eat species of fish that are of direct use-value for humans. Non-consuming use-value of whales can be whale watching, swimming with dolphins, watching shows at aquariums, etc. Longva discusses whale watching in more detail: “Whale watching gives people the opportunity to observe whales who swim free in the ocean. However, not all whale species are exciting to look at. The minke whale is *not* suitable as an object for whale watching” (Longva 1993:108, my own translation). Longva says that the minke whale is relatively small, and it is not as playful near the surface as some of the other whale species. After stating this, he uses the humpback whale as a contrast to describe what a spectacular experience whale watching can be. He highlights, among other things, its huge size and long pectoral fins, its playfulness near the surface, its sense of curiosity, as well as its “goodbye-wave” to the audience when it waves its tail, making the final dive before it disappears. The main attraction for whale watching in Norway (mainly conducted from Andøya in Nordland) is sperm whales as well as killer whales who are sighted often. Fin whales, blue whales and humpback whales may also be spotted if one is lucky. “Minke whales are not a rare sight, but they are like mentioned earlier not very audience friendly” (Longva 1993:109, my own translation). Thus, according to Longva, the non-consuming use-value of whales found in whale watching does not include minke whales, and this non-consuming use-value of minke whales cannot compete with the use-value whaling. Others have a rather different opinion: Hoelzen and Stern says that in Iceland and in the Hebrides in Scotland, minke whales are the main event for whale watchers. In these areas minke whales are relatively abundant, and the whale watching boats therefore have a good chance at finding them. “Minkes

seem to be naturally curious, and will often approach a boat for a look, and may even bow-ride. (...) they sometimes approach and remain with a boat for hours, gently rolling and hovering just below the surface” (Hoelzen and Stern 2000:37). At the end of his chapter about use-value, Longva presents yet another way in which whales can be used by humans. He says that there exists a certain demand for memberships in or the ability to donate money to organisations to make us feel better about ourselves, for example organisations who work for the protection of whales and an end to whaling. Research shows that being a member of organisations like these gives us a “warm and nice feeling”, Longva says. Whaling thus creates the possibility for joining an organisation like this, an action that gives a warm and nice feeling for those who buy it. “In other words, a moderate whaling may be better than no whaling for supporters as well as opponents!” (Longva 1993:123, my own translation). It would be interesting to see this argument being used for advocating for more pollution or more hunger. Is the warm and nice feeling a membership or a donation to for example UNICEF gives really more important for those who donate, than the cause they are donating to? Should we *not* aim to eradicate world hunger or stop the deforestation of the Amazon because being able to donate to organisations working for these causes is of more value to us? However, the most important discussion here is not whether minke whales are boring to look at or not or whether donating money to a whale protecting organisation is of more value to us than ending whaling. Rather, the discussion should be focused on why there is a need for them to have some kind of use-value for humans to be valued at all - whether this additional burden of proof ought to be accepted or not.

As we have seen, it is taken for granted that it is *not* morally OK to hunt a species to extinction. Does this mean that the authors are moving away from their anthropocentric standpoint after all? As discussed in part one of the thesis, there is a discussion within ecological ethics whether individuals, species or ecosystems should be given priority when it comes to moral

consideration. Do the authors of “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” advocate for species as most important when it comes to moral consideration? “An advocate for this version of an environmental ethic could argue that the rare and endangered species ought to be preserved because natural species are the primary recipients of moral obligation” (Katz 2003:88). But to consider species as the primary object of moral concern is difficult to defend. What kind of arguments can this be based on? It does not ensure the well-being of individuals nor does it provide direct reasons for protecting ecosystems or the natural objects who form their material structure (Katz 2003:88). Katz states that this view is basically incompatible with animal liberation, because when the well-being and survival of species is the primary moral concern, the pain or death of an individual member of that species is of secondary importance. “It may be necessary, for example, to manage or “harvest” an animal species that is overpopulating an area and threatening its own food supply” (Katz 2003:88). Neither does protection of species automatically lead to the protection of ecosystems. What about species who only exist in captivity? Or those who have so few individuals left that they no longer have any relevant function in their ecosystems? What are the incentives for protecting those species? Joel Feinberg discounts species entirely as the proper object of direct moral concern. “A whole collection, as such, cannot have beliefs, expectations, wants, or desires... Individual elephants can have interests, but the species elephant cannot” (Feinberg in Katz 2003:88). Katz does not discount the view entirely as Feinberg does, but he does find it difficult to argue for it. “In itself, a species-based environmental ethic seems to be an uneasy, groundless compromise between the broad view that the natural community is the environmentally appropriate moral object and the narrow view that natural individuals are themselves the bearers of moral worth” (Katz 2003:89). It seems difficult to find relevant arguments for valuing a species more than the individuals it consists of or the ecosystem it is a part of. However, it does not seem like the authors of the book advocate for this kind of intrinsic value of species. In the same way the authors describe the

individual whales and the ecosystem they live in as human's resources, their incentive for protecting the species minke whale also seems to be anthropocentric: “If the pelagic whaling in its time had driven for example the bowhead whale extinct, many or most people would consider this a loss. This would be a loss of current as well as future use of this resource” (Longva 1993:118, my own translation). In addition, he says, one could feel a loss of well-being by the thought that such a huge and beautiful animal was gone forever and by the thought that the diversity of nature had been reduced” (Longva 1993:118). We must manage the whales sustainably, “so that whale can be an eternal renewable resource” (Schweder 1993:291). The reason for protecting the species is thus that this ensures further use of it as a resource and that humans may feel a loss of well-being by the thought of a whale species as extinct. As Myers puts it: “If species can prove their worth through their contributions to agriculture, technology, and other down-to-earth activities, they can stake a strong claim to survival space in a crowded world” (Myers in Gorke 2003:137). The continued and widespread focus on sustainable whaling and the incentives for protecting the minke whale as a species are thus anthropocentric. Sandøe confirms that “The modern discussion about whaling is based on the view that the whale is a resource that can be exploited by humans” (Sandøe 1993:161, my own translation). This implies that the discussion starts from the presumption that minke whales are resources and do not have intrinsic value – it defines a burden of proof.

However, both Longva and Sandøe are aware that there is a discussion of whether intrinsic value can be found in more-than-human nature, and this *is* in fact discussed briefly in “Vågehvalen – valgets kval”. Together with the discussion about whale rights, Longva's and Sandøe's brief discussions about intrinsic value in more-than-human nature are the only places in the book where ecological ethics is consciously used to frame an argument. Although, Longva's piece about non-use-value can be argued to not really be a

discussion. He describes what intrinsic value is, and mentions Singer. He also tries to make a case against the intrinsic value of other animals by quoting Næss, saying that Næss argues that those who are closer to us are more important than those who are not: “To prioritise the creatures who are close to us, is as far as I can understand, the only or the best reason to prioritise help to humans and cultures in need before help to animals. It is also a reason for killing animals and in other ways place them “last in line” (Næss in Longva 1993:119, my own translation). First of all, Næss did only say that it is OK to prioritise humans over other animals when these humans are *in need*. Are the whalers and the consumers of whale meat in Norway really in need? Second of all, this was Longva's only argument. He states that this is a philosophically interesting debate, but does not investigate it any further. Sandøe discusses intrinsic value in nature in more detail than Longva, but still not thoroughly. And it seems as though he, as Longva, has already decided what the answer will be before starting the discussion. He starts by saying that there are some who argue that there is intrinsic value in all of nature. “This is a tempting way of thinking” Sandøe continues, but he highlights what he describes as some main flaws in this view. First of all, he says that it is possible to argue for moral consideration of non-human animals, but not further like Singer and Regan do. Non-conscious natural entities have no interests, he states. As seen in part one, far from everyone agrees with this statement, and therefore it is problematic to state it straightforwardly as a fact. However Sandøe does not discuss this any further. It has also been made clear by now that he is not an advocate for the intrinsic value of conscious animals, so this statement does not make a strong case. Further he states that an ethic giving intrinsic value to all of nature is so comprehensive that it becomes futile. If everything in nature has intrinsic value, then how can we live without doing anything that is morally wrong? We cannot harvest grains or take medicine when having an infection. How should we prioritise? He says that those arguing for a such a view say that if one has to prioritise, then original species must come first. Whales, for example, have been present on Earth longer than human beings,

and so therefore whales should be prioritised over humans. This is not a strong argument, Sandøe says, as species continually evolve and also because of the fact that many species are older than whales, for example xiphosuras. Does this mean that xiphosuras should be given more moral concern than whales? “All opponents of whaling would presumably answer no to this question” (Sandøe 1993:163-164, my own translation). This is the only alternative to prioritising he mentions. As we have seen in part one, there are a lot of suggestions as to how one could prioritise and live in accordance with an ecocentric ethics. Katz, for example, came to the conclusion that ecosystems should be the top priority, but that individuals also are of great importance, and should only give way for the greater good of the ecosystem if really necessary. Næss speaks of vital needs, and both harvesting grains (to eat) and taking medicine to alleviate sickness are to cover vital needs. Moral pluralism could also be a solution for Sandøe. As seen in part one, the goal for those who support moral pluralism is not to forward and defend a single overarching ethical principle, but to use the different principles of ecological ethics to discuss the best solutions for different situations. It is also important to emphasise that ecological ethics is not meant to replace traditional human-centred ethics, which, Curry says, “has a legitimate and important role in intra-human relationships. The point is, rather, that adding something new will enable an ethical behaviour that a more anthropocentric ethic cannot, on its own, accomplish” (Curry 2011:7). Sandøe has concluded that giving all of nature intrinsic value is impossible, without even discussing the views of different ecological ethicists. If Sandøe had used the field of ecological ethics as a platform for his discussion, familiarising himself with some of the different views, for example those presented in part one of this thesis (which, as I have mentioned before, do represent a good *overview* of the field, but are far from exhaustive) perhaps he would have come up with a different conclusion?

Although failing in their attempt to make a case against both whale rights and against the intrinsic value of more-than-human nature, the authors of “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” are not open to consider the minke whale as anything other than a human resource. The reasons for the continued focus on sustainable whaling and not threatening the species are all anthropocentric. As seen in part one of the thesis, Næss argues that no natural object or life-form must be conceived solely as a resource. He says that we should ask ourselves *why* we use resources and whether or not we need this particular resource to live meaningful lives. He also emphasises that humans may not be the only ones who desire this resource. Are we the ones who need it the most? Næss argues that there are two different profound views or attitudes towards whaling. The first is that humans have no right to bring other species to extinction, but they do have a right to kill other living beings as long as a risk of extinction is not a threat. When extinction is not a threat, and it is commercially favourable to “harvest”, this is a good enough reason to do so. It can even be seen as a political duty, to create jobs. This is clearly the view of the authors of “Vågehvalen – valets kval” and most others who are pro-whaling. The second view is that humans do not have the right to decrease the richness and diversity of live forms, except to satisfy vital needs. Every living being has intrinsic value, a value independent of its use-value for humans (Næss 1992:1). “I am against whaling, not because extinction is a possibility, nor because the whale has a unique position among mammals” (Næss 1992:3, my own translation). To find reasons for being against whaling, he challenges us to think through, once more, our profound view on the nature/human relationship (Næss 1992:3).

## **A legitimisation problem?**

“Vågehvalen – valgets kval” argues that those who use ecological ethics as an arena to negotiate different arguments against whaling have a legitimisation problem (Sandøe 1993:151). However, as we saw in his discussion about whale rights, Sandøe himself was the one who ended up with a legitimisation problem, as he came to the conclusion that an insufficient answer is “the price one has to pay” to continue defending that killing minke whales is ethically right. In the introduction of his ethics chapter it is not only mentioned that those who use ecological ethics to argue against whaling have a legitimisation problem, but it is also stated that including a chapter about ethics in the book was something the editors did to avoid critique, not because they saw it as important. Because those against whaling often use ethical arguments, they say, the defenders of whaling need to answer. “If the defenders of whaling do not try to answer the ethical arguments, they may soon appear as though they do not care at all about what is right” (Sandøe 1993:151, my own translation). Hence, the reason for the editors of the book to include a chapter about ethics was not because it was of any real importance to them. It seems to me, therefore, that the claimed legitimisation problem does not lie with those who argue for the intrinsic value of whales (when using ecological ethics consciously), because Sandøe, in fact, accepted that his answer was insufficient. However, according to Sandøe, the problem lies with those who argue that ecological ethics should be an important part of the debate in the first place. The remaining question is then: Why are those who think that ecological ethics should be an important part of the debate when discussing issues regarding more-than-human nature, and consciously use ecological ethics as a platform when arguing, considered to have a legitimisation problem?



First it is worth mentioning that those who argue for whaling, including the authors of “Vågehvalen – valgets kval”, themselves are using ethics when they discuss. As Curry simply puts it: “relationships between subjects entail ethics” (Curry 2011:3). Their arguments are therefore not “unethical” in the sense that ethics is missing. On the contrary, they are situated with a particular kind of ethics that according to Curry is not only “ecologically pathological” but also largely unconscious (Curry 2011:11). Perhaps the editors of the book and others mentioned in the thesis, like Borten Moe, are not aware that they themselves represent certain kinds of ethical views when they present their arguments, while at the same time not accepting other arguments based on ethics? The discussion about whaling is a discussion about the relationships between humans and minke whales, which also affects fish and other animals and plants, as well as species and ecosystems – and relationships between subjects entail ethics. For this reason, it might not be the case that those who argue for continuing whaling in this debate do not use ethics in their arguments, but perhaps they are not be aware of it. They might use it unconsciously, as Curry said. For example, by describing the dive of a humpback whale as a “goodbye-wave”, the book itself gives “human characteristics” to other animals, while at the same time critiquing those who oppose whaling when doing the same. It is also worth remembering that anthropocentrism is an ethical view. All people represent certain ethical views when discussing, also anthropocentric and “objective” scientists. Joseph R. Des Jardins emphasises that when leaving environmental decisions to “experts” in science and technology this does not mean that the descisions made will be objective or value neutral. “It means only that the values and philosophical assumptions that do decide the issue will be those that these experts hold” (Des Jardins in Curry 2011:10). So when their own arguments represent certain ethical views, how come they refrain from using the term ecological ethics consciously and to encourage people to use it as a platform to discuss whaling? Why do they make fun of those who consciously use

ecological ethics when arguing against whaling and state that they have a legitimisation problem and use feelings instead of knowledge?

In her chapter “Out of the Straitjacket” Børresen writes about how the focus on “objectiveness” and the fear of giving into feelings causes problems when researching for example the behaviour of non-human animals. The problem is, she says, that the researchers distance themselves so far from those who are researched that it blocks their ability to perceive reality. When scientists view themselves as “objective”, rational and unaffected by their feelings, the emotional distance to the animal studied will make them as good as blind. Most of the behaviours and attributes of the animals are often overlooked under these circumstances (Børresen 2007:49). To distance themselves from their subjects of research scientists have for example adapted the habit of using numbers instead of names for the animals, and to speak of “it” instead of her or him (Børresen 2007:52). To clearly separate between the human researcher and the non-human animal studied has been the norm in scientific research, Børresen says. She calls this “the taboo of anthropomorphism” (Børresen 2007:54). However, she continues, this taboo has finally started to disappear. She quotes a scientist who for a long time experienced this “fear” of anthropomorphism when studying birds:

Because I earlier had accepted the official scientific view that birds are robots controlled by instincts, I was terrified when I realised that this official taboo against anthropomorphism had blocked me and practically all other scientists against perceiving the reality, and hence our closest neighbours, the birds', intelligent nature (Barber in Børresen 2007:54, my own translation).

Børresen highlights the importance of so-called “theocentric research”, as opposed to anthropocentric research. Anthropocentric researchers are people who in their fear of anthropomorphism demand that the non-human animals they study must show mimicry, language, behaviour and problem solving that is entirely like humans', if they are to be accepted as more than robots. As a contrast, a researcher who tries to perceive the world from the point of view of

the animals studied can be called a theocentric researcher. This has nothing to do with sentimentality, Børresen emphasises. Rather, it is based on knowledge of the animal species' unique sensing and moving capacities, its development history, and what we already know about animal behaviour, motives and intelligence (Børresen 2007:55). A good example to illustrate how this focus on objectiveness and fear of anthropomorphism has weakened research is the study of sexual behaviour of female rats. The common research method for hundred years had been to put a female rat in a cage, letting one or more male rats into the cage and then observe the behaviour. When one male is let in, the female tilts up her tail and signal herself as ready for mating. If two or more males are let into the cage, a little or a lot of fighting may occur before she signals herself as ready for one of them, or perhaps even two of them. The more males let into the cage, the more “behaviour” the scientists can describe. In addition, they can castrate, give hormones or otherwise influence their brains which may make their behaviour different. Because of these results, the sexual behaviour of female rats has for a long time been considered as a simple affair. However, this view changed when a female researcher experienced empathy with the female rat and asked herself: perhaps a female rat under natural conditions, not in a small cage like this, do not just behave as a passive recipient and a “mating machine”? A miniature “rat world” was built, with several square meters of rocks, straws, pathways and hiding places. After making herself familiar in her new world, she greeted the first male she was introduced to with a playful attitude, jumping and running around. The male had to follow her into her territory and then make himself presentable. Suddenly the female rat had a large variety of “behaviour” to show the researchers. She mated with some of the males she was introduced to, but not all of them. Some of them were even chased away, and it was discovered that rats are selective when they choose a father for their children. This revealed that what the scientists had been studying for hundred years was not the sexual behaviour of female rats, but the behaviour of female rats getting raped (Børresen 2007:50). The scientifically correct result was uncovered because a

scientist gave into her feelings, and tried to perceive the world from the view of the rats.

Børresen argues that human beings are probably the only animal with the ability to empathise with and have an understanding for what it is like to be another species. “This means that those who hold tight onto the old anthropocentric standpoint are blocking themselves from developing what perhaps is the only thing that is special about humans” (Børresen 2007:56, my own translation). To move from an anthropocentric to a theocentric attitude, and to allow room for feelings and ecological ethics is not only important when conducting research, but also when discussing issues about more-than-human nature. As Stephen Jay Gould emphasises: “we cannot win this battle to save species and environments without forging an emotional bond between ourselves and nature as well – for we will not fight to save what we do not love” (Gould in Curry 2011:5). Why this negative focus on arguments based on feelings? In the book “Ecology, community and lifestyle – outline of an ecosophy” Arne Næss defends the importance of feelings, and emphasises how important our subjective experiences are. He addresses the problems of ontology - “what there is” - and challenges the contemporary “near monopoly of the co-called scientific world view” (Næss 1989:35). He makes an attempt to “defend our spontaneous, rich, seemingly contradictory experience of nature as more than subjective impressions”, as “They make up the concrete contents of our world” (Næss 1989:35). David Rothenberg, introducing this edition of Næss' book, emphasises that intuitions and emotional views like these are an integral component of objective reality and that they therefore deserves serious consideration in debates (Rothenberg in Næss 1989:14), and that “the feelings of oneness which we can learn to feel in/with nature actually exists in nature, and are as real as any quantifiable environment that can be the subject to cost-benefit analysis” (Rothenberg in Næss 1989:20). As Næss points out, science can never uncover values (Næss 1989:40), and values are

needed when deciding how to act. The belief that science and rational knowledge about nature is enough to derive conclusions about what to do must be challenged, because “*we cannot act without norms!*” (Næss 1989:41). As an example, Næss writes that if a factory is shut down and moved to another location because of waterway pollution, we accept, in addition to the scientific hypotheses about the effects of this waterway pollution, evaluations that are not part of any science: for example that waterways ought not to be poisoned (Næss 1989:41). Science and rational knowledge alone cannot help us to decide how to live and act – ethics is needed.

Feelings and subjective experiences are important, not only because they may help us to uncover more correct scientific results or because they are needed to decide what to do with these scientific results, but also because they make up the concrete “objective” world. *They are as real as science*. In scientific research the taboo of anthropomorphism is slowly declining according to Børresen. But in the public debate about whaling and other issues involving non-humans we have seen that it is still present. Ecological ethics is not encouraged, or often not even “accepted”, to be used as a platform when discussing issues regarding more-than-human nature. Why are the defenders of whaling avoiding arguments based on feelings and subjective experiences, refusing to admit that they are as real and as important as science, and to admitting that they are using it themselves? Is it because those who perceive the world from an anthropocentric standpoint are afraid of what a thorough ethical discussion about more-than-human nature might imply - of the consequences of asking deeper questions about our relationship with the rest of nature? Rothenberg says that “One should never limit the bounds of the problem just to make an easier solution acceptable” (Rothenberg in Næss 1989:12). We saw earlier that Ola Borten Moe says that he is afraid of the consequences ending fur farming might imply, as other ways of exploiting non-human animals then will probably be questioned as well, including his chicken farm. It is easier for him to defend fur farming to prevent a deeper

discussion about other species of non-human animals, for example by making fun of those who use ecological ethics when arguing against fur farming by saying that they have a Walt Disney-like view of animals and that they base their arguments on feelings instead of knowledge when they argue. Do the government and others think the same way about whaling, and what a thorough ethical discussion about whaling might imply? Would we have to stop whaling? And would we also then have to stop hurting other marine mammals? All mammals? All sentient animals, including the environment they live in? What about non-animal nature? An ethical discussion including deeper questions about our relationship with more-than-human nature may occur if the government encouraged using ecological ethics as a platform when discussing whaling. And some of the answers one would get as a result might force most people to change their practices drastically to live in accordance with these answers. Is this the reason why they try to tie down the ethical discussion about whaling?

Siri Martinsen makes a connection between the lack of acceptance for ethical arguments in the whaling debate in the early 1990's and the reason why there is still such a low awareness of ecological ethics in most public debates in Norway today regarding non-human animals. In her chapter about Norwegian whaling and seal hunting in the book "Hvem er villest i landet her?" Martinsen mentions "Vågehvalen - valgets kval" and its arguments as a good example of how the debate took place. She confirms that critique of whaling based on ecological ethics was described as (illegitimate) "feelings" by the pro-whaling side, and that those who argued with arguments based on these "feelings" were said to have no knowledge, no understanding, etc. (Martinsen 2013). She argues that this, at times, quite aggressive political promotion of whaling, and mission to label those using ecological ethics when arguing as ignorant etc. may have weakened the development of an ethical debate concerning other animals in Norway (Martinsen 2013:111). When reflecting upon this negative

focus on arguments based on feelings, Martinsen challenges us to think about what kind of feelings these arguments are based on – they are based on empathy and compassion. “And since when was it considered as a virtue not to be empathic and not to be compassionate?” (Martinsen interview 09.04.2014, my own translation). Human beings without these feelings intact are even considered as dangerous, as they might hurt other human beings, she says. Why do these feelings become “illegitimate” when those we feel empathy with or compassion for are non-humans? Martinsen also points out, like discussed above, that the arguments of those who wish to continue whaling are also based on feelings and present certain ethical views and values. She mentions emotions such as the feeling of national pride and the feeling of nostalgia, and values such as keeping traditions and valuing money more than valuing lives. However, as a veterinarian, she also emphasises the importance of scientific research and using arguments based on facts when debating. It is a fact that minke whales have the ability to feel pain like us, and an interest to live a good life without experiencing pain like us, she says. These are facts and are not up for discussion. However, they must be included as a central part of the debate about whaling: The facts are on the table, and now we have to discuss what these facts should imply ethically. “Is it OK to inflict pain and to kill whales, when they have an interest to live and to not experience pain, like humans?” (Martinsen interview 09.04.2014, my own translation). Concerning the claimed legitimisation problem Martinsen argues that this is not a valid statement – it is the same as saying “you are wrong” without giving any reasons why. Instead of answering the ethical arguments thoroughly and accepting that ethics should be a central part of the debate, they name-call and make fun of those who do so (for example by using the words ignorant, Disney, legitimisation problem, feelings instead of knowledge, etc.). This creates a toxic culture around the debate, she says. But it also illustrates that those who claim so have run out of relevant arguments to defend their view (Martinsen interview 09.04.2014). In addition, statements like these from government representatives and other important people are

very unfortunate, she says, and as we have seen she thinks that “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” and the views it still represents may have made the development of the ethical discussion about non-humans in Norway more difficult. Still one is met with the same arguments, and still one experiences being made fun of when arguing against whaling by consciously using ecological ethics.

However, as a central character in the ethical debate about non-human animals in Norway, Martinsen can confirm that it has become more and more accepted with ethical arguments since “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” was published and the debate about whaling was at its greatest, especially when they derive from scientific results about the animals. This is not only evident when discussing whaling, but also issues involving other sentient animals. However, there is still a long way to go before the scientific results revealing the physical and emotional feelings of other animals can be thoroughly discussed ethically in the public debate, she predicts (Martinsen interview 09.04.2014).

This previous section has discussed the claimed legitimisation problem of those who consciously use ecological ethics when discussing whaling. It has been revealed that those who claim this are themselves using arguments based on feelings and represent certain ethical values, and that they do not acknowledge the importance of so-called theocentric research for achieving the most correct results, by stating that feelings and rational knowledge are opponents. Further on, they do not acknowledge that feelings and subjective experiences also make up the concrete “objective” world and are as real as science. When actively using scientific results, for example that whales are self-conscious, then the treatment of them has to be reconsidered. However, science alone can never tell us how we ought to live and act in relation to anyone or anything. Therefore it does not make any sense to make such a clear distinction between feelings and knowledge. In addition, when actually discussing ethics consciously in “Vågehvalen – valgets kval”, it is not discussed thoroughly, and an insufficient answer was considered as “the price



one has to pay” to get a satisfactory answer for arguing that continuing whaling is morally OK. It seems fair to conclude that the authors of the book had already decided what the answer should be (i.e., whaling is good), and constructed their ethical discussion according to this. The government still operates with their focus on “lack of knowledge”, stating that “Still a lack of scientific knowledge is experienced as a challenge for the Norwegian government, not just within the IWC, but also when marine mammals are discussed in several other contexts” (regjeringen.no:B, my own translation). However, they speak of this lack of knowledge while at the same time presenting uncertain knowledge as facts, and omitting other knowledge that might render their premeditated position problematic. The argument about how whaling equals more fish is a good example of this. At the same time they represent what according to Børresen are outdated views about the relationship between knowledge and feelings. How come the government and others representing the pro-whaling views discussed in part two of this thesis omit all of the points uncovered in this section? It certainly seems like they try to steer clear of the ramifications of using this broader frame of ecological ethics as a platform for discussing the issue of whaling: Deeper questions and a thorough discussion about how we should live and act in relationship with other sentient animals and what this should imply. And perhaps some would start asking questions about more-than-human nature as well? It is more convenient to sidestep this ethical discussion and continue business-as-usual. But is this really the way we wish to proceed?

### **Reversing the burden of proof**

According to the authors of “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” those who are against whaling have to prove why this practice is wrong by giving good reasons for why more whales does not result in less fish for humans to catch,

why whaling is less humane than other ways of exploiting non-human animals, and why whaling is not a sustainable way of managing our resources. Furthermore, the book states that those who attempt to do so by grounding their arguments in ecological ethics have a legitimisation problem, as they do so because they fail to find good counterarguments to the “proofs” the book is presenting. A burden of proof thus lies not only with those who are against whaling, but with those who do not perceive the world from an anthropocentric standpoint.

Throughout the chapter about ecological ethics and Norwegian whaling we have seen that a burden of proof is defined several times by the supporters of whaling. They for example base their arguments on that killing fish is morally OK, that it is morally OK that other animals are treated worse than whales (for example pigs in the meat industry), that intelligence should be measured by our particular human style of intelligence, that there is an ethically relevant difference between humans and whales, that whales must have some kind of value for humans in order for them to be valued at all, and that it is impossible to live in accordance with an ecocentric ethics. However, just because someone defines a burden of proof, it is not necessary to accept it. Why is it that the burden of proof always lies with those who do not wish to limit intrinsic value and moral consideration to human beings? Why should anthropocentrism be accepted as the universal “truth”? Martin Gorke does not accept that those who wish to include non-humans in the moral circle have to justify it. Instead, he chooses to *reverse the burden of proof*. Now, those who argue that non-humans should not be included have a burden of proof – now *they* need to explain why humans are the only ones who should be given moral consideration, and not the other way around.

The person who assumes that invertebrates and plants are direct objects of moral consideration is not the one who must convincingly demonstrate that his or her perspective is legitimate. This is the responsibility of the person who feels that

the prima facie universal character of morality must be restricted to entities with consciousness (Gorke 2003:284).

In this particular case regarding whaling, even conscious beings are left outside the moral circle. Curry agrees with Gorke that the burden of proof needs to be reversed, and also argues from the starting point that all of nature has intrinsic value:

This book therefore does not advocate ethics by 'extension' from human being throughout other animals (mostly those lucky enough to resemble people in some way that is valued) to, perhaps, and only after much agonizing, trees. Rather, I start from the belief, or perception, that nature – which certainly includes humanity – is the ultimate source of all value (Curry 2011:2).

When reversing the burden of proof, the starting point is that every natural entity on the planet has intrinsic value, including minke whales, the fish who both minke whales and humans like to eat, the animals who are “less intelligent” and treated worse than minke whales, as well as the ocean minke whales live in as an ecosystem. It does also include, as Curry emphasises, human beings. And this is an important point – now we have to discuss how we as humans can live rich and meaningful lives in accordance with this. Ecological ethics as a field offers us a platform for doing exactly this.

Even though it may seem as though I have accepted that the burden of proof lies with those who question the practice of whaling for non-anthropocentric reasons, and those who think that more-than-human nature has intrinsic value - carrying the burden with me through part two of this thesis by answering and discussing the arguments of “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” and others who define this burden of proof - this is not the case. I share Gorke's and Curry's belief that those who only ascribe intrinsic value to human beings, or for example to certain animals, certain plants, or to species but not the individuals they consists of or the ecosystem they belong to, need to prove why this is the case. However, ecological ethics is not a widely practiced discipline, and as we have seen in the debate about whaling in Norway, a public discussion

consciously using ecological ethics as a platform is rare to find. It may be difficult to make a case for a reversal of the burden of proof when ecological ethics as a discipline is not yet familiar, or as in the debate about whaling not even “accepted”. For this reason this thesis has addressed some of the “proofs” defined by the supporters of whaling, including the claimed legitimisation problem, and discussed them in order to illustrate that they may not be proofs at all. After ecological ethics has been presented as a field and the readers have become familiar with the discussion about anthropocentrism, intrinsic value, knowledge, etc. and how this can be applied to discussions about more-than-human nature, then one can speak of reversing this burden of proof. This thesis is meant as an introduction for doing so – and it has shown that one does not need to accept anthropocentrism as the right way to perceive the world, nor that a burden of proof lies with those who argue for a less human-centered ethical framework.

## Concluding Thoughts

Patrick Curry states that “all societies have values and ethics; and far from being optional considerations, they are among the strongest factors that determine our actual behaviour on the ground” (Curry 2011:9). Virtually all humans acknowledge the importance of ethics – it is an integrated part of our everyday lives and fundamental for how people choose to behave in relation to each other. However, it is important to remember that other human beings are not the only ones humans live in relation to. The necessity of ecological ethics is not only made evident by the fact that humans are affecting the rest of nature on a global scale (causing scientists to consider that we have entered the new geological era of Anthropocene), but also by the fact that we live in relationship with other natural entities. And as Curry has emphasised: “relationships between subjects entail ethics” (Curry 2011:3). Another important point is that we not only live in a relationship with more-than-human nature – we are also a part of it. As David Abram argues, it does not make sense to separate ourselves from the rest of nature, which we are sustained by, both physically and mentally. In fact, we can say that our human bodies are our small bodies, while the rest of Earth is our larger body (Abram 2014). When acknowledging these human/nature relationships we should also acknowledge that more-than-human nature should be included in our ethics.

Ethics that is only concerned with humans encourages our powerful susceptibility to limited sympathies, short-terminism and greed, rather than checking it. It also denies any responsibility for the effects of our behaviour on the millions of other species and many million living individuals with whom we share the Earth: not exactly an ethically impressive position (Curry 2011:3).

This thesis has briefly outlined the general field of ethics, before presenting ecological ethics and creating an overview of some of the different views within this area. These presentations have varied from those who argue that

nature can be protected without being given intrinsic value, like Bryan G. Norton, those who give intrinsic value to other animals, like Peter Singer, and those who also give intrinsic value to plants, like Gary Varner, to those who find intrinsic value in all of nature, like Aldo Leopold, David Abram and Arne Næss. What all these different views have in common is their acknowledgement of the importance of asking deeper questions concerning humans' relationship with more-than-human nature, for example by discussing who has intrinsic value and what this implies, or what we really need to live fulfilled lives. While the central question in ethics is how one should live and act in relation to other humans, the central question in ecological ethics is how one should live and act in relation with more-than-human nature. However, it is an important point to make that ecological ethics does not replace human ethics. The point, as Curry says, is rather that “adding something new will enable an ethical behaviour that a more anthropocentric ethics cannot, on its own, accomplish” (Curry 2011:7)

Even though, for reasons mentioned above, ecological ethics should be an important part of debates regarding more-than-human nature, this is often not the case. As we have seen in particular, this is not the case in the Norwegian public debate concerning whaling. Following a brief chapter about Norwegian whaling and its history, and another brief chapter about minke whales (which is the only species of whale that is commercially hunted in Norway), I have presented the book “Vågehvalen – valgets kval”. This book has formed the main basis for discussions in the rest of the thesis. It was published with support from the Norwegian government in 1993, at the same time as it was decided that Norway would resume whaling after a seven year break - despite the IWC moratorium. The book was, according to its editors, meant as a form of “public education” about whaling. But, as Siri Martinsen has argued (and as has become clear in the course of the discussion), it is more accurate to say that the book functioned as a part of the government's agenda to create a

“whaling nation” and to gather support from the Norwegian population before resuming whaling - despite clear opposition from both the national and the international community (Martinsen 2013:108) The three main arguments presented for continued whaling, mentioned repeatedly throughout the book, and still used today, are as follows: More whales equal less fish for the fishing industry, the killing methods used in whaling are not less humane than the methods used in the killing of many other kinds of animals, and Norwegian whaling is a sustainable way of managing our ocean resources. These may seem to be sound and reasonable arguments for many at first sight. However, this thesis has challenged them, by consciously using ecological ethics as a platform for expanding the discussion and by asking, in Næss' words, *deeper questions*. When doing so, these arguments no longer appear as sound and satisfactory. Instead of arguing who suffers the most – whales or pigs? or whether the estimated numbers of the North-East Atlantic minke whale populations is correct, this re-framing of the discussion has shifted the focus to questions such as: Is it morally OK to kill whales so that we can kill even more fish than we already do? Is it morally OK to kill whales because many other animals are treated worse? Is it morally OK to kill whales because they do not belong to an endangered species, and to speak of whales and the ocean as “our” “resources”? And is it morally OK to kill other animals at all?

Many interesting ethical debates can spring forth from these questions (some, but not all, of which I have taken up here). However, it seems as though the authors of the book had a certain interest in tying down ethical discussions like these, by stating that ethics is not really important in this debate, and that those who use it only do so in the lack of any “real” arguments. Furthermore, it is claimed that those who use ecological ethics consciously when discussing have a *legitimation problem*. Those who do use ecological ethics consciously when arguing are still today often not taken seriously, and sometimes mocked for using feelings instead of - or in addition to - rational knowledge when

arguing. But as we have seen, feelings and subjective experiences are an important way of obtaining knowledge, and they also form what make up our “objective” world. Therefore it does not make sense to draw such definitive distinctions between feelings and (rational) knowledge. Even if it did: Why should it be accepted to argue on the basis of feelings such as empathy and compassion when debating issues regarding humans, but not when discussing issues involving non-humans? It should also be emphasised that those who argue for continued whaling are themselves using feelings when arguing and present certain kinds of ethical views – even though, possibly, unconsciously. When the book, in the ethics chapter and briefly some other places, *does* discuss whaling consciously in the light of ecological ethics, it does not offer a thorough discussion. As we have seen, the pro-whaling side attitudes presented in the book concludes that an insufficient answer is “the price one has to pay” for finding an ethically relevant difference between whales and humans, and that it is unproblematic to kill whales but not certain groups of humans. The very brief discussion concerning intrinsic value in more-than-human nature concludes that it is impossible to live in accordance with an ecocentric ethics, arriving at such a strong conclusion without having discussed any of the ecocentric views presented in part one of this thesis. Instead of recognising more inclusive ethical positions as valuable and significant voices in the whaling debate, and instead of promoting the larger discursive platform that is ecological ethics, it seems as though “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” – and those whose interests it represents – actually tries to tie down the debate, so that certain unspoken premises are never questioned: Anthropocentrism is without any alternatives. The individuals, species and ecosystems who constitute the more-than-human nature are “resources”, and they are “ours” to “manage”. We can only speculate as to why so many of the important points mentioned in this thesis are either left out entirely or misrepresented so strongly in the book, and why this is still the case in public debates about whaling or other issues regarding more-than-human nature today. Is it because of a certain anxiety of the consequences of acknowledging



such deeper (and more difficult) questions? Or is it simply because they have not been properly introduced to ecological ethics, and for this reason have a too narrow ethical imagination to perceive the world in a non-anthropocentric way?

If the first suggestion is the case – a fear of consequences - then David Rothenberg should be quoted one more time: “One should never limit the bounds of the problem just to make an easier solution acceptable” (Rothenberg in Næss 1989:12). It is easier to prevent an ethical discussion about whaling than to face the unknown (and perhaps complicated and inconvenient) consequences of an open and informed discussion. Because, when opening up to a thorough ethical discussion about whaling, then an end to whaling may not be the only consequence. It is possible that more people, for instance, would acknowledge the arbitrariness of not giving whales the right to live when all groups of humans have this right. If this discussion started it is perceivable that it might lead to other sentient animals being included in the debate as well. Perhaps other parts of nature too? If whaling was the only industry at stake by opening up a discussion of the issue in the light of ecological ethics, then perhaps the government and other who are pro-whaling would not be so reluctant to discuss it. As we have seen, whaling is a small industry, involving few people, and its economic gain is assumed to be lower than its costs. Putting a stop to whaling would for these reasons not have any large economic consequences for the Norwegian society as a whole. In fact, it can be argued that whale watching is most likely more profitable than whaling itself. Still, the government continues to defend whaling, and, as seen, to spend millions of NOK each year to keep the industry going. Ola Borten Moe is concerned that if we start to discuss one issue ethically (in his case fur farming, but the argument is transferable), then the further discussion may be difficult to contain. He is afraid of what might be the consequences for his chicken farm if fur farming is discussed ethically and, as a possible

consequence, ended. In the same way, the pro-whalers may fear what ethically discussing whaling implies because of the possible consequences. When people change their perception of the world from an anthropocentric to a less human-centred ethical position, they also need to change the way they live and act in relation with the rest of nature some way or another, perhaps in ways that are not viewed as convenient – both for themselves individually, but also for the government and others who profit from exploiting more-than-human nature. Containing an ethical discussion about anything more-than-human is probably the easiest solution. But is it acceptable?

If the latter suggestion is the case - if the authors of “Vågehvalen – valgets kval” and other people sharing their anthropocentric views do not use ecological ethics consciously when discussing more-than-human nature because they have a too narrow ethical imagination or if any other approach is unfamiliar to them - then this thesis may be a good starting point. Not only does it present several different ethical views within ecological ethics, making the readers familiar with some of the non-anthropocentric options, it also attempts to show that there is no need to be “intimidated” by this approach - which, for instance, the government and others sharing their pro-whaling views, seem to be. I have emphasised that ecological ethics does not give a universal answer to *how* we should live in accordance with a non-anthropocentric ethics, but that there are a variety of different views and that everyone can develop their own. Opening up to a discussion of more-than-human nature based on ecological ethics does not mean that one has to end up with an ecocentric standpoint, or even that one has to be against whaling. As we have seen, it is, for instance, possible to argue for prioritising ecosystems over individuals – and after all, hunting a few whales may be more environmentally friendly than many of the other ways food is produced today. The point is, rather, that we should challenge the dominant anthropocentric

world-view, and discuss how to best live in relationship with the rest of nature – not how we as humans most effectively can exploit it.

This thesis has used the Norwegian public debate on whaling as an example to illustrate the absence of a thorough ethical discussion in debates concerning non-humans. Issues regarding non-human animals, such as whales, can be a good place to start, as other sentient animals are those who are usually first included when the moral circle expands, and because most people already have given intrinsic value to *some* non-human animals, such as their pets. However, when using whaling as a starting point, it soon becomes evident that, when arguing based on ecological ethics, the discussion cannot end with whales but is constantly expanding. In addition to whales, both as individuals and as a species, this debate directly also concerns fish, as well as the ocean as an ecosystem. In addition, it is nearly impossible, when starting to discuss the questions mentioned above, to see the debate concerning whales as an isolated one, for example from a debate about other sentient animals, our perception of resources, or what is the most ethical way of eating. I thus share Borten Moe's predictions that when opening up to an ethical discussion on one issue regarding non-humans, like fur farming or whaling, the discussion may not end with this. However, I do not share his solution - trying to contain it.

As we have seen, the point that the goal is *not* to present an ethics that everyone should follow is an important part of Næss' deep ecology. Rather, the goal both Næss and I are trying to reach, the way I see it, is to encourage others to ask deeper questions and to use ecological ethics consciously as a tool for thinking through their profound views of the nature/human relationship, and also how one should best live in accordance with these views - while still living meaningful and fulfilled human lives. This thesis may be a starting point for doing so, as it highlights the importance of ecological ethics,

and (hopefully) challenges people to test the bounds of their predominantly ethical imagination. Perhaps it even encourages some to share their thoughts in public debates regarding more-than-human nature, such as whaling?

Whether or not participating in public debates; after reading this thesis, those who wish to continue exploring the field of ecological ethics know that when doing so, they do not have to accept that the burden of proof lies with those who give intrinsic value to more-than-human nature. On the contrary, it is those with an anthropocentric perception of the world who need to explain why human beings are the only ones who should be included in the moral circle.

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