Stranded at the museum

A museological study of two whale displays at the Whaling Museum in Sandefjord

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Human relationships with animals have always interested me. To have had the opportunity to examine how whales in particular are products of cultural history has been a great privilege, and I am grateful to live in a time and place that allows me to plunge so deeply into such a field.

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ABSTRACT

Museums acquire additional layers of significance as historical and cultural settings change. In a time of climate crisis and rapid extinction of species, they can be important actors in raising public awareness of human relationships with nature, as institutions that interpret, collect, and conserve. In this paper, such a role is applied to the Commander Chr. Christensen's Whaling Museum in Sandefjord, Norway. This is a museum that represents overexploitation of natural resources, but also local history, wealth, industry and conservation. At its centre is the human relationship with the whale.

In my examination of two whale displays at the Whaling Museum, I found that the whale reveals cultural meanings at multiple levels. First, I examined the blue whale model hanging from the ceiling in the museum's main hall. The model is the Whaling Museum's centre piece and was originally made for the opening in 1917. I argue that the model represents the very idea of "whale" at the museum and is thus interpreted within a set of cultural conceptions of the whale. Based upon how the museum curated the replica, as well as beholders' own prepossessed feelings for the animal, the model is transformed into a cultural product. I have used direct observation at the museum and interpreted the whale as a mythical object, a gendered object and a symbol for conservation.

Secondly, the fin whale skeleton in the museum's basement was examined. The skeleton is a representation of a once live animal that was caught outside of Sandefjord as a result of Norwegian state-funded whaling in 1918. It has been transformed from a conscious being into a means for humans in the food and fat shortage during the First World War. Further on, it has been transformed to a museum object, displayed as a skeleton in the basement of the Whaling Museum. Writing the fin whale's biography, I follow a history of an animal's trajectory after death.

The whale is a polyvalent symbol that evokes emotion for many. In this paper, aspects of human relationships with whales is assessed in the context of a specialist museum in Sandefjord.

KEYWORDS

Whaling museum, whaling, whale, animal studies, museology

INTRODUCTION

The Whaling Museum in Sandefjord, Norway, is a specialist museum within the field of whales and whaling. The museum exhibits both cultural and natural history, but it is the natural history section that takes up the most room, both in terms of space and collection size – though not intentionally, according to former manager, Einar Wexelsen (1993: 29). When founded in 1917, the museum's collection of natural objects consisted of two complete whale skeletons, four whale skulls, the remnants of a fossil Greenland whale, whale teeth, baleens and preparations on alcohol. There were also taxidermized animals and animal groups; first and foremost, sea mammals, but also birds and land mammals from polar areas – in addition to a real-life blue whale model (Wexelsen, 1993: 22).

The full name of the museum is *Commander Chr. Christensen's Whaling Museum.* Christer Christensen was a pioneer from Sandefjord that initiated the Norwegian pelagic whaling in the Southern Ocean at the beginning of the 20th century (Bøe, 1993: 5).[1] It was Christer Christensen's son, the consul, Lars Christensen, who bestowed the museum to the local community of Sandefjord and named the museum after his father.

The idea of a whaling museum in Sandefjord was born in the United States. Lars Christensen was on a business trip in his early twenties and had the opportunity to visit the New Bedford Whaling Museum in Massachusetts (Wexelsen, 1993: 9). Christensen then sought to open a similar museum in his own hometown. However, the museum in Sandefjord was to display the whaling industry as a driving force during the present time – in contrast to the New Bedford museum that depicted whaling throughout history (Wexelsen, 1993: 10).

The establishment of the Whaling Museum in Sandefjord had three purposes: First, the museum was going to showcase various, though mostly Norwegian, whaling cultures. Secondly, it was to present whales and whale species, as well as general fauna from polar regions. Thirdly, the museum was to present the South Pole, Antarctica. The target audience was "the broad public", schools and the whaling industry itself (Wexelsen, 1993: 28-29).

It is the rapid decline of the state of the natural world that stirred me to examine human perceptions of and relationships with nature for the purpose of this thesis. When examining specific animal displays in given contexts, I am seeking to gain knowledge of human values, both in cultural and temporal spaces.

[1] "Pelagic" means "open sea", as in contrast to "coastal".

In the renowned essay, *Why look at animals* (1980), John Berger writes about how humans have been living with and mirrored themselves through animals. Animal representations in museums might show nature – not as something outside of human culture, but as a cultural and historical concept.

The Whaling Museum is an institution that bears witness to the human use of non-human nature. However, the museum's main focus has been on workers in the whaling industry. To emphasise solely animal representations displayed at this museum has not been done previously. In this thesis, however, the museum's display of a fin whale skeleton and human-made blue whale model is examined.

The two animals are chosen for several reasons: The blue whale model is the museum's main attraction. It looms over the entire main hall so that the rest of the exhibition has to be adjusted according to the whale. The model is a representation of what the whaling industry has been centred around. As such, I suggest that the model is not "only" a blue whale, but a representation of the conception, "whale", in general terms.

In the blue whale model, I decipher the whale as a cultural product in a mythic, gendered and environmentalist perspectives. As an academic actor, it has been important for me to evaluate historical links and relations. As such, the mythical aspect of the whale was assessed. Additionally, I am a political actor that takes part in the environmental and feminist movements in Norway. It has been proximate for me to connect those aspects in my observations of the whale. Rather than hiding my political predispositions, I use them as an advantage to originate what I deem to be interesting approaches.

The blue whale model, however, has never been alive, nor been an object outside of the museum building. This is in contrast to the second animal that was chosen as an example of a museum object that once lived. The cultural perceptions applied to the blue whale model might also apply to the fin whale. Moreover, the fin whale has the potential to reveal new dimensions to Norwegian history of whaling, as it was shot at a time when Norway decided to ban previous Whaling Acts. This, I argue, brings an additional element of uniqueness to the human relationship with the whale.

Research questions

The blue whale and fin whale both have in common that they are museological objects as well as representations of animals. I intend to perform a critical analysis of the museum displays that might challenge and complement the dominant narrative of the Whaling Museum.

The main research question is:

> *How can the blue whale model and fin whale skeleton at the Whaling Museum in Sandefjord illustrate human relationships with whales?*

Human relationships with whales are here understood as the relationship a museum visitor might be preconditioned to have with whales before entering the museum, both also the historically and locally conditioned relationship that might have existed with the fin whale when it arrived to Sandefjord in 1918, as well as the relationship that is created between the beholder and whale display in the museum context today. My argument is that the beholder of the exhibition reconstructs the whale displays based upon their own associations with the idea of "whale". As such, they interrelate the symbolic idea of "whale" within human society and culture.

The blue whale model is examined within three cultural perceptions of whales: myth, environmentalism and gender. This leads to the following additional research question regarding the blue whale model:

> *How can the blue whale model at the Whaling Museum in Sandefjord be perceived as a representation of whales in myth, environmentalism and gender?*

In my opinion, these selected perceptions endow the model with relevant dimensions. Myths form cultural history. They may shape relevant associations with the whale. In cultural history, cetaceans have been typified with human characteristics, ascribing them as both "gentle" and "monstrous" creatures. Characteristics such as these may also lead to the cultural concept of the whale as a symbol for environmentalism. The "save-the-whales" movement of the 1970s changed the whale's status, as will be further elaborated in the analysis. Finally, the blue whale model is examined as a gendered object. This aspect might be less obvious for many visitors at the Whaling Museum, which is an interesting factor to consider itself. However, I contend that the whale is placed within a gendered culture. To remove gender would have been to ignore a significant dimension to human relationships with whales.

The cultural conceptions applied to the blue whale might also be relevant for the fin whale. The fin whale was, after all, born with a biological sex. The skeleton was part of an alive body. The fin whale has lived with its own autonomy and agency. This dimension makes

the fin whale interesting. Additionally, the whale was not killed to be a museum object, but a resource for humans during the First World War. As such, the fin whale has had a purpose for humans beyond its position as a museum object. This leads to the question:

> *How has the fin whale, whose skeleton is exhibited at the Whaling Museum in Sandefjord, been transformed in its afterlife?*

In emphasizing "its afterlife", I mean to examine the fin whale after death, as little is known about the whale alive. The intent is to investigate how this particular whale has been transformed as a cultural product both outside and inside of the museum.

Structure of the analysis

The analysis is divided into two main parts: Part one is regarding the blue whale model and part two the fin whale. I have chosen to follow these museum objects' trajectory by dividing their history into three stages: 1) the history before joining the museum collection; 2) the transformation to becoming a museum artefact; and 3) the history as a museum object. The fin whale is subjected to stages one and two, and the blue whale model to stage three.

To follow the fin whale's history before joining the museum collection is to start with its death when it first entered the realm of humans. Its body changed from being a living individual to becoming a human resource. This is described in the setting of the First World War in Sandefjord. Becoming part of the museum collection is stage two. Here, the whale was transformed yet again. It became objectified, *tingliggjort*¸ made into a thing. As an object, the fin whale no longer only represents an individual animal that once lived - it has become a representation of the authoritative knowledge of the whale's osteology during the 1910s.

A museum object's trajectory does not end here. When acquired by a museum, objects are classified and categorized – but also exposed to analysis and comparison (Alberti, 2005: 567). Its meanings vary not only over time and space but also depending on the beholder. The relation between the beholder and whale is historically and culturally conditioned, but also based upon the viewer's own relations, feelings and memories. "We do not see things as they are, but as we are," says museologist, Stephen Weil (1997: 265). The visitor is not a passive receiver of an exhibition, but rather an active participant, making meaning of the exhibition. Every object and every exhibition are as such dynamic. Within this context, the blue whale model is analysed as a dynamic cultural product.

The two parts of the analysis complement each other but can also be read separately. As the cultural conceptions applied to the blue whale might be relevant for the fin whale, I have reversed the stages in the structure of the thesis. I begin my analysis with stage three, how the blue whale model as a museum object might be perceived as a representation of whales in myth, environmentalism and gender. Then, I write the biography of the fin whale, subjecting it to stage two, as it is transformed into a museum artefact. Finally, I close the fin whale's biography and the thesis at stage one, writing about the fin whale in the historical context of its death.

METHODOLOGY

This thesis is written to describe specific phenomena within a specific culture. I have thus chosen to use an ethnographic method, which allows for several categories to be applied to the same research (Öhlander, 2011: 18).

As cited by ethnologist Magnus Öhlander (2011), methodology can be characterised as a systematic approach used to a) obtain material and b) conduct an analysis (Öhlander, 2011: 29). Accordingly, this chapter on methodology is divided in two: data collection, including fieldwork and written sources, and analytical framework, including exhibition analysis and animal biography.

Data collection

Fieldwork

To describe the systematic approaches that I have used while I was engaged in fieldwork in Sandefjord for three days in September 2018, I have divided this sub-chapter in three: First, I describe the purpose and circumstances for the fieldwork. Then, I describe how direct observation was employed to collect material before I end with how I have collected material from oral sources. Material were also collected from written sources in the field, but as written sources were utilised as a supplement to fieldwork, I have chosen to describe written sources in another, separate sub-chapter.

According to ethnologist Lars Kaijser, fieldwork is a collective term for research carried out in the social or physical environment where the activity or occupation of interest is located (Kaijser, 2011: 37). A precondition, then, is that the researcher physically positions

themselves in the location of the objects of study. As such, the researcher can experience the field in its usual environment - in "natural surroundings".

The goal of my stay in Sandefjord was to follow guided tours, meet with the museum workers and examine the museum materials. In the field, I had the possibility of observing how museum workers and museum visitors referred to animals in general, with the displayed animals as focal points.

At the time of the fieldwork, I had not yet chosen which animal displays would be my objects of study. The animals were selected once I reviewed the collected materials. I was then able to derive a synopsis of what information I had gained and which perspectives that could be interesting to investigate further. Accordingly, I arrived in Sandefjord, curious in both the display of the taxidermized fur seals, the enormous elephant seal, as well the blue whale model and whale skeletons in the basement. This is an example of what Öhlander characterizes as *pragmatic systematics*, as the researcher has to know how, why and what to do, in combination with intuition, improvisation and creativity when engaged in fieldwork (2011: 13). The researcher must be able to rephrase and complement previous assumptions, as material is garnered also in spontaneous situations.

I used a notebook to write down my observations during my stay. The notes were written down as keywords and comprise almost 30 pages worth of commentary about the museum.

Direct observation

Direct observation is a method of collecting data within the ordinary environment of a field without altering that environment (Pripp and Öhlander, 2011: 130). In using observation, I have been able to collect, construct and reconstruct my own material.

To discover what the museum wishes to present to visitors, I accompanied two different guides on a total of four tours and talked to the guides before and afterwards. My part as researcher was active rather than passive. As I followed the museum workers, I conversed with them and posed questions. Ethnologist Anna Lundstedt (2009) describes this as "talking whilst walking" (*in* Pripp and Öhlander, 2011: 122). Two of the tours I followed were part of the Cultural Schoolbag activity, *Dra på hvalfangst med klassen*, "Go whaling with class", that is offered for 7th graders in Sandefjord and nearby regions.[2] The Cultural

[2] The Cultural Schoolbag is a national programme in Norway designed to ensure that all school pupils experience professional art and culture (Kulturtanken. 2017. *The Cultural Schoolbag* [Online]. https://www.artsforyoungaudiences.no/about: Kulturtanken. [Lest 10th of February 2019].).

Schoolbag activities at the Whaling Museum entail some activities for younger children (1st-4th grade) surrounding animals, and other activities for older children (5th-7th grade) about whaling as part of Sandefjord's cultural history (Hvalfangstmuseet, 2019). The activity, *Dra på hvalfangst med klassen*, consists of learning about whales in the main hall in the museum, learning about whaling through the documentary, *Blåst forut* (Agnell, 1992), in the museum's basement, going to the Harbour Chapel where memorial plaques of whalers that lost their lives at sea are located and, finally, have a tour on the ship, "Southern Actor". It was agreed with the museum that I should visit while the Cultural Schoolbag was still in season, as this would give an impression of the museum's main activities. In addition to this, I followed a tour for a retiree group and asked for a private guided tour to make room for specific questions relevant to my research.

Unfortunately, the cultural history department that was built as an extension to the original museum in 1981 was under reconstruction in September 2018 (Vestfoldmuséene, 2019). Only the original museum building that contains the natural history collection was available during my stay. It might be that my view of the selected animals would have been different in the additional light of a cultural history exhibition.

In order to consider the collected material's quality, it is important to understand the researcher's personal intentions (Öhlander, 2011: 18). I have chosen to embrace that the descriptions of reality I collected at the Whaling Museum are shaped by my own predispositions. This is what ethnologist Lena Gerholm (1997) refers to as *perspectivism* (*in* Öhlander 2011: 28). My observations are my views and interpretations, and not the official views of the museum. During fieldwork and throughout the process of writing this thesis, I have been conscious of my perhaps disproportionately critical approach. My interpretation of the whale displays is in a context where my preconceived opinions are allowed to roam, opening only for a limited way of interpreting the exhibits.

Museologist Chris Whitehead points out that it is not always a match between what curators intend visitors to experience and understand, and what visitors actually do experience and understand (Whitehead, 2016: 3). People are individuals with lives, backgrounds and knowledges of their own – as am I. In the case of this thesis, my observations permit the reader to understand my interpretations of the whale displays at the Whaling Museum. These do not necessarily coincide with the museum's intentions.

Oral sources

Observation may uncover "obvious" details that interviewees would not necessarily think of mentioning in an interview setting (Pripp and Öhlander, 2011: 114). Observation is, as such, used in addition to conversations and interviews that I had with the museum staff. The museum staff I met with consisted of the department manager, a consultant in charge of the collection, a consultant in charge of the museum ship, "Southern Actor", the receptionist in charge of public contact, an administration officer, a museum educator and a guide. Most of the oral material were gathered through informal meetings and conversations during lunch time and in preparation for activities. As folklorist Line Esborg predicts in *Feltarbeidets mange samtaleformer* (2005), such conversations may be just as informative as interviews (Esborg, 2005: 93).

I quickly discovered that the museum workers were more interested in the cultural history of whaling than they were in the animals on display in the museum. I therefore decided to use interviews as a link to other sources rather than direct sources for my analysis. As such, interviews are only indirectly tied to my interpretation of the museum displays. I conducted two interviews with, respectively, the department manager and consultant in charge of the collection. The aim for these short, informal interviews was to increase my understanding of the museum and consequently obtain a better comprehension of the museum displays. The interviews were note-based and consisted of open conversation points about the museum's history and what the interviewees thought to be important for the museum today.

Written sources

I have used research literature to supplement the material collected from my fieldwork and interpret the whale displays in a broader context. In this sub-chapter, I have chosen to first describe written sources that were collected during fieldwork before the written sources used in the analysis of the fin whale skeleton were accounted for. Finally, I describe how the literature was leveraged to place the blue whale model within myth, environmentalism and gender.

While in the field, several of the museum workers recommended using *Vel blåst! Kommandør Chr. Christensens hvalfangstmuseum 75 år: 1917-1992* (1993) by the former managing director at the Whaling Museum, Einar Wexelsen, as a guide to the museum's history. *"Vel blåst"* means "Well blown", implying "Well done", all the while referring to the whale's blow. Wexelsen wrote the book for the museum's 75th anniversary as a homage to the

museum. Throughout the thesis, Wexelsen's observations and knowledge about the museum is used to complement my own.

To trace the fin whale's history, a collection register from 1943 was used. This was the only collection register that existed from the time before 1973, when Einar Wexelsen decided to properly register, catalogue and mark the museum's collection (1993: 23, 62). The 1943 register offers little information on the museum objects. However, it does feature a short account of the circumstances of the fin whale's death, as well as its size and whereabouts in the museum building.

Additionally, I utilised guestbooks from the Whaling Museum to search for comments about the animals on display. As a result of the reconstruction of the museum in 2018, only guestbooks from the period 2007-2012 were available at the time of my being there.

Throughout the thesis, sociologist Andreas Tjernshaugen's *Hvaleventyret*, "The whale adventure" (2018), is used as a source of the Norwegian history of pelagic whaling.

In order to write the fin whale's biography, I used the local paper, *Sandefjords blad*, formatted in microfilm from the National Library to piece together information about the whale when it was shot in 1918.

The blue whale model is studied within perspectives that have not necessarily been enlightened in the museum itself. The analysis of the model is as such a study of a museum object enlightened by literature.

In the study of the whale both as mythic creature and symbol for environmentalism, social-anthropologist and pro-whaler, Arne Kalland, brings up what I deem to be radical standpoints in *Management by Totemization: Whale Symbolism and the Anti-Whaling Campaign* (1993) and *Unveiling the whale: discourses on whales and whaling* (2012). His contributions have been important for challenging my own interpretations. Additionally, the environmental historian, Frank Zelko, uses critical environmentalism in order to place whales in the cultural history of the late 20th century in *From Blubber and Baleen to Buddha of the Deep: The Rise of the Metaphysical Whale* (2012). Zelko's work has been vital for seeing the cultural whale in an environmental perspective.

Regarding gender, sociologist Anna Samuelsson's doctoral thesis, *In the Theatre of Nature: Analysis of Natural History Exhibitions and Films from the Perspective of Cultural and Environmental Sociology* (2008), was referred to in order to apply feminist theory to animal studies. Additionally, historian Londa Schiebinger offers interesting commentary on

gender and natural history in *Why Mammals Are Called Mammals: Gender Politics in Eighteenth-Century Natural History* (1993).

Analytical framework

Exhibition analysis

Exhibition analysis was used to interpret my fieldwork. An exhibition analysis is a methodological framework to conduct research on the knowledge-making capacity of museum displays, as stated by museologist Stephanie Moser (2010: 22). Exhibition analysis describes the space surrounding the examined objects, including the colours, lighting, smells and sounds of the exhibition. The exhibition is tightly connected to the relationship that is created between the beholder and whale at the museum. Consequently, in the analysis of the whale displays, I introduce the whales with this methodological approach.

An exhibition is an integrated part of the museum institution. Moser suggests that the experience of an exhibition begins at the very museum building (2010: 24). In the case of the Whaling Museum, the experience of the exhibition starts in the actual town of Sandefjord. The museum is located on *Museumsgata*, "Museum Street", suggesting that the museum stands as a witness to town history. I spent part of my visit to Sandefjord in noting references to whaling and whales around town, such as restaurant names, the mall, the town square, street names, several statues and art works, and even the civic heraldry. Moreover, even the Clarion Collection Hotel Atlantic in Sandefjord exhibits several objects related to whales and whaling, and the hotel is frequently a venue for lectures and meetings regarding whaling. *Museumsgata* is in the town centre. Here, the Whaling Museum stands as a neoclassical landmark. It is built in tile and covered by a black mansard roof. The original main entrance is embellished with whaling motives in granite. At each side of the entrance, harpoon canons are placed, one of which apparently belonged to Svend Foyn (Wexelsen, 1993: 13). As such, the museum carries motions of consistence, of something unchanged, as well as pride, wealth and local patriotism.

Animal biography

In order to answer how the fin whale has been transformed in its afterlife, I have constructed a biography of the whale. As such, the material source has been written as an animal biography.

Animal biography is a specified branch of object biography, as is more commonly used in the study of tangible and material culture. Object biography allows for the researcher to follow the object's trajectory, from the time before becoming a museum object, and through the stages undertaken within the walls of a museum. Although material objects are often formed within cultural categories of systematization, certain scholars have proposed using object biography to obtain a less anthropocentric view of cultural heritage by removing humans as the locus of action. Things possess an otherness that we refuse them by subjecting them to categories and inscribing them only instrumental purposes, as suggested by archaeologist Torgeir Rinke Bangstad (2014). Materials have the ability to "speak back" and sometimes upset our presuppositions. In granting them the ability to do so, the agency of the object is removed from a restricted human realm (Harrison 2012; Webmoor 2007 *in* Bangstad 2014, 13).

Object biography may open for rethinking human meaning-making practices (Bangstad, 2014: 14). This is apparent when writing about a museum object that *has* lived, in the very literate sense of the word. As art historian Rachel Poliquin frames it, biographical narratives, whether for an animal or human-made object, are historical narratives for which the object of study is more interesting as material evidence of human activity than as the representative of a collection or classification (Poliquin, 2008: 129). In the biographical narrative of an animal, the life of the individual is at focus; more so than the presence of a particular species – unless that species has particular cultural significance (Poliquin, 2008: 129).

Animal biography may easily lead to some reasonable misunderstandings: It is necessary to divide between the live animal and the "afterlife" as a museum object. When writing about "the life" of an object, its life is often recognised to mean the trajectory of that object. When writing about dead animals at museums, however, "their lives" have ended. At the same time, their "afterlives" as inanimate objects have begun. The past of mounted animals separates them from other museum objects. Their lives from before they became museum objects renders museum animals with a dimension that human-made objects do not possess. Animal biography makes room for investigating the relationship between mounted animals and their various narratives (Poliquin, 2008: 125). Their afterlives include the various uses of the decreased animal.. In employing objects as material sources, they may provide material evidence of the mechanics and relationships that have enabled their existence as museum displays (Poliquin, 2008: 129).

When analysing the fin whale at the Whaling Museum, I try to read the skeleton as an individual that once lived. This means that I attempt to find traces of the animal's individuality in the representation before me. The objective for the biography is to make "someone" out of the animal representation. In so doing, I think that visitors may easier engage in a relationship with the individual animal.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

To answer the research questions, I required certain theoretical tools. The theoretical framework was chosen as the *key symbols* for the thesis as concepts that carry meaning central to the cultural framework that the research questions revolve around (Öhlander, 2011: 22). In the case of this paper, the key symbols are *museum*, *animal studies* and *whaling.*

It is essential to place the Whaling Museum in Sandefjord in museum history in order to understand the museum context of the displays. Furthermore, the animal biographies are a cultural study of animals. As such, the field of animal studies is introduced. Lastly, the context of whales and the Whaling Museum is linked to the history of Norwegian whaling.

The Whaling Museum in museum history

To place the Whaling Museum in Norwegian museum history, it is necessary to note that the distinction between culture, art and nature first arose during the 19th century (Brenna, 2006: 34). Several Norwegian 19th-century museums were a mixture of the three, the earliest example of this being Bergen Museum. Bergen Museum was founded in 1825 and was to be a "museum and cabinet of *naturalia*" (Eriksen, 2009: 50). The double formula suggests that museums and natural collections were not recognised as synonymous. Rather, the understanding was that museums displayed antiquities and art, whereas cabinets displayed *naturalia* (Eriksen, 2009: 51).

The purpose for most museums established in Norway during the 19th century was educational (Eriksen, 2009: 62). This was also the case for the museum that opened in 1894 in Tønsberg, a Vestfold town approximately 30 kilometres from Sandefjord (Eriksen, 2009: 66). Their main attraction was the skeleton of a whale, placed outdoors by the ruins of Tønsberg castle. The museum also received collections from local seamen, transforming the museum to that of local cultural history.

The first official fishing museums in Norway were established at the same time as the museums in Tønsberg, Bergen and Ålesund (Eriksen, 2009: 66). The museums displayed

boats and fishing tools, and were supposed to be educational, as well as driving forces for the development of the fishing industry. Later, several fishing museums were transformed into cultural history museums for their specific regions (Eriksen, 2009: 67). This is the context in which the Whaling Museum was established in 1917.

Museums are often, although not exclusively, associated with material things. Things can be understood in multiple ways: a thing presented in a certain way facilitates certain associations and relationships. Museologist Eilean Hooper-Greenhill refers to this as "time-subject-object-space" (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 3). Hooper-Greenhill reads Michel Foucault's *The Order of Things* (1962) in a museological context. Foucault argues that the order and classification of things is useful to recognize knowledge regimes throughout history. History in this context is to be understood as a depiction of ourselves rather than a chronological story of our origin (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 10). Foucault rejects the chronological timeline; a path through which the civilization develops; in which there exists "a next step". Rather, he looks at history as different ways of organizing and viewing the world. This is what Foucault calls "effective history". Hence, he introduced three epistemes; the Renaissance, the classical and the modern (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 12).

In the Renaissance episteme, there exists hidden relationships between objects, permitting endless play of symbols. The world is a place where hidden signs can be read everywhere; in resemblance, sameness, links, and relationships form the basic structure for knowledge (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 14). Nothing should be discarded as all could potentially be "true". In a museological context, this may be seen in natural history cabinets, the earliest example being *Dell'Historia Naturale* from 1599. Even though the Whaling Museum was established as late as 1917, some elements from the Renaissance epistemes might be identified in the museum. The museum is, in some ways, like a cabinet of wonder. The collection of natural artefacts is seemingly quite random. It includes an elephant seal and fur seal family, but also musk oxen and reindeer – animals that whalers never would have encountered in the Southern hemisphere. However, the animals at the museum do not only represent animals that whalers met, but animals from polar areas in general – no matter the whalers' relation to them. The animals only have in common - that they thrive in cold weather. This is, as such, their "link" and "resemblance" and therefore, to follow Foucault, their "hidden sign".

This differs from the classical episteme, where order, measurement and hierarchical structures were idealized (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 15). Things should no longer be drawn

together but set apart. Knowledge was simplified compared to the Renaissance episteme. Humans were bystanders in God's cabinet of wonder – a collection that might be classified to gain knowledge about the creation. Collections were made to create order in the chaos of nature. They were supposed to present examples of the works of nature, not the curious and rare. Natural history museums changed during the 19th century, from combining exhibitions and scientific research to create a structural division between exhibition and research - the so-called "new museum idea" (Lund, 2012: 20). Still, the ruling regime of zoological collections was to compare species' morphology and anatomy, as was the case at, for example, the Zoological Museum in Oslo when established in 1910 (Lund, 2012: 21). In Sandefjord, the classical episteme may be recognised in the collection of whale skeletons in the museum's basement, where size and zoological facts are presented and compared.

Foucault's final episteme is the modern one. Within the modern episteme, things are to be understood as organic, with several levels of complexity (Hooper-Greenhill, 1992: 17). Things are given a history, and relationships between parts and the functions they perform are of importance. Representation of nature is seen as a construction. The collection is not valued for its own part, but in relation to the collector and the user of the artefacts. In this episteme, the natural history museum becomes an institution that examines past and present encounters between humans and the rest of nature, for example through a historical presentation of human abuse on nature (Poliquin, 2008: 126).

Today, the Whaling Museum is part of the Vestfold Museums. The museum's mandate is to be a Norwegian centre for whales and whaling history, and, as claimed in the Norwegian Parliamentary Act on museums from 2009, *Framtidas museum*, "to focus on resource management and sustainable exploration of natural resources" (Kultur- og kirkedepartementet, 2009: 37). The museum is thus placed within the modern episteme, as am I in my study of cultural constructions of "natural" objects.

Cultural study of animals

Animal studies are a cross-disciplinary field that examines relations between animals and humans. The field is divided between the analysis of animal representation in history and culture, and the philosophical consideration of animal rights (Garrard, 2012: 146). The Utilitarian, Jeremy Bentham (1748-1832), presented the idea of animals as objects for moral consideration in Western philosophy as a critique to the reigning "Cartesian rationalism" (Garrard, 2012: 146). René Descartes (1596-1650) had effectively "hyper separated" reason

from emotion and mind from body, claiming animals to be little more than complex machines (2012: 147-148).

Animals may be conceived as fundamentally like or unlike humans. Influenced by Cartesian rationalism, scientific scholars have tended to be suspicious of anthropomorphism until quite recently, discarding any idea of animals having similar emotions to humans (Garrard, 2012: 157). Anthropomorphism means to ascribe human emotions to things such as computers, cars, musical instruments – and animals. An approximate example of anthropomorphism in this paper is the bottlenose dolphin's smile. Rationally, we know that "the smile" is only the permanent shape of the dolphin's mouth: Dolphins "smile" even in death. Even so, the smiling shape is misconstrued based upon human experience, making us think of dolphins as "friendly".

However, boundaries based upon Cartesian rationalism are results of cultural projections. To *not* ascribe human emotions to animals may also result in misleading conclusions. This human-animal dichotomy is called human-animal boundary work, effectively creating boundaries between humans and non-human animals (Samuelsson, 2008: 80). In recent years, "critical anthropomorphism" has been employed by scientists to understand animal behaviour (Garrard, 2012: 157).

Cultural attitudes towards animals change over time. As knowledge about animals is gained, lost, recovered, reshaped and reconstructed, our views and presentations of them are transformed, as well (Thorsen et al., 2013: 4). Modern humans mostly encounter animals that are either beloved (pets), familiar (birds) or invisible (rats), while fascination and remoteness of wild animals is provoked and informed by wildlife documentaries and movies – or, indeed, as taxidermized animals in museums (Garrard, 2012: 173). In the essay, *Why look at animals* (2009 (1980)), John Berger states that "to suppose that animals first entered the human imagination as meat or leather or horn is to project a 19th century attitude backwards across the millennia" (Berger, 2009 (1980): 12). Berger argues that animals first entered human imagination as messengers. Cattle, for example, had magical functions, sometimes oracular, sometimes sacrificial, and were not, at first, associated (only) with milk and meat (2009 (1980): 12). This view on animals meant that "each lion was Lion, each ox was Ox," and represented an idea of animal deity. Hence, they were subjected *and* worshipped, bred *and* sacrificed (2009 (1980): 16) "A peasant becomes fond of his pig and is glad to salt away its pork," Berger writes, and posits these dichotomies are difficult for a modern, urban human to grasp - that the relationship with animals is connected by an *and* and not by a *but* (ibid).

Animal studies are utilised to historicize animals, tracing human relation to animals through time-subject-object-space. The focal point is that at which culture and knowledge shape our reading of animals. In reading animals as cultural products, animal studies attempts to draw animals out of categories such as "biological" or "automata", in the words of Descartes, making the human/non-human boundary more permeable. As such, it is possible to conduct what ethnologist Liv Emma Thorsen refers to as "double reading" - to read an animal display both culturally and scientifically (Thorsen, 2009: 86).

During the 19th century, the decline of a species was often regarded as a reason to increase procuring them for personal trophy or scientific collections (Andrews, 2013: 148). Natural history museums are therefore often interesting institutions to examine past and present encounters between humans and non-human nature, as human abuse of nature is evident in many natural history collections. Preserving animals in museums was seen as saving nature even though it meant killing the animals in question. The narrative was that the museum gave the animal eternal life (Andrews, 2013: 148). An extinct species would still be possible to observe at a museum.

Whaling in Norway

Whales have equipped humans with an astonishing variety of products: meat and fat; oil for burning lamps and lubricating machinery; soap, perfume and corsets; as well as bones and teeth for grinding into fertilizer or carving into works of art (so-called *scrimshaw*) (Zelko, 2012: 92).

Norway is still a whaling nation, although the blue and fin whale are protected. Defending whaling for minke whales in *Vågehvalen: valgets kval,* "The minke whale – a though choice" (Stenseth et al., 1993), the authors argue that whaling is about more than employment and economy; it is about culture. As cited by Stenseth et al. [my translation]: "The consequences of ending whaling is not only a matter of some ships being put into disuse: Knowledge, attitude and skills will be lost" (Stenseth et al., 1993: 22).

Early Norwegian whaling, however, was nothing like modern hunting of minke whales; nor, for that matter, like the Vestfolders' hunting of the large rorquals of the Southern Ocean. Traditionally, whales in Norway were caught when stranded or trapped in narrow fjords (Mathisen, 1996: 109). Only some smaller whales were hunted for consumption by the Saami people in the Northern parts of the country. The majority of the whaling that took place along the Norwegian coast during the 16th and 17th centuries was not carried out by Norwegians at all, but by people from other European countries. The large-scale whaling that

is presented in Sandefjord was a phenomenon that begun only during the late 19th century; and this lasted for roughly 80 years.

Sociologist Andreas Tjernshaugen introduces the Norwegian history of pelagic whaling of the blue whale in *Hvaleventyret* (2018). As the Americans built facilities to boil blubber on board ships in the early 19th century, pelagic whaling became a world-wide industry (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 24). The Norwegian "adventure" commenced with Svend Foyn (1809-1894). Foyn was from Tønsberg in Vestfold, and became the richest man in town thanks to sealing in Greenland (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 20). During the 1860s, he decided that he wanted to hunt rorqual whales. He seemed to think of it almost like a religious duty; "God made the whale for man to use and benefit, so I considered it my calling to establish this fishery," he later wrote, as cited by Tjernshaugen [my translation] (2018: 21).[3] Traditionally, blue, fin and humpback whales were considered to be almost impossible to catch (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 21). Bowhead whales, otherwise known as right whales, were those suffering from excessive hunting during the early 19th century. Right whales were slow and, because of their thick blubber, floated when shot (2018: 23). Hence, the name - right whales; the right whale to hunt. Rorqual whales, such as blue, fin and humpback whales, however, were fast, strong and sunk when shot. Once the harpoon hit, they would drag the ship far out to sea, eventually dying from loss of blood and prolonged battle (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 30). During the early 1870s, Svend Foyn constructed the perfect hunting tool - a barbed harpoon that could be fired from a shipboard cannon and explode inside the whale as it hit, simultaneously securing the whale with rope (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 30, Zelko, 2012: 92). The dangerous practice of hunting whales with hand-thrown harpoon was quickly replaced by the high-tech harpoon, and shifted the odds completely in the whaler's favour (Zelko, 2012: 92). Furthermore, whaling ships became exceedingly faster, making it easier to hunt speedy rorquals. To prevent whales from sinking when shot, a device that pumped compressed air into the whale carcass was invented. At the end of the 1880s, Foyn sold licenses for new companies, bringing Sandefjord into the whaling business (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 55). Shortly thereafter, Christer Christensen brought the industry into the Southern Ocean (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 76, 94).

The Norwegians continued to be at the forefront of whaling technology well into the 20th century (Zelko, 2012: 93). The difficulty of processing large whales on the open ocean was finally dealt with in the 1920s as enormous factory ships were developed, enabling

[3] *«Gud havde ladet Hvalen gaa der til Menneskenes Nytte og Gavn, saa jeg ansaa det som mit Kald at opphjælpe det Fiskeri.»*

whales to be dragged aboard to be flensed, boiled, rendered and packed into barrels. Soon, few whales stood a chance when meeting with an advanced whaling fleet.

It is mostly pelagic whaling from the beginning of the 20th century that is on display in Sandefjord. As was recalled by a member of staff at the museum, the town narrative is that whaling brought employment to the citizens of Sandefjord and great wealth for Sandefjord businessmen. At the Whaling Museum, there is a screening of the documentary, *Blåst forut*, "There she blows" (1992), in the basement. Owing to the absent cultural history department at the Whaling Museum in 2018, this was one of few displays to actually cover whalers at a whaling ship at the time of my being at the museum. The film is about whaling during the 1960s and shows devastated whalers. As a consequence of the low number of whales in the Southern Ocean at the time, the whaling season brought in little in the way of profit.

In 1966, blue whale hunting was banned by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 257). During the following decades, all whale species became temporarily protected. In 1994, however, Norway decided to maintain a limited amount of whaling for minke whales (Mathisen, 1996: 125). The Norwegian whaling for minke whales can be traced back to the 1930s in the Lofoten area among ordinary fishermen (Mathisen, 1996: 109, 110). The current Norwegian policy on whaling is that this is sustainable harvesting of renewable, natural resources and that a nation has a right to manage its own marine resources (Mathisen, 1996: 108). Whaling in Norway is now seen as a chance for fishermen to make some additional earnings during the "low" summer season.

PART ONE – A CULTURAL STUDY OF A BLUE WHALE MODEL

In order to answer how the blue whale model at the Whaling Museum can be perceived as a representation of whales in myth, environmentalism and gender, the analysis of the whale has been divided into four sub-chapters. First, the model is introduced with the methodological approach of an exhibition analysis, described as it is displayed at the Whaling Museum. Secondly, the model is viewed in the context of whales as mythical creatures. In the third sub-chapter, the whale is interpreted as a symbol of environmentalism and in the fourth, the model is interpreted as a gendered object.

1. The whale in the ceiling

The blue whale, *Balaenoptera musculus,* is the largest animal on earth. There are four recognised subspecies: *Balaenoptera musculus musculus*, the Northern blue whale, *Balaenoptera musculus intermedia*, the Antarctic or Southern blue whale; *Balaenoptera musculus indica*, the Indian Ocean blue whale; and *Balaenoptera musculus brevicauda*, the pygmy blue whale – a misleading name, as it is the size of a fin whale. An average blue whale measures between 23-24.5 metres long, but animals are observed to be as large as 33 meters. The blow is tall and straight and can reach 10 meters. Blue whales are commonly seen in pairs, although larger groups have been observed. The blue whale is grey in colour, but on the sea surface, it seems turquoise – thereby their name (See Appendix 1: Drawings of *Balaenoptera physalus* and *Balaenoptera musculus*) (Marinebio.org, 2007a).

When arriving through the original main entrance at Commander Chr. Christensen's Whaling Museum, one enters an entrance hall with Art Nouveau-inspired decorations. The vestibule leads to staircases on each side. Although possible to start the visit by climbing the stairs, the intuitive reflex is to head towards the large wooden doors leading to the main hall. Here, the blue whale model looms from above.

The blue whale model makes a powerful impression. It was built especially for the museum's opening in 1917 and is constructed by wooden laths secured with iron pledges and covered by wire mesh (Wexelsen, 1993: 26). The model measures 21 meters and is estimated to weigh 15 tons: as such, it takes up most of the room. The whale is coloured dark grey. Its colour and shadow darkens the exhibition hall even though almost 15 windows can be counted on each side. During my visit, only two windows were shedding light through cathedral glass in different colours. The other windows were covered with black blinds. Earlier, the main hall's floor was made to resemble a ship deck with black-painted wood and a

light sway on both sides (Wexelsen, 1993: 13). Now, the floor is laminated with a "neutral" grey as if not supposed to be given much attention.

The hall is embroidered with galleries on three sides with iron railings, supported by columns. The floor is still covered by dark wood in the galleries. No matter where the visitor is located in the museum, the whale is too large to garner a comprehensive view. However, the upper part of the model is better viewed from the galleries. One may notice the whale's eye from up there. It does not look directly at the visitor; rather it stares into the wall above; quite out of reach. Lighting is placed only at the ceilings under and above the galleries, facing the mounted polar animals on each side of the whale. The mounted animals underneath the whale, including an unnatural huge elephant seal, musk oxen and leopard seal, are not luminated and neither is the whale. It hangs quite low; there is maybe half a meter between the oversized elephant seal and whale's bog.

Whales are difficult to taxidermize. The world's only taxidermized blue whale was caught by fishermen on the Swedish coast in 1865 and is displayed at the Natural History Museum in Gothenburg (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 11, 13). Whale skeletons have been the most practical, and hence the most typical to exhibit. Yet, even Herman Melville noted that "the naked skeleton of the stranded whale… gives very little idea of his shape," (Rossi, 2010: 345). To compromise, the American Museum of Natural History made a real-life model of a blue whale in 1907. This model would later inspire the one at Sandefjord (Wexelsen, 1993: 26). The American model measures 23 meters and was crafted out of similar materials as the Sandefjord one (Rossi, 2010: 339). Measurements, photographs, casts and scientists were consulted for the whale to look authentic (Rossi, 2010: 341). As Rossi points out, authenticity "was a quality to be laboriously produced and maintained" (2010: 340). In the General Guide for the American Museum of Natural History from 1911, the whale was emphasised to be a replica of an original specimen captured in Newfoundland (Rossi, 2010: 343). The whale should by no means be devaluated to a generic model: The specific animal it resembled had a specific history. As such, the model was to be no less authentic than any taxidermized animal at the museum. As with a taxidermized animal, "careful measurements" were vital for the model, only not by re-enacting the remains (2010: 343). Correspondingly, specialist consultants were requested to make the model in Sandefjord as authentic as possible (Wexelsen, 1993: 26).

According to Wexelsen, the blue whale model in Sandefjord was originally based upon a drawing by Georg Ossian Sars (1837-1927) (Wexelsen, 1993: 26). Georg Ossian Sars was professor in zoology at the University of Christiania [Oslo] from 1874. In the summer

that very year, he was in Vadsø in Finnmark to observe whales caught by businessman and whaler, Svend Foyn (1809-1894), who was experimenting with harpoon cannons (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 41). Sars got the opportunity to examine 10 different blue whales of both sexes, young ones as well as adults. When Sars returned home, he held a lecture titled *Om "Blaahvalen"*, "About 'the blue whale", in *Videnskaps-Selskabet* in Christiania, and drew a big, pregnant whale for the occasion (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 43). This could be the model that the blue whale in Sandefjord is based upon (see Appendix 3: The blue whale by Georg Ossian Sars). Sars' drawings of various whale species can be found hanging in the staff office at the Whaling Museum.

Sars had probably never seen a living whale up close. His drawings were based upon dead animals. At the time, zoologists did not know how whales used their flippers to manoeuvre under water (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 43). In the drawing, the flippers are held close to the body, not stretched out like on a swimming whale. This error seems to have been copied in the model in Sandefjord.

The whale in Sandefjord hangs from the ceiling. On the floor, there is a genuine blue whale jaw (See Appendix 2: The blue whale model at the Whaling Museum). A zoologist visiting the Whaling Museum noted that the jaw was placed upside-down. This was probably for aesthetic reasons and demonstrates that the museum did not display whales (purely) for science. The placement of the jaw on the floor arouses associations with the Natural History Museum in Gothenburg as well as the Natural History Museum in Stockholm. At these museums, visitors have (had) the opportunity to enter the exhibited whale's open mouth. Culturally, it makes a link to the Book of Jonah, where the biblical Jonah was swallowed by a great fish when thrown into sea: "And Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights" before the fish vomited him onto dry land (Jon 2,1b). The great fish is generally thought to be a whale. At the Natural History Museum in Gothenburg, it was previously possible to enter the whale's gut, making the reference more apparent (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 15). The blue whale's mouth in Sandefjord is not open, but when entering the museum through the main entrance, visitors are met with the gigantic jaw on the floor and the whale above, rendering the impression of an open mouth. To follow the association further, the rest of the main hall could be interpreted like being inside the whale.

At many natural history exhibitions, animals are displayed without the presence of humans. When sociologist Anna Samuelsson interprets the exhibition, *Sveriges natur*, "Nature in Sweden", at the Natural History Museum in Stockholm, she notes that it is created as if

humans are non-existent, a submission to the traditional border between wilderness and civilization (Samuelsson, 2008: 150). This creates a dichotomy between nature, the realm of animals, and culture, the realm of humans. This is not the case at the Whaling Museum. Here, nature is fashioned as a human resource, the animals subjected to humans' conquering gaze. Humans are placed in nature, emphasised by a man placed in a masthead behind the blue whale model, just like he would have been on a traditional whaling ship. The placement of the man in the masthead suggests that blue whale model is frozen in an image where it is soon to be shot, a perhaps more honest display of animals compared to many natural history museums.

2. A myth, or, The Whale

In maritime cultures all over the world, people have been fascinated by the whale and built it up into a creature with mythical abilities. This aura of myth is arguably present at the Whaling Museum. The blue whale model is surrounded by cathedral windows of different colours, giving the hall "an almost sacral light", as cited by Einar Wexelsen (1993: 13). The neo-classical building seems to confirm the impression of something fairy-tale like, nursed by the blue whale model as a fantastic beast.

Exhibited animals have often been portrayed as "modern fables" according to Anna Samuelsson (2008: 84). They have been mounted to be characters in a fable, symbolising different narratives and tales based upon human virtues, vices and shortcomings. As with the cunning fox, the cruel wolf and pious lamb, the whale has been featured with human characteristics in various cultures. In this sub-chapter, examples of the whale as a mythical creature is examined, from ancient Greece until modern times.

Often, cetaceans have been portrayed as "good" and "friendly" creatures. In Greek mythology, the sun god, Apollo, turned himself into a dolphin to rescue people lost in a gale. Besides this, friendship between dolphins and boys is a common theme in several stories and illustrations from ancient Greece (Kalland, 2012: 34). In the book of Jonah, the great fish, or the whale for argument's sake, swallowed Jonah. However, the whale did not kill or eat him. Rather, the whale preserved Jonah for three days and three nights. As the eminent biblical studies researcher, Alexander Izuchukwu Abasili, suggests, the whale was kind and fair, and in obedience to God by saving Jonah (Abasili, 2017: 252). In several non-Western cultures, whales and dolphins are portrayed as shapeshifting creatures; both in the Amazon and Micronesia, dolphins are believed to take human form to attend village celebrations, and

people in some Oceanic societies turn into dolphins when they die. The Haida people in British Columbia believe that humans take the form of orcas when they drown (Kalland, 2012: 34). In Japan, whales have been regarded as the embodiment of Ebisu, the patron deity of fishing, and in Vietnam, cetaceans receive human-like funerals to become "Angels of the Sea" (Kalland, 2012: 34). In *Kongespeilet*, "King's mirror", a text believed to have been written in Norway during the 13th century, whales are described as having healing abilities (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 65). In 1640, the Icelandic writer, Jon Gudmundsson, describes *steypirereydur*, believed to be rorqual whales, and how they were the best and most holy of all whales. If evil whales were damaging ships, the *steypirereydur* would save the seafaring men (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 66).

The latter examples, however, also depict the presence of "evil" and "monstrous" notions of whales. The term "cetaceans", from the Greek, *ketos,* means "huge fish" or "sea monster" (Liddell and Scott, 1940). In biblical terms, the sea monster, the *leviathan*, is sometimes portrayed as a giant squid, sometimes sea serpent and sometimes a whale. The Finnish Swedish naturalist, Sigfrid Aron Forsius, wrote about "troll whales" in 1611 (Svanberg, 2018: 149). Troll whales wrecked ships, and the only way to expel them was to use *bäfuer gäll* – that is to say, castoreum, or exudate from beavers' castor sacs (Svanberg, 2018: 149). Apparently, castoreum was used to keep "troll whales" away from ships even as late as the 1800s in the Faroe Islands (ibid). In Scandinavia, stranded whales were believed to be bad omens: A whale stranded on the coast of Sweden in 1333 was assumed to be a warning of the coming war. Likewise, a huge whale stranded in Scandia in Sweden in 1709 assumingly led to troubled times, and a sperm whale stranded in 1718 was seen as an omen for the death of Swedish King Charles XII that took place shortly thereafter (Svanberg, 2018: 154).

In addition to these mythical stories, novels like *Moby Dick* (1851) by Herman Melville, a tale inspired by an actual incident when a sperm whale attacked and wrecked the Nantucket whaling ship, *Essex*, in 1820, as well as *The Adventures of Pinocchio* (1883) by Carlo Collodi, where the marionette, Pinocchio, and his father, Geppetto, is swallowed by a dogfish (a shark) in the book, portrayed as an evil whale called *Monstro* in the Disney adaption from 1940, both define whales as "evil" creatures.

Myths still surround the whale according to the social anthropologist and pro-whaler, Arne Kalland (1993, 2012). The whale became a symbol for the environmentalist movement during the 1970s owing to the great anti-whaling campaign at the time. The campaign was allegedly

inspired by the release of the long-playing record, *Songs of the Humpback Whale*, in 1970 that "opened up" the world of whales (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 259). However, when *Songs of the Humpback Whale* has been used in anti-whaling campaigns, the argument evolved from being a biodiversity argument, to becoming a "special creature" argument, according to Kalland (*in* Mathisen 1996: 108). The whale is relocated from being a symbol of threatened nature into a unique kind of creature. Whales come to represent more than environmental concern; they became totem animals. Kalland characterises this totem creature as the "super whale":

> "We are told that "the whale" is the largest animal on earth (this applies to the blue whale); that it has the largest brain on earth (the sperm whale); that is has a large brain-to-body weight ratio (the bottlenose dolphin); that it sings nicely (the humpback whale); that is has nurseries (some dolphins); that it is friendly (the grey whale); that it is endangered (the blue and right whales) and so on. By talking about the whale, an image of a single whale possessing all these traits emerges. But such a creature does not exist. It is a mythic creation - a "super whale" which has come to represent all species of cetaceans"
>
> (Kalland, 1993: 126)

Kalland contends that whales only are exceptional because they are perceived as such (1993: 126). The uniqueness of the whale is a cultural product, created by urban people in the Western world under certain economic and political conditions. The anti-whaling campaigners have created an animal that is "large and smart and fond of music and friendly and caring and so on" (Kalland, 1993: 127). Kalland has several explanations as to why the super whale was created. First, it is common to attribute preferential attitudes towards large and juvenile-looking animals, making whales likely candidates for "totemic treatment." Secondly, whales form an anomalous category of animals, falling into a "betwixt and between" classification. They have traits found in various species (both fish and mammal) and are consequently difficult to place in our cognitive maps. Thirdly, Kalland states whales live in the oceans, which humans know little about. Salt and water have religious aspects - as purifying agents in religious rites throughout the world. Kalland puts forth that: "The ocean becomes the ultimate symbol of purity, of untouched nature", and thus stands in contrast to the polluted soil on which we land mammals live (1993: 127).

I agree with Kalland that the common idea of "the whale" in Western culture is a mixture of several whale species. However, I do not necessarily adhere to Kalland's conclusion. Kalland thinks that the "special creature" argument is invalid, and that such a

contention should not suffice to end whaling. I think that it is wise to turn the question around; rather than asking why should the animal not be hunted, one might ask – why should they? Food taboos exist in one form or another in every society on earth, whether it is because of group identity, out of ecological necessity to protect a resource or as an expression of empathy (Meyer-Rochow, 2009: 8). In the case of rorqual whales, humans pushed them to the brink of extinction, effectively making room for a food taboo. This food taboo has later developed into an expression of empathy, commonly found in animals categorized as pets, such as dogs, cats and horses. These animals all have in common that they are seen as individuals rather than a "mass" of anonymous creatures. In learning about whales' intelligence, old age and slow reproduction, or indeed perceiving the whale as a mythical creature, the whale becomes an individual. This individuality evokes sympathy for someone with personality and will to live. At a time when humans are continuously overexploiting nature, it is my opinion that this expression of empathy should expand rather than diminish.

There is still much we do not know about whales; hence, the whale remains a mythic creature. However, there has been a dramatic shift from the Moby Dick-inspired image of whales as vicious leviathans of the deep into a human-like, kind and playful animal that rescues us at sea. In some ways, then, the mythic whale from the Icelandic 1640 seems to be alive in our imagination, and thereby apparent in meeting with the blue whale model at the Whaling Museum. As the next sub-chapter will delve into, this mythic image has further transformed into a symbol of protection and environmentalism.

3. "Save the whales!"

By the 1970s, particularly in Western culture, whales and dolphins had become cultural icons for the environment movement (Zelko, 2012: 95-96). This was also evident when I had the opportunity to browse through guestbooks at the Whaling Museum during my fieldwork, where several international visitors had written comments that included "Save the whales!" (see examples in Appendix 4: Comments in guestbooks at the Whaling Museum). In this subchapter, this symbolism and cultural conception is further evaluated.

The pamphlet, *The Whaling Museum – An Exciting Learning Experience* (Hvalfangstmuseet, 2007), was produced for the Whaling Museum's 90th anniversary. The pamphlet states that the museum possesses both cultural history and natural history collections, effectively giving the museum a chance to "(…) examine human undertakings and the influence they have had

on nature." (Hvalfangstmuseet, 2007: 3). According to this pamphlet, the Whaling Museum is supposed to be a place for people to experience, learn and reflect to gain an understanding of the link between past and future, human and nature (Hvalfangstmuseet, 2007: 2). The museum is to deal with "the management of whale resources, the consequences of whaling and the activities and decision which led to the decimation of several whale species" (Hvalfangstmuseet, 2007: 3). This view is relatively new; when animals have been given so much room at the Whaling Museum previously, it has been because they showed the benefits of the whalers; not the interaction between human culture and nature, as stated by Wexelsen (1993: 29).

Environmental historian Frank Zelko has written about the whale as a cultural icon in Western culture in the 20th century. During the first half of the century, the whale was still considered to be a monstrous creature of the deep. *Time* magazine reported in 1954 that a group of American soldiers had slaughtered a pack of 100 orcas off the coast of Iceland (Zelko, 2012: 91). The whales were described by the magazine as "savage sea cannibals up to 30 ft. long and with teeth like bayonets," and they were thought to be a menace to the local fishing industry. Apparently, the U.S. Navy routinely used whales for target practice throughout the 1950s, "pretending that they were Soviet submarines" (Mowat, 1972 *in* Zelko, 2012: 91). Though, within little more than a decade, the Western public's attitude to whales changed completely.

Despite a massive collapse in whale populations during the 20th century, obvious to virtually everyone involved, each individual whaling firm or nation insisted on curbing its practices, proposing that the others would merely take a greater share for themselves if they quit (Zelko, 2012: 93). It was as such an excellent example of Garrett Hardin's "tragedy of the commons", a situation where individual users act independently according to their own self-interest and thereby contrary to the common good of all users (a situation which, incidentally, frequently appears in the current debate on emissions and climate change) (Hardin, 1968).

The American whale biologist, Remington Kellogg, worked hard to convince *National Geographic*'s editors to steer clear of references to cetacean "monstrosity" when he wrote an article about whales in 1940 (Zelko, 2012: 93). Instead, he tried to appeal to readers' anthropomorphism, and exposed a new image of whales as noble and endangered wildlife (Zelko, 2012: 94).

In 1946, an International Whaling Convention was held in Washington DC, leading to the formation of the IWC. The IWC still acts as the international regulator of whaling (Zelko, 2012: 94). The IWC turned to science as an objective arbiter in the debate, hoping for factual

argumentation against whaling. However, many scientists saw their job as justifying whatever number of whales their own nations were able to catch. They developed the notion that hunting whales benefited the whale population - fewer whales meant more food for the remaining individuals; these whales would necessarily grow faster and larger, breed earlier and more frequently, and ultimately develop into a fitter and more productive population (Zelko, 2012: 95).

During the United Nations Conference on the Human Environment in Stockholm in 1972 (the Stockholm Conference), the United States suggested banning whaling of all kinds. This suggestion comes as a result of several factors: First and foremost, science had determined there to be high intelligence in whales and dolphins. Secondly, as previously mentioned, the release of *Songs of the Humpback Whale* in 1970 "opened up" the world of whales (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 259). The "song" of rorqual whales was first discovered by military-listening buoys after the Second World War. The recordings were classified as secret for a long time (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 85). Before this discovery, the only "sounds" whales were assumed to make were when blowing through their breathing hole. The blowing intensified in shot whales that struggled to breath, and was described by whalers as roaring (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 85). The record supplied further evidence to bolster the theory that cetaceans had sophisticated communication systems similar to our own. It inspired numerous artists to record songs incorporating cetacean "music" (Zelko, 2012: 97). The humpback whale became the very symbol for whale protectionists. In addition to its song, the humpback whale is photogenic, often jumping out of water and displaying its whole body when up for a breath (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 260). The blue and fin whale, however, usually only display their breathing holes before disappearing under the surface again.

Thirdly, marine theme parks became increasingly popular in the United States (Zelko, 2012: 96). Although highly controversial today, theme parks such as SeaWorld showed clever and playful bottlenose dolphins and killer whales, whose tricks, vocalizations and apparent delight in interacting with humans won the hearts of numerous people (Zelko, 2012: 96). In addition to these factors, Walt Disney released the short, animated film, *The Whale Who Wanted to Sing at the Met*, in 1946 produced by the same people responsible for *Bambi* – and just as with *Bambi,* the film created a sympathetic view of a creature "whose only goal was to please humans and live in peace and harmony with the rest of nature" (Zelko, 2012: 97). In 1963, the movie, *Flipper*, and subsequently the television series by the same name, was released – a kind of aquatic version of *Lassie* that saved the day whenever his human friends got themselves into trouble (Zelko, 2012: 97).

As a result, non-whaling countries joined one after another in the IWC, and in 1982, an international whaling moratorium was a fact (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 260).

Environmentalism is the concern for ecological systems. This differs from animal welfare, which is the concern for the well-being of individual animals. When Kalland accuses whale protectionists of creating the super whale, he accuses them as animal rights activists, not as environmentalists per se (Kalland, 1993: 125). The debate against whaling can be separated between the "biodiversity argument" and the "whales as special creatures" argument (Mathisen, 1996: 108). The "whales as special creatures" argument has been dominant in the anti-whaling movement. This makes it difficult to initiate the same kind of campaign for other animals that are endangered or otherwise suffering from human abuse. To cite Zelko, "the "save the whales" movement, with its emphasis on cetaceans' putatively unique intelligence, may have hindered other animal welfare or animal rights campaigns" (Zelko, 2012: 105-106).

The anti-whaling campaign is a striking example of how quickly human attitudes toward a particular species can change. However, the IWC still allows for whaling in Greenland, where minke, humpback, Greenland and fin whales are hunted every year. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines in the West Indies allow whaling for humpback whales. In Iceland, there is still whaling on fin and minke whales, while Japan still hunts several species of whale. Russia hunts for grey whales and the United States opened hunting for Greenland whales. Besides, the IWC do not regulate traditional hunting of smaller whales in several countries (Svanberg, 2018: 151). This in addition to the Norwegian hunting of minke whales.

There are no reliable statistics surrounding how many whales were killed during the 19th century. From the year 1900, however, as many as 379 185 blue whales are known to have been killed by whalers, including the illegal whaling by the Soviet Union during the 1970s. Most of the whales were caught in the Southern hemisphere; just a mere 15 500 blue whales have been caught in the Northern hemisphere during the last century (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 259). When the hunting of blue whales ended in the Southern Ocean, there were between 150 and 840 blue whales left (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 264). The blue whale is still threatened. As a consequence of their long lifespan (blue whales can grow as old as humans), it is unknown whether the next generation of blue whales carry the genetic variations needed to avoid diseases and environmental changes (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 264). Additionally, new threats have arisen: Shipping traffic, plastic pollution, noise pollution, and climate change reducing

krill and acidifying the sea are all human-made threats to whale populations (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 265-267).

These threats are of increasing interest and adding to our conception of whales. When a Cuvier's beaked whale appeared just outside of Bergen in 2017, the whale became a symbol of human impact on sea life in Norway. Its bog was full of plastic bags, and pictures of the plastic-filled whale were shared extensively on social media. At a conference in Oslo in 2019, ethnologist Connie Reksten held a lecture, *Å snuble over en hval*, "To stumble upon a whale", about the "Plastic whale". Reksten dissected how the whale transformed from being conceived as a "strong and great" animal to an "innocent victim" (Reksten, 2019: 26-27). At the time of writing the thesis, a pregnant sperm whale was found dead in Italy with 22 kg plastic in its stomach, making headlines all over the world (Aronsen, 2019). Furthermore, the protest group, *Extinction Rebellion*, arranged for a protest on the 23rd of April 2019, where approximately 100 people laid down under the blue whale skeleton at the Natural History Museum in London to raise awareness of the "sixth mass extinction" (BBC News, 2019). There are no available sources describing why the protest group chose to lay underneath this exact animal, but the fact that the whale had been a heavy symbol for the conservation movement suggests that this species was not randomly chosen. These factors indicate that the whale still is associated with environmental issues.

4. Gendered animal in a gendered culture

In this subchapter, the blue whale model is investigated as a gendered object. Though not always visible for the observer, I argue that gender might be a relevant perspective regarding how the whale model is displayed in addition to how it might be perceived. Both the gender of the model, but also the gendered culture surrounding the museum, is applied to the object.

As claimed by Wexelsen, the blue whale model is based upon a drawing by Sars. The only one I have found thus far is a drawing of a pregnant whale that Sars showed his students after his expedition to Vadsø in 1874. This suggests that the blue whale model is female. For both male and female blue whales, only a linear cleft is visible where the genitalia are placed when not in mating season. This linear cleft is visible also in the blue whale model, revealing little about its sex. However, the model is also designed with mammaries intact, signifying both her being a female and mammal.

Gender is an interesting component of animal studies. It may be used to personify the animal. When the animal remains an "it", a barrier is created; they are *no one*. Using pronouns

such as “she” or “he”, the animal is personified, becoming *someone*. When professor in cultural studies, Anita Maurstad, created an exhibition about how nature is staged in culture, represented by human relationships with cod (the fish), she had involuntarily managed to ignore gender (Maurstad, 2018: 85). The cod remained an “it”, the gender forgotten. Drawing a link from *materialising,* Maurstad introduces *animaling* as a verb to describe how the dichotomy “human-animal” is moulded (Maurstad, 2018: 86). Humans’ perspective changes the animals’ identity – or, the humans’ way to act around them. Like the discursive regimes which produced the word “queer”, as opposed to the heterosexual norm, the word “animal” is opposed to “human” (Birke et al., 2004: 169). The noun “queer” emerges from a hegemonic discourse, positing a dichotomy between the heterosexual norm and “queer” irregularity. Analogously, the noun “animal” is linked to hegemonic discourses that rely on assumptions about the essence of “animal” or “human”. “The animal” in these essentializing discourses becomes that which is not human (Birke et al., 2004: 169).

Gender categorizes our society and creates culture. As such, gender makes us feel differently about individual beings. As Maurstad rightly underscores, the story about Moby Dick would have been interpreted and understood differently if the whale went by *Nancy Dick* (Maurstad, 2018: 86).

Arguably, gender is present at the Whaling Museum: There are several whale foetuses on display, witnessing shooting of pregnant females, and in the corner on the right side of the galleries, a blue whale penis lamp shines in all its glory (not surprisingly one of the most popular artefacts for school classes).

To some extent, the whales’ gender was also relevant for whalers. The protection of mothers and their calves was discussed as early as in 1914 and was one of the first restrictions on whaling adopted by international law (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 139, 214). When engaged in fieldwork, a guide told me about a whaler that expressly felt sorrow when out at sea and finding viable foetuses in shot animals. Another account regarding gender is a story from zoologist Ørjan Olsen in 1912 - whalers had spotted a large whale; she was 28 meters and had a thick layer of blubber as she was nursing. When the whaling ship approached, the whale did nothing to escape. When she was shot, she continued to lay still on the surface, weakened as she had just given birth. The umbilical cord was still stuck on the new-born calf, the tale crumpled (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 142).

Yet another gendered aspect was when whales were flanged along the ship. The previously mentioned cleft was useful to get a better grip of the whale. As a consequence, the

boys that had the task of attaching their tools in the animal's skin were commonly called *"fitteskipperen"*, "the cunt skipper" (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 190).

A common occurrence at natural history exhibitions is the display of female animals as "lonely mothers". In the exhibition, *Sveriges natur*, at the Natural History Museum in Stockholm, this is evident both with the moose, deer, otter and boar according to Anna Samuelsson (2008: 165). While the appearance of "the mother" in the animal kingdom [*sic*] is repeated all over the exhibition in *Sveriges natur*, not one animal is characterised as "the father" (Samuelsson, 2008: 166).

Another frequent scenario is to present female animals as passive receivers of the male, as is the case of the moose in the exhibition in Stockholm. The museum plate states that: "The cow is only receptive for one day – the meeting is short and intense" [my translation], suggesting that the cow takes no active part in the mating (Samuelsson, 2008: 165).

Likewise, signal animals presented at museums are typically adult male (Haraway, 1984: 37). Taxidermist Carl Akeley (1864-1926) describes in his hunting notes that even though he cared for the reconstruction of fine cows or lionesses, it was never necessary to "take weeks and risk the success of the entire enterprise to find the perfect female" (Haraway, 1984: 37). Similarly, male animals are typically prepared as "the norm" animal in dioramas and characteristically placed at the centre of the display with female animals surrounding him in the background (Samuelsson, 2008: 163). Correspondingly, the diorama of a fur seal family in the main hall at the Whaling Museum and the sea elephant underneath the blue whale model are such representations of male animals. The fur seal male is in the centre of the diorama, being the protector of "his family". The elephant seal is a huge specimen of his species, impressive in all his might.

Arguably, this is not the case for the blue whale model. As female rorquals grow larger than males, it is not even necessarily the "male animal" that is "the most impressive" among them. Nor is the whale portrayed as a mother. The "gendered whale" may not be present in the whale representation. Still, assuming that the whale's gender is chosen for a reason, it is interesting to discuss what the whale as a female might indicated.

As argued by Kalland (1993) in the previous subchapter, whales are easily totemized because they have traits found in both fish and mammals (1993: 127). The fact that whales are mammals, and therefore related to humans, may make them even more fascinating to us. Carolus Linnaeus (also known as Carl von Linné) introduced the term, *Mammalia*, into

zoological taxonomy in 1758, thus placing both humans and whales in the same category (Schiebinger, 1993: 382). This was highly controversial. For one, whales were assumed to be fish. In the United States in 1818, a New York City jury heard two long days of testimony from the leading scientific figures at the time on the question of whether whales were fish or not because it was a matter of taxes (Bouk and Burnett, 2008: 434). The jury concluded to reject the whale as some sort of kin to mankind - they insisted that whales were fish (ibid).

Furthermore, the question of *mammalia* is interesting as a gendered topic. As historian Londa Schiebinger writes in the article, *Why Mammals Are Called Mammals: Gender Politics in Eighteenth-Century Natural History* (1993), Linnaeus devised a word meaning literally "of the breast" to distinguish the class of animals embracing humans, apes, dogs, mice and whales. In so doing, he made the female mammae the icon of that class (Schiebinger, 1993: 382). Schiebinger contends that it is possible to see this as a political act on Linnaeus' part. Of Linnaeus' zoological divisions, only the *Mammalia* class focused on reproductive organs and highlighted a characteristic associated with the female (Schiebinger, 1993: 384). Linnaeus could have derived a term from other unique and more universal characteristics of the class he designated mammals, for example *Pilosa*, the hairy ones, or *Aurecaxnga*, the hollow-eared ones (Schiebinger, 1993: 383). Furthermore, if insisting on nursing as the common denominator for all mammals, terms such as *Lactentia* or *Sugentia* (both meaning "the suckling ones") would have better universalized the term as both males and females suckle their mothers' breasts (Schiebinger, 1993: 392). However, as Schiebinger puts forth, Linnaeus created his term, *Mammalia*, in response to the question of humans' place in nature. In his quest to find an appropriate term for uniting humans and beasts, Linnaeus made the fully developed female breast the icon of the highest class of animals. In the same volume, Linnaeus introduced the name *Homo sapiens*. This term, "man of wisdom", was used to distinguish humans from other primates, like apes and lemurs (Schiebinger, 1993: 393). "Man" had traditionally been distinguished from animals by his reason; the *animal rationale*. Therefore, within Linnaean terminology, a female characteristic (the lactating mamma) ties humans to brutes, while a traditionally male characteristic (reason) marks our separateness (Schiebinger, 1993: 394). Linnaeus followed well-established Western conceptions when he suggested that women belong to nature in ways that men do not (Schiebinger, 1993: 395). Following this, a female whale might symbolize exactly that; female as nature, and male as culture.

Norwegian whalers were men. When founded, the Whaling Museum represented exclusively male industry and male history. Based on pelagic whaling, whalers were at sea for six to seven months every year from September/October to April/May (Garmel, 2010: 2). The men's homecoming was a highlight for families, and they often brought gifts (Garmel, 2010: 4). During my fieldwork, I was told that many of the artefacts at the Whaling Museum were such gifts. These collections, including the animals, tell a story about these men.

Several displays at the Whaling Museum were mounted more to impress than to give a realistic picture of the journey (Wexelsen, 1993: 30). The enormous sea elephant stands as the most obvious example. This practice has not been uncommon in European museums; for example, provincial natural history collections in England often boasted a particularly iconic specimen (Alberti, 2005: 565). Amongst hunting communities in the late 1800s and early 1900s, the larger and more visually impressive the animal, the greater the level of prestige afforded to the individual who conquered it, making animals trophies (Andrews, 2013: 149). Trophies are often associated with only heads mounted on walls. This is also the case for several animals at the Whaling Museum; both walruses, musk oxen and the head of a narwhale (allegedly only a model). These representations indicate a trophy culture at the museum.

Trophies easily conjure the association with *the conquering gaze.* As Donna Haraway introduces in *Primate visions: gender, race, and nature in the world of modern science* (1989), many exhibitions are made from the white man's point of view, who not only gazes at the world, but actively (re)arranges it to his picture (Haraway, 1989: 54). The subject, in perceiving an object, traps and conquers it just as an animal traps its prey. The conquering gaze is the gaze of metaphysical man, man as *animal rationale*, as subject. The whale is subject to man's conquering gaze. The man in the masthead is arguably a conquering man, about to subdue nature, the whale, the sea. Additionally, the sea as a feminine force has a long history in Judeo-Christian thought (Helmreich, 2017: 29). Indeed, the English call when spotting a whale ("There she blows") suggests that the whale is seen as a feminine animal. Drawn from this association, the female whale may be perceived as a female that is to be conquered by man.

PART TWO – A FIN WHALE'S BIOGRAPHY

In order to answer how the fin whale skeleton at the Whaling Museum has been transformed in its afterlife, the analysis of the fin whale is written as an animal biography. The biography has three sub-chapters. First, the skeleton is introduced with the methodological approach of an exhibition analysis, described as it is displayed at the Whaling Museum. Then, the fin whale is assessed in the historical context of its death before joining the museum collection. Finally, the fin whale is examined in the context surrounding its death in 1918.

1. "The Sandefjord whale"

The fin whale, *Balaenoptera physalus*, is the second largest animal on earth. Fin whales are baleen whales, within the categorisation of rorquals – a family that includes species like blue, humpback and minke whales. There are two subspecies of fin whale, the *Balaenoptera physalus physalus*, the northern fin whale, and the *Balaenoptera physalus quoyi*, the southern fin whale. Adult males measure up to 24 meters in the Northern hemisphere and 27 meters in the Southern hemisphere. Females are slightly larger. As is common with other rorquals, fin whales migrate across oceans all over the world. The fin whale has shades of grey on its back and sides, whereas the ventral side, flippers and fluke are white (See Appendix 1: Drawings of *Balaenoptera physalus* and *Balaenoptera musculus*). It feeds mainly on krill or schooling fish. Fin whales are mostly solitary animals, although larger groups have been observed (Marinebio.org, 2007b).

The complete skeleton of a fin whale is located in the basement of Commander Chr. Christensen's Whaling Museum. Originally, Consul Lars Christensen did not mean to use the basement for exhibitions. However, the remnants of a fossilized whale found near Larvik in Vestfold in 1914 made for a reconstruction of the discovery site in the new museum's cellar (Wexelsen, 1993: 27).

A silence resembling that of going underwater is the first to strike a person when descending to the basement. The walls are thicker downstairs. The only sounds are the continuous noise from what I reckon to be the air conditioning along with muffled sounds from the documentary, *Blåst forut* (Agnell, 1992). The movie supplies a constant soundtrack to the experience of the cellar exhibition. This is no problem when the whalers in the movie are celebrating Christmas onboard, accompanied by the schottische, *Når nettene blir lange*, on

the accordion.[4] Most of the film, however, is set on the uneasy seas of the Southern Ocean. The soundtrack changes into the noise of howling wind and roaring waves, as well as shouting and the unmistakable sound of cannon shots when spotting a whale.

According to the museum staff, children tend to be scared of descending to the basement. This is paradoxical as the entire floor, called "The world of whales", is constructed *for* children. The first chamber of the basement is an activity room consisting of drawing tables with chequered tablecloths and a shelf containing children's books about animals. Penguins are drawn on the wall, and a screensaver displaying photographs of various polar animals is continuously rolling on a mounted flat screen.

A small hallway divides the activity room and exhibition room of marine mammal skeletons. The hallway makes room for the display cabinet of the Greenland whale fossil, called "the Rekkevik whale". Only lighting on the floor of the display cabinet shows the fossil through the vitrine. Otherwise, the short aisle is not lit. Accordingly, the display and hallway are quite dark. Lighting from the activity room makes it so that passers-by are reflected in the vitrine. I have to admit having jumped a few times, staying in the basement alone and examining the remnants – before discovering that the seeming movement inside the cabinet only was my own reflection in the vitrine. The display does only add to the somewhat ominous atmosphere of the basement floor.

The fin whale skeleton is the first to greet the arriving visitor that enters the exhibition room of marine mammal skeletons from the small aisle. The fin whale is accompanied by the skull of an orca, the skull of a sperm whale, the deformed jaw of another sperm whale, a full orca skeleton, a full minke whale skeleton and, nearly invisible in a corner, the skeleton of a seal (species not specified).

The brick walls and floor are white. Nevertheless, it is evident that the room is made to appear as if being underwater. The columns supporting the room are painted light blue. The wall where a movie screen is mounted to display *Blåst forut* is painted a darker shade of blue. On the floor, there are placed some blue and purple lights, and the windows are covered by plastic coverage foil picturing a surface as viewed from underwater. To complete the illusion, periscopes are placed by the covered windows. Looking inside the periscopes, several angles of a deck, seemingly of a whaling ship, are visible.

The text plates also differ from those in the main hall. The fonts are larger, with a smiling cartoon whale presenting "Did you know"-facts. These plates are not academically

[4] *Når nettene blir lange,* "When the nights are getting longer", is a schottische, in Norwegian called a *reinlender*, usually played with lyrics by Alf Prøysen during Christmastime in Norway.

written – they are for children, presented with headlines like “How big is it”, “How does it look”, rather than the more stoic, “Size” and “Identification”. When presenting facts, there is always something that is selected as relevant and something that is not (Moser, 2010: 27). Little is said about the individual animals whose skeletons are on display – the exception being the fin whale.

The plates that describe the fin whale skeleton refer to the specimen as “the Sandefjord whale”. The skeleton dominates the exhibition room as the largest of the displayed whales. Its bones are mounted on the floor with the spine touching the low roof, attached together by white painted iron bars.

The skeleton is in odd colours - white, yellow and dark brown. Although not reported on the labels, the colouring can be explained by the fact that the skeleton was painted white in 1959. Unfortunately, none of the craftsmen employed at time were specialized in conservation (Wexelsen, 1993: 24). The surface was cleansed for grease and painted with white mulch paint. As a result, the painting locked the fatty acids inside the bones and caused decay of the skeleton’s calcium. When the fatty acids finally leaked, the surface turned brown and sticky.

Apparently, the Whaling Museum is one of several museums to have trouble conserving whale bones. Owing to their large size and high lipid content, whale bones are difficult to conserve in general (Guilminot et al., 2014: 128). Fin whale skeletons are particularly large and fatty, and residual fats tend to ooze from the bones, especially in increasing temperatures (Guilminot et al., 2014: 129). The fat might remind the visitor of an un-doing process - the skeleton was once part of a living animal and humans do not manage to control its natural processes. The fat shines on the fin whale skeleton at the Whaling Museum. A sign is put up, proclaiming; “Please do not touch. The oil will stain your clothing”. There are, however, no barriers between the skeletons and beholders. The skeleton may be touched, smelled and even climbed inside without physical obstacle.

2. Stranded at the museum

In the following, the transformation of the skeleton as a dead (in the literate sense of the word) museum object is analysed.

Exhibition of dead whales was not a new phenomenon when the Whaling Museum opened in 1917. During the 19th century, specimen of large whales were commonly prepared and shown throughout Europe (Wexelsen, 1993: 31). The most famous whale skeleton in Europe was apparently a blue whale caught along the Norwegian coast in 1827 (Svanberg, 2018: 158-159). The skeleton was prepared in Belgium before it was bestowed to the king of

the Netherlands, and thereby named "The King Whale". Since then, the King Whale toured around Europe to be viewed in the Netherlands, France, England, Germany and Austria. Finally, the whale was displayed in Saint Petersburg, where it still can be seen at the Zoological Museum today. At the beginning of the 20th century, whales had become valuable assets for professional dealers and museums (Brenna, 2013: 43). At Bergen Museum, "seafaring men, captains, and others with dredges" were provided with glass containers and alcohol so that they could bring new species home (Brenna, 2013: 44). Whales could be bought and prepared to be shown for the public in various settings far into the 20th century (Svanberg, 2018: 159). However, the history of exhibiting whale *bodies* for public display, "tends towards brief and unappealing episodes," to cite Michael Rossi (2010: 345). The headmost alterative was whale bones.

Despite the fact that displays of animal bones are common in museums all over the world, very little is written about the phenomena. The zoologist and educator, Sue Dale Tunnicliffe, and her study of how children perceived skeletons in museum contexts is an exception. Tunnicliffe found that even though visitors are in fact viewing a skeleton and not a whole-animal specimen, the skeleton is seldom mentioned at all – unless it resembles the human form (Tunnicliffe and Yonally, 1999 *in* Tunnicliffe and Laterveer-De Beer 2002: 130). Rather, the visitor recognises a skeleton initially before trying to "clothe" the bones as best they are able, seeking to grasp the animal the skeleton represents.

Naturally, "clothed" animals are easier to grasp as representations of live animals. Liv Emma Thorsen refers to the process of taxidermizing as "naturalization" as it is supposed to create the illusion of life (Thorsen, 2009: 87). This differs from skeletons that are associated with death in the iconography of the West. The fin whale, in contrast to the blue whale model or the stuffed animals in the main hall of the Whaling Museum, is presented as dead - it is not in motion, not re-created as if doing something. Taxidermized animals, however, are usually made to look alive; they are mounted as if in motion, whether hunting, eating, creating habitats or looking after their family. If presented as dead, it is frequent because the animal is an object of another animal subject, that is to say, made to look like the prey of the main animal of a diorama (Lund, 2012: 75).

Owing to the fact that attitudes towards animals are culturally and historically conditioned, the view of dead animals on display has changed over time. During the Victorian era, it was apparently acceptable to sew stuffed kittens on weddings outfits (Henning, 2007: 664). During the 20th century, however, it became increasingly difficult for many to look beyond death when observing animals that were made to look alive (Andrews, 2013: 145,

147). Besides the appeal that historian and animal studies researcher Rachel Poliquin calls the "relationship between the aesthetics and ethics of taxidermy," namely the urge to look at taxidermized animals and worry about what made that appearance possible, it has been suggested that as concern for animal rights grows, the unease over the use of mounted animals will increase (Poliquin, 2008: 123, Manual of Natural History Curatorship, 1994 *in* Andrews, 2013: 146). Indeed, in a world where wildlife can bring live animals into everyone's home through the Internet, the required killing to present animals in museums might seem almost perverse (Poliquin, 2008: 123).

These aspects are interesting for museums as mediums. Just like the perception of the painting changed when photography was invented, and the perception of theatre changed when the first movie was shown, the museum changed when the possibility of seeing the same objects alive through a screen changed. If museums are to compete with mediums, such as the Internet and movies, museums must emphasise what only museums can do, as stated by social anthropologist Anders Johansen (2002: 195). Museums consist of actual rooms, where the visitor might move around to maintain genuine objects. Effectively, this makes it possible to give in to the "urge to look and worry about what made that looking possible," to cite Poliquin (2008: 123). Anders Johansen brings up an exhibition in Paris that apparently succeeded in making the museum relevant, titled *La Grande Gallerie de l'Evolution*. In it, animals, birds and insects were exhibited to enlighten different subjects of mutations or principles for species. The exhibition was apparently done so tastefully that it left the visitor flabbergasted by the richness and beauty of nature. According to Johansen, it does no longer suffice for a museum to show "an animal". The museum should concentrate the objects together in ways that make way for new thoughts (Johansen, 2002: 195).

The fin whale skeleton is a representation of the limited knowledge available at the time it was mounted. This is not stated to devalue said knowledge, but knowledge is always limited. The skeleton displays a frozen picture of the curators' comprehension of the animal's osteology in 1918. When presenting an animal at the museum, nevertheless, if the animal is a human-made model, a taxidermized animal or a skeleton, the curator chooses a posture and an expression for the animal. Knowledge about zoology and the animal when alive is necessary to make a realistic look-a-like. As such, the exhibited animal offers insight into the scientific narrative that predominated at the time it was mounted (Lund, 2012: 71, 77). Without science, the fin whale skeleton would have been mounted only with the help of imagination.

An exhibited skeleton is mounted by human hands. Even so, the skeleton itself is the genuine bones of once live animals. These bones cannot lie. Where the naturalized animal can be redesigned according to an intended purpose, whether as cultural things, natural things or as hybrids, the bones cannot be manipulated to the same degree: The lived life can be read in the bones, both by those with osteological as well as humanistic knowledge (Thorsen, 2009: 95).

I am not capable of reading the bones from a strictly scientific point of view. In order to grasp the once live animal behind the skeleton, however, I can make my own assumptions based upon observations at a museum.

Skeletons show lived life; they may reveal the animal's gender, age, diseases, as well trauma the skeleton endured, like encounters with predators or how they died (Dunning, 2017). In the case of a stuffed walrus at the Gothenburg Natural History Museum, described in detail by Thorsen (2014), the wounds on the skeleton told a story of a tortured animal, in addition to the fatal wound inflicted when killed (Thorsen, 2014: 171). As for the fin whale, only one thing is known for a fact - that it was killed by humans. Reading the skeleton, it might be possible to identify where it was shot without osteological knowledge. My guess is that the third rib, counting from the tail, may feature some evidence. The rib is seemingly injured, and it does not seem like a straight cut made by human hands post-mortem. The rift has seemingly come from behind, suggesting that it could be from the shooting range of a whaling ship.

In this sub-chapter, I have written about skeletons as museum objects in order to determine how the fin whale skeleton has transformed in its afterlife.

The fin whale skeleton is on display in the exhibition, "The world of whales". The exhibition was engineered for children, and accordingly made to look as if underwater. However, the animals exhibited are not mounted as if alive. As skeletons, they are objectified as representations of their species, seemingly without trace of individuality or lived life.

In the following sub-chapter, the fin whale is examined in the historical context before becoming a museum object.

3. The first war whale

Hidden behind the giant skeleton in the museum's basement, almost invisible to the impatient visitor, there are two plates with the headline, "The Sandefjord Whale". The plates show two pictures of the newly caught, dead whale from 1918 (See Appendix 6: Photos of "The

Sandefjord whale" as displayed in the Whaling Museum). Both pictures display a whale surrounded by people; children, women and men posturing for the photographer. Apparently, the arrival of the whale caused droves of people to come and watch, including pupils from the area's middle school.

The "Sandefjord Whale" was a fin whale that measured 21 meters – the size of an adult *Balaenoptera physalus physalus*. It was caught off the Swedish coast, between Strömstad and Lysekil, and transported to Gonviken cod liver factory in Sandefjord to be processed for oil and meat.

The fact that the whale was processed for meat makes it a different representative of a whale than it would have had if it had been caught in another period of time. During the guided tours at the Whaling Museum, I was told that whale meat was rarely consumed by the Vestfold whalers. Even at sea, whalers seldom ate whale meat. The fin whale skeleton, however, is not a good representative of the Vestfold whaling phenomena. The whale was not caught in the Southern Ocean by adventurous whalers searching for gold, so to speak, but as a result of the Norwegian state funding whaling during the First World War. "The Sandefjord Whale" was used for "good quality meat" and oil. The arriving of the whale was reported in *Sandefjords blad* on the 21st of January 1918 with the headline, *Hvalkjøt*, "Whale meat", as its meat was to be handed out at the pier (1918c). For the whale to be edible, *Sandefjord blad* advised the following day for the meat to stay for 24 hours in vinegar with the headline, *Hvalkjøtet*, "The whale meat", arguably confirming that whale meat was not usually on Vestfolders' menus (1918d).

Norway was proclaimed neutral during the First World War but had food and fat shortages. In *The history of modern whaling* (1982), Arne Odd Johnsen and Johan Nicolay Tønnessen explain that Britain claimed all whale oil produced in British territory during the war (1982: 304). This included large areas of the South Atlantic Ocean, such as South Georgia and South Shetland Islands, and created the paradoxical situation that Norway, the world's major producer of whale oil, suffered serious shortages of fats during the war years of 1914-1918 (Tønnessen and Johnsen, 1982: 304). This compelled Norway to violate both their own Whaling Act of 1896 and the ban of 1904.

The Whaling Act of 1896 prohibited whaling on the coast of Troms and Finnmark in Northern Norway during the season, 1st of January until the end of May, as well as during herring fishing no matter the season or near operative fishing boats in general terms

(Hvalloven, 1896). As the whale population in Norway continued to decrease, the act of 1904 prohibited all whaling along the Norwegian coast for 10 years (Hvalloven, 1904). [5]

It is significant to note that during the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th, fishermen from the north of Norway were those to work for a ban on whaling along the Norwegian coast (Tjernshaugen, 2018: 51). They had established that the presence of whales steered fish closer to shore, making the fish more available for the fishermen. A decreasing whale population meant that fish were becoming exceedingly difficult to catch.

This view and its political support is described as *""political" superstition"* by Tønnessen and Johnsen (1982: 305). Some comments are due regarding this use of quotation marks and the word "superstition". How whales affect human access to the fishing pool is a long-standing debate. At the time of the release of *Vågehvalen – valgets kval* (1993), the argument was opposed to that of 19th-century fishermen; Stenseth et al. contended that minke whales were "real competitors against humans in the use of ocean resources", suggesting that an increased population of whales led to less fish (Stenseth et al., 1993: 240 *in* Johansen 2014: 68). In a critique of Stenseth et al., animal rights activist Hanne Johansen (2014) points to the growing body of research showing that the presence of whales may, in fact, increase fish populations. Whales enhance primary productivity in their feeding areas by concentrating nitrogen near the surface through the release of flocculent faecal plumes, according to Johansen (2014: 70). I leave the debate of whether whales increase or reduce fish populations to the scientists. However, as there seem to be no obvious conclusion on the matter, I vouch for the use of the quotation marks and the word "superstition" to be political inclined by Tønnessen and Johnsen.

During the First World War, shortages of fats, lubrication oil and food made these resources so precious that even fishermen in Northern Norway pleaded for the ban to be raised (Tønnessen and Johnsen, 1982: 304). The Norwegian Government once again permitted whaling along the Norwegian coast, resulting in the emerging of six whaling stations. *Sandefjords blad* reported on the 10th of January 1918, under the headline, *Hvalfangst i Skagerak*, "Whaling in Skagerak", that the Norwegian state had proclaimed all Norwegian whaling ships. If any other country was to use Norwegian ships, they would have to negotiate with the Norwegian government. For the time being, however, the Norwegian state-funded whaling had yet to yield any results (1918b).

[5] These regulations did not apply for smaller tooth whales, such as orcas.

On the 17th of January 1918, *Sandefjords blad* used an abstract from *Norsk hvalfangertidende*, "The Norwegian whaling gazette", to provide a status update on the whaling situation for the previous year. They could report that the whaling business had suffered great losses as a result of the war (Norsk hvalfangertidende, 1918 *in* Sandefjords Blad, 1918e). During the year 1917, Norwegian whaling companies had been doing business in South Georgia, Alaska and on the South Shetland islands, and in the case of the latter, it was reported that only 96 000 barrels of oil were produced in 1917 compared to 193 000 in 1916, 187 900 barrels in 1915, 192 000 barrels in 1914, 171 200 barrels in 1913, 127 000 barrels in 1912 and 83 000 barrels in 1911 (1918e). These numbers highlight a growth in the total barrels of oil during the years of 1911-1914, and a drastic turn in 1917, the total amount having not been so low since 1911. The necessary resources that whaling produced then had to be bought from other countries. Norway would have little to no influence on the prices. *Norsk hvalfangertidende* declared that the war diminished freedom and possibilities at sea and prevented the development of the whaling business (1918e).

The first whale caught as a result of the Norwegian state-funded whaling during the First World War was supposedly the fin whale whose skeleton in on display at the Whaling Museum. As such, it was the first of 1 874 whales to be caught along the Norwegian coast at the time (Tønnessen and Johnsen, 1982: 304). While a single blue whale could yield as much as 120 barrels of oil, "the Sandefjord whale" only produced 19 barrels of oil (Marinebio.org, 2007a). It was, unfortunately, a typical specimen of the time; the whales caught along the Norwegian coast were of "very low quality". As stated on the plates at the Whaling Museum, the Norwegian state-funding campaign was a fiasco. The whole operation had been a crisis measure and, upon termination in 1921, a loss of 3 800 000 Norwegian kroners was declared. The whale fat had been of low quality and the blubber was eventually mostly used as technical fat for soap production.

In the museum registers from 1943, it is stated that the fin whale was dragged into Sandefjord on the 19th of January 1918 (1943). This can be confirmed in *Sandefjords Blad*, stating in a notice titled *Den første hval til staten*, "The first whale caught by the state", that a fin whale was brought in by the whale catcher, Falkland II, after being caught the day before (1918a).[6]

[6] The museum plates state that the fin whale arrived in Sandefjord in May 1918 with the whale catcher, Hekla 2. There may be two different whales. Yet, the pictures that show the newly caught, "Sandefjord Whale", were taken during wintertime; the ground is covered with snow and the people depicted are wearing winter clothes.

The Norwegian Government permitted private individuals to carry out whaling on the Norwegian coast until the complete protection of whales in 1972 (Tønnessen and Johnsen, 1982: 305). This allows for speculation of whether the fin whale would have survived if the act of 1904 had been expanded rather than banned. Given the history of whaling, I deem it improbable that Norway as a whaling nation would have reserved the act when other nations advanced as serious whaling competitors during the 1940s. The fin whale was living in dangerous times - had it not been shot in 1918, it probably would not have survived the extensive hunting of whales that continued in oceans over the world the next 50 years.

This sub-chapter depicts the historical context in which the fin whale skeleton was killed, as well as some attitudes towards whales and whaling at the time. Although the Norwegian Government initially forbade whaling along the Norwegian coast cf. the Whaling Act of 1904, the act was rescinded as a result of the fat and food shortages at the time. Consequently, the fin whale became food for Vestfolders that in all probability did not eat much whale. The fin whale transformed, then, from a live *Balaenoptera physalus physalus* to food in a time of rationalization in Norway.

When dead, the animal's body changes status. Sometimes it remains an individual – this specific animal – while other times, it transforms into a representation of a species. This is the case for the fin whale. It was reconstructed without any trace of individuality. The display of the individual is but the bones of a whale that we know nothing about before its death in 1918. Only what the whale meant for humans after death is apparent in the museum display.

Within the museum context, the whale was transformed into a skeletal display. There is little trace of its past as a live animal with its own agency. Rather, the skeleton is placed in the basement surrounded by other marine mammal skeletons that are even less described than the large whale. The skeleton has been treated poorly over time. It is evident in the treatment of the bones from the 1950s, but also by the fact that it is "hidden away" in the basement, housed in a room made for children – as if adults would have little interest for the skeletal remnants of the whale.

CONCLUSION

In this thesis, I have examined how the blue whale model and fin whale skeleton at Commander Chr. Christensen's Whaling Museum in Sandefjord, Norway, can illustrate human relationships with whales.

In order to assess how the blue whale model can describe human relationships with whales, I chose to link this model to myth, environment and gender. I suggested that the blue whale model is an illustration of the whaling phenomenon in Sandefjord, and therefore represents whales in general terms - not just the species blue whale.

By using fieldwork and literature, I have demonstrated how the model can be perceived as a mythic creature. This is shown through examples from cultural history, from the Bible to *Moby Dick*. I have also pointed to Arne Kalland's modern "super whale", a mythic creature that possesses the characteristics of all species of whale even though no single whale has them all. As such, the mythic whale might also be read as the whale as a symbol for environmentalism. In the thesis, I have shown that several international visitors at the Whaling Museum have associated whaling with the "Save the whales" movement in the 1970s. Whales have also been present as environmental symbols present in the media in current times, from the Norwegian "Plastic whale" in 2017 to a symbol used by the protest group, *Extinction Rebellion*, in London in 2019.

The study has been a critical analysis of the Whaling Museum's animal displays that might complement the museum's dominant narrative. It is my opinion that the environmental perspective could be further emphasised at the museum. The museum's exhibitions display a means of managing natural resources that most people would dissociate from today. As such, the museum has an opportunity to be a relevant arena in the debate on how humans utilise natural resources. Questions like "How should humans use natural resources?", "What is our part as regulators of nature?" and "What are our rights and duties towards non-human nature?" could be approached at the museum from several angles. The absence of such questioning seems sorely apparent today. Still, I wish to note that I do not think that the museum glorifies the whaling industry. Rather, the museum seems to be a supplier of local history in Sandefjord, where whaling has been significant. My argument is that the museum has the potential to be a more relevant actor in society.

The last approach regarding the blue whale model was how it could be perceived as gendered. The gendered approach is not evident, but as the model reveals, the blue whale was designed as female. Furthermore, the model cannot be isolated from the rest of the exhibitions. The gendered whale is visible throughout the museum in example foetuses and

the popular whale penis. The man in the masthead also signifies the conquering gaze, where man is conquering the world, conquering nature or conquering the female, as is the case with the blue whale model before him. An extension of the thesis could have been to place gender upon the fin whale, as well. The fin whale has, after all, lived with a biological sex. If the sex of the fin whale had been known, there would have arisen an opportunity to read the whale as, for example, a mother or a competing male. Dimensions such as these could have helped museum visitors relate to the individual before them.

In order to investigate how the fin whale skeleton can illustrate human relationships with whales, I opted to investigate how the fin whale had been transformed in its afterlife. By using fieldwork and sources such as *Sandefjords blad,* I found that the fin whale represents a period of time in Norway when laws had to bend in order to make use of resources from an animal that should have been protected. The whale was transformed from a living individual to food and oil. Its meat gave nutrition to humans. Consequently, part of the whale became part of the humans who ate it.

This dimension could have been interesting to further emphasise at the Whaling Museum. Moreover, it would have given the museum an opportunity to comment on the debate on current Norwegian whaling for minke whales. The Whaling Museum is a museum that specialises on whales and whaling. As such, the absence of the debate on minke whaling is striking. Minke whales, as with the fin whale whose skeleton is on display, are killed for their meat. How does this affect the relationships humans create with these animals? Following John Berger's claim that it is possible for humans to both subject, worship, breed and sacrifice animals, it is possible to see them as individuals and eat them anyway. This seeming duality make humans interesting as moral actors. The whale as meat could perhaps also challenge the dominant "whales as special creatures" argument, which makes it difficult to initiate the same kind of campaign for other animals that are endangered or otherwise suffering from human abuse. The "Save the whales" movement, with its concentration on cetaceans' allegedly unique intelligence, may have hindered other animal welfare or animal rights campaigns.

The fin whale whose skeleton is on display at the Whaling Museum was evidently the first whale to be shot as a consequence of the Norwegian state-funded whaling efforts. This is probably why it later became a museum object. This part of the whale's afterlife has been discussed by evaluating how skeletons and dead animals can be perceived in a museum context. The skeleton not only links together nature and history, but it can be reduced down to

the individual level (the animal) and the local, national and international levels (the humans). As such, the whale that Vestfolders usually associated with the other side of the planet became tangible to the local community.

It would have been interesting to know more about the fin whale's life and death. Perhaps it is possible to find out if the hunt of the whale was long-lasting and if the whale seemed to suffer significantly when killed? Moreover, an osteologist might be able to determine whether the fin whale was in contact with humans previously; had met with predators such as orcas; or had been in contact with animals beyond the Northern hemisphere –fin whales do migrate across oceans all over the world. I believe that such dimensions would remind visitors of the fact that the whale before them once was an individual that lived a life. This could perhaps make the experience of the museum more interesting.

The material I collected to analyse was gained through fieldwork and written sources. Literature had a major part in extending my interpretations further. I then used tools from exhibition analysis and animal biography to interpret the collected material. I could, however, have used additional methods in order to collect material about the whales. A quantitative survey based upon the views of museum visitors might have enhanced the analysis with a broader perspective, featuring viewpoints from other people's relationships with whales. Instead, the analysis remains an amplification of my own prepossessed feelings towards the animal.

I argued that the blue whale model, as a representation of the whaling phenomena in Vestfold, could be associated with all species of whales. The museum object has sometimes been undetectable for the benefit of literature of the whale in cultural history. Nonetheless, it is the model that has made room for these associations. The analysis is based upon a model that brings me as researcher closer to the whale as a cultural product.

The research questions could have included other cultural approaches. An approach that was considered for a long time was to connect the whale to science and education. This would have been relevant in a museum with the purpose of education and where the most frequent visitors are school children. However, owing to my own fields of interest, as well as the limited time for and scope of this study, the cultural approaches remained within a mythic, environmental and gendered perspective.

On several occasions, I have experienced how interest in animals has been considered juvenile by others. This was also evident for me during fieldwork, when I discerned an attitude that suggested that there would be topics much more interesting for me to examine

than the museum's exhibited animals. Indeed, museums that display animals are often considered "children friendly". Affection for animals is seemingly encouraged for young children, in e.g., cartoons and toys. However, it is expected to diminish as children grow older. At the Whaling Museum, this was apparent during the Cultural Schoolbag activities, where the subject of animals diminished in activities for older children. The activity, *Dra på hvalfangst med klassen*, for 7th graders consisted mainly of learning about the whaling industry and cultural history of Sandefjord. This impacted the fin whale skeleton display. The fin whale, in my opinion, has been reduced and simplified to an object presented for children in the basement. It is exhibited not as a display of the human use of natural resources, but as a curiosity for children in the exhibition, "The world of whales."

Obviously, the main research question, *"How can the blue whale model and fin whale skeleton at the Whaling Museum in Sandefjord illustrate human relationships with whales?"* cannot be answered here in its entirety; I cannot show every possible way these animal displays illustrate human relationships with whales. However, by examining the blue whale model and fin whale skeleton, I hope to have further advanced the understanding of these unique relationships. In so doing, some lights has been shed on two whale displays at the Whaling Museum in Sandefjord for the first time.

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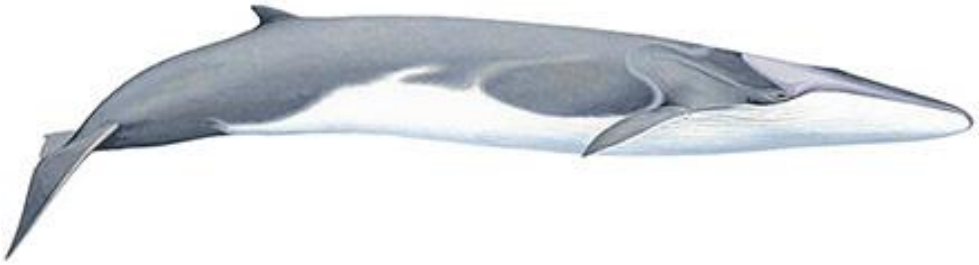
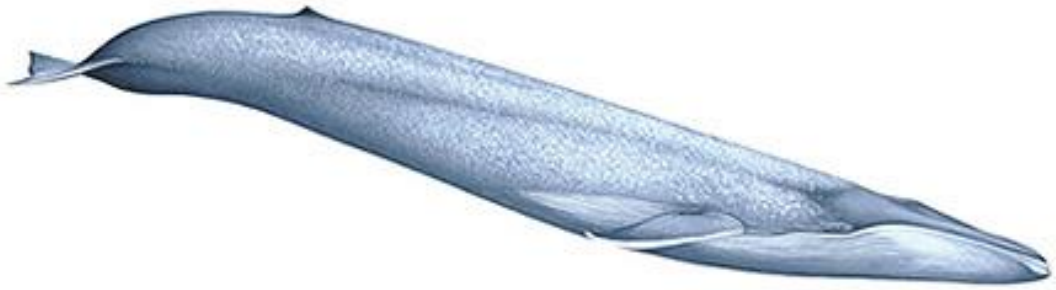
APPENDIX

Appendix 1: Drawings of *Balaenoptera physalus* and *Balaenoptera musculus*



The fin whale (*Balaenoptera physalus*)

Downloaded from Marionbio.org,
https://web.archive.org/web/20071017214359/http://marinebio.org/species.asp?id=40, 24th of March 2019



The blue whale (*Balaenoptera musculus*)

Downloaded from Marionbio.org,
https://web.archive.org/web/20071005165442/http://marinebio.org/species.asp?id=41, 24th of March 2019

Appendix 2: The blue whale model at the Whaling Museum

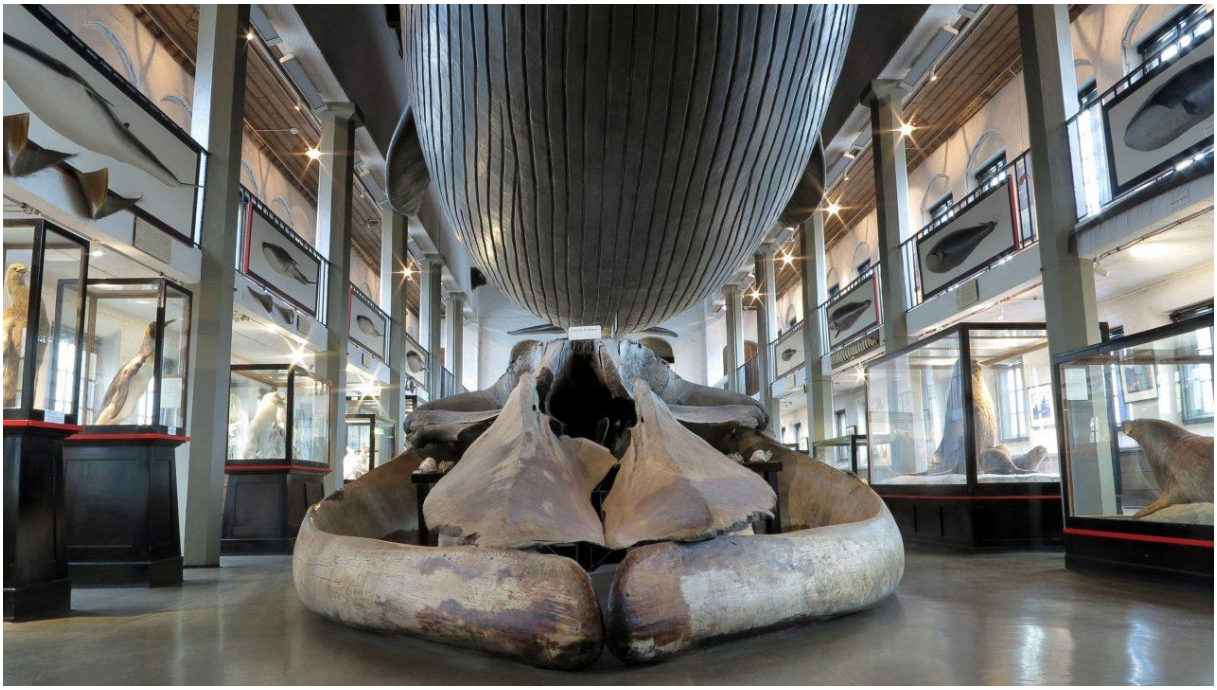
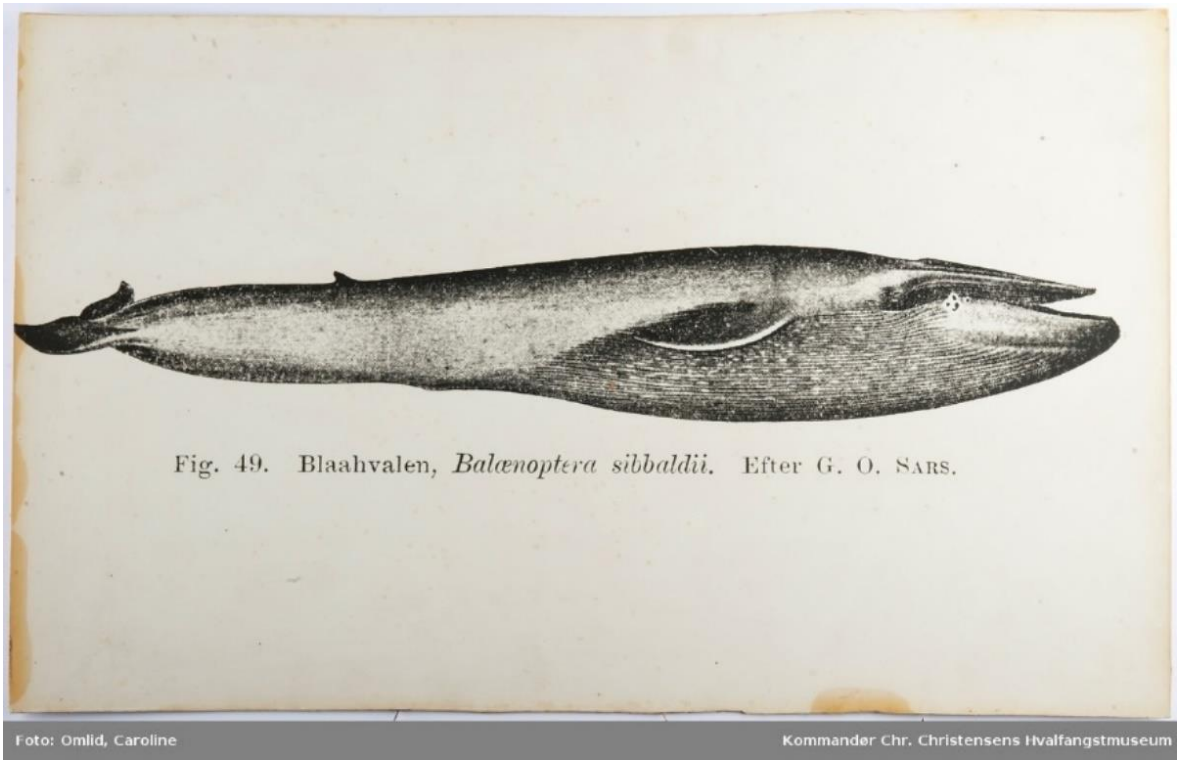


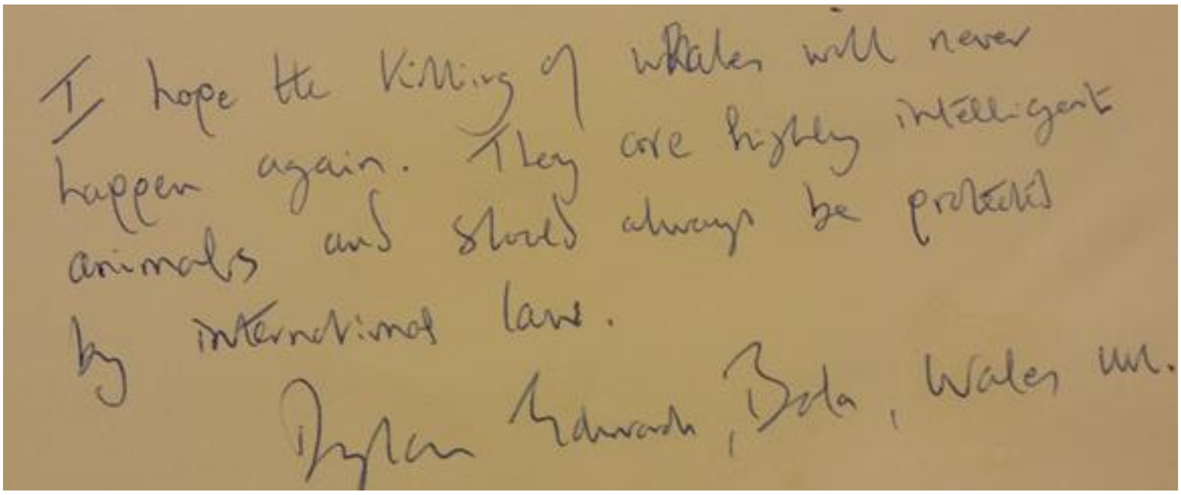
Photo: Hvalfangstmuseet, 2019

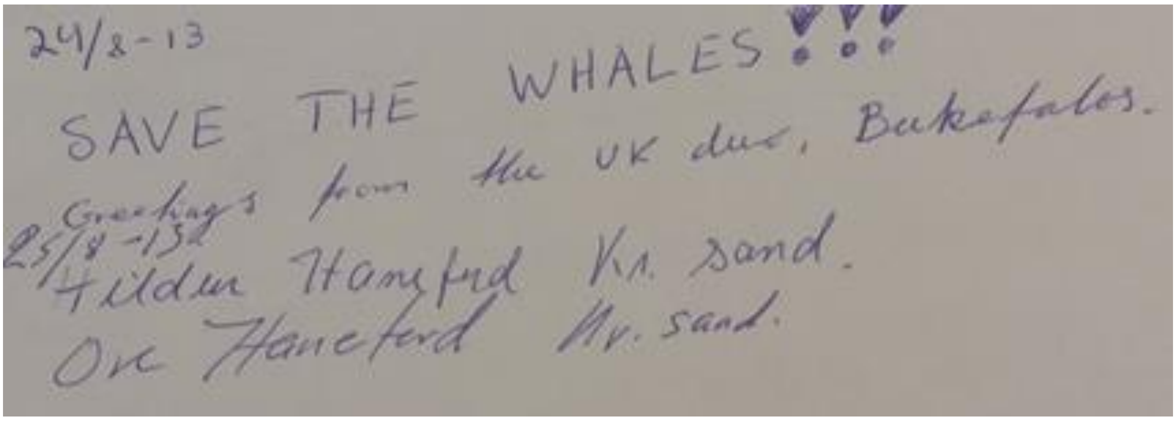
Appendix 3: The blue whale by Georg Ossian Sars

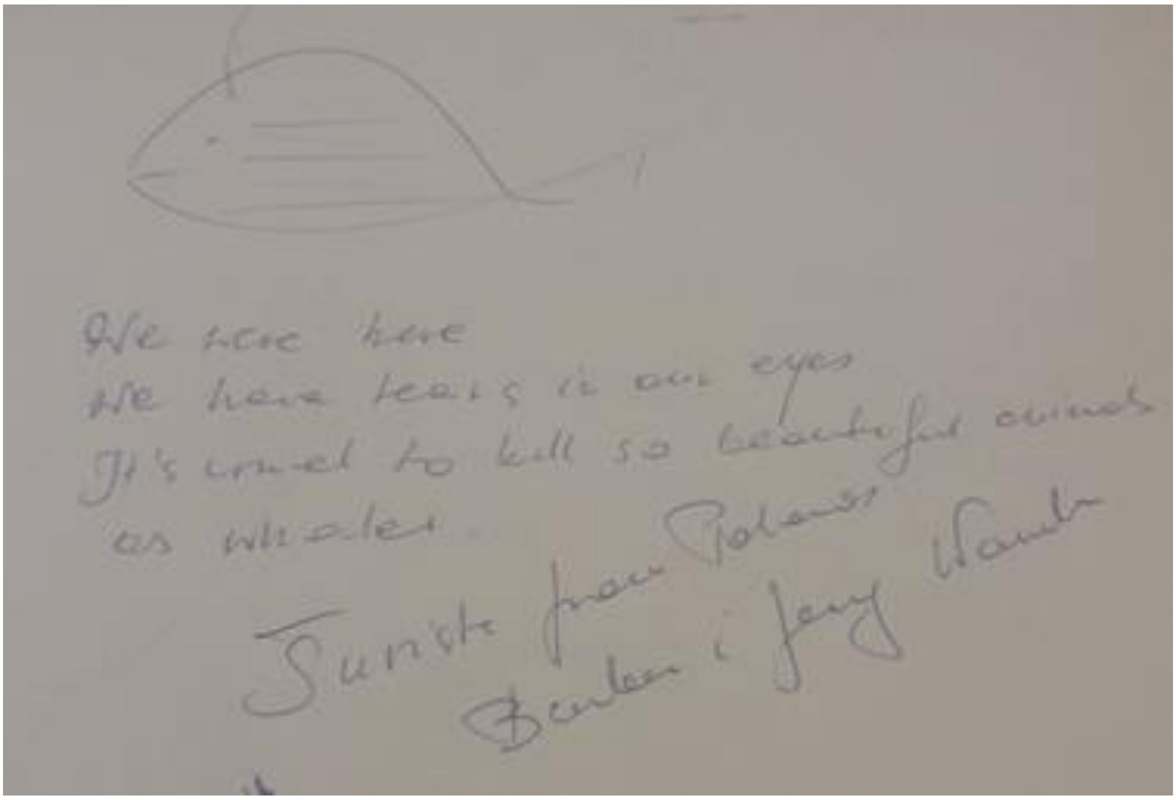


Downloaded from DigitaltMuseum, https://digitaltmuseum.no/021025744465/bilde, March 17th, 2019

Appendix 4: Comments in guestbooks at the Whaling Museum


I hope the killing of whales will never happen again. They are highly intelligent animals and should always be protected by international laws.
Dylan Edwards, Bala, Wales UK.


24/8-13
SAVE THE WHALES!!!
Greetings from the UK duo, Bukefalos.
25/8-13 Hilden Hansford Kr. sand.
Ove Hansford Kr. sand.


We were here
We have tears in our eyes
It's cruel to kill so beautiful animals as whales.
Greetings from Poland
Barbara i Jerzy Wanda

Appendix 5: The fin whale skeleton at the Whaling Museum

Downloaded from Advisor Travel, https://no.advisor.travel/poi/Hvalfangstmuseet-8798/photos, 24th of March 2019

Downloaded from Advisor Travel, https://no.advisor.travel/poi/Hvalfangstmuseet-8798/photos, 24th of March 2019

Appendix 6: Photos of "The Sandefjord whale" as displayed in the Whaling Museum

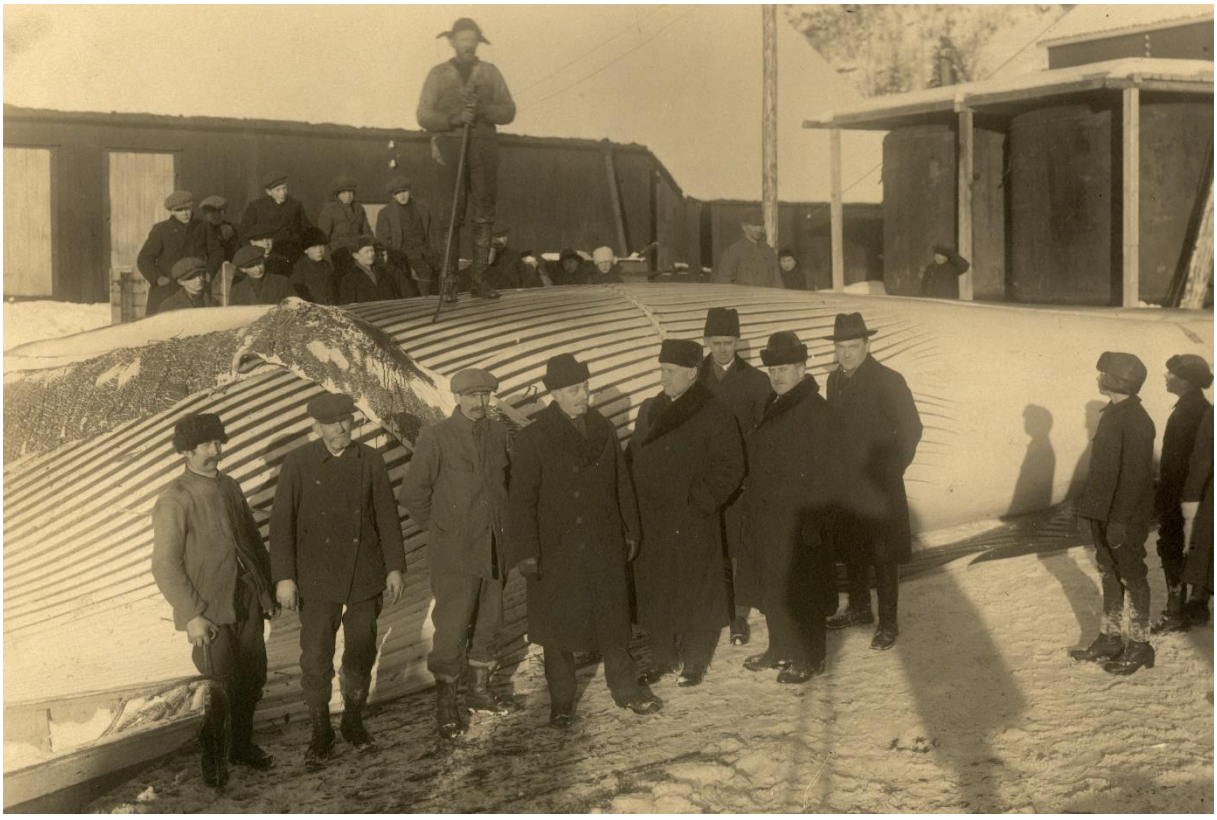


Photo: Hvalfangstmuseet, 2019