

## Whose Whale is That? Diverting the Commodity Path

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**ABSTRACT** Using concepts from Appadurai's *The Social Life of Things*, this paper seeks to analyze the simultaneous processes of de-commodification of meat, oil and other whale products and the commoditization of a symbolic 'super-whale,' i.e. how an old established commodity path (commercial whaling) has been interrupted by a new one (low-consumptive use of whales). Through the cultural framework of ecological and animal rights discourses, government agencies, politicians and industries have been able to acquire green legitimacy and protection in return for supporting environmental and animal rights organizations. This exchange has been legitimised through the annual meetings of the International Whaling Commission, whale rescue operations and other 'tournaments of value.' How the 'super-whale' is turned into a commodity and consumed raises also the important question about rights in whales, and the ways by which the anti-whaling movement tries to appropriate whales will be contrasted with the whalers' way of appropriation.

Around 1980, at a conference on marine mammals held in Bergen, some people got together and tried to estimate the 'low-consumptive' – i.e. non-lethal consumption – value of cetaceans.<sup>1</sup> They arrived at an estimate of about US\$ 100 million, which was about the same value as for commercial whaling (Scheffer 1991:17-18). Since then commercial whaling has ceased, at least temporarily, while the low-consumptive value has increased manifold. What we have witnessed during the last two or three decades is, to use a phrase taken from Appadurai (1986), a diversion of a preordained commodity path, i.e. the route a commodity – loosely defined as goods and services of exchange value – used to travel from production through consumption has been altered. The moratorium imposed on commercial whaling by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) in 1987,<sup>2</sup> has left whale protectionists as the main economic beneficiaries of cetaceans, which, together with seals, have turned out to be the most important source of income for environmental as well as for animal rights and animal welfare groups.<sup>3</sup>

One of the aims of this paper is to explore how the protectionists have tried to turn meat, oil and other whale products into products of no exchange value and thus sought them removed from the 'commodity state' (Appadurai 1986:13). A number of strategies have been used by environmental and animal welfare groups to achieve this end. For many years the ecological discourse dominated the rhetoric. Whales were believed to be endangered, and the moratorium was introduced in the name of conservation. Recently our knowledge on the population of some species of whales has improved considerably, however, and it is now evident that some whales can sustain a carefully monitored harvest (e.g. Barstow 1989:10; U.S. Marine Mammal Commission 1991:2;

Butterworth 1992). This has caused some groups – but by no means all – to switch from an ecological discourse to one based on animal welfare. At the same time they have embraced the image of a 'super-whale,' which combines traits from a number of different species of cetaceans as well as from human beings (Kalland 1993).

A second aim of this paper is to show how environmental and animal rights groups have created a demand for a 'green' conscience or a 'green' legitimacy and how they have been able to bestow these highly desired characteristics on those who sponsor the 'super-whale' myth. By using the ecological and animal welfare discourses as the cultural framework for exchangeability (Appadurai 1986:13), companies have acquired 'green' legitimacy (and partial immunity) by economically supporting environmental and animal rights organizations, while government agencies have obtained the same in return for political legitimacy. Both exchanges have been wrapped in the metaphors of 'super-whale' and 'goodness.' Thus, the 'super-whale' has taken on a life as a commodity of its own. De-commodification of meat and oil and commoditization of the 'super-whale' are simultaneous processes in the diversion of the commodity path, and both find legitimacy through the annual IWC meetings and other 'tournaments of value,' where 'central tokens of value in the society' are contested (Appadurai 1986:21).

Finally, the paper discusses concepts of rights *in* or ownership of whales in order to show how it has been possible to redefine the rules for appropriating nature. It is the symbiotic relationship between environmental and animal rights group on the one hand and some national governments on the other – brought about by skilful manipulation of the ecological and animal welfare discourses – which has enabled this coalition to appropriate almost all whale stocks, to the exclusion of whalers.

### Whale Protectionists and the 'Super-Whale' Myth

#### 'The Whale Protectionists'

'Save the whale' organizations have proliferated in recent decades. Corrigan (1991) lists 74 whale conservation and 'research' organizations in the USA and Canada alone. Some organizations – like the American Cetacean Society, the Cetacean Society International (CSI), the Whale and Dolphin Conservation Society (WDCS), and the Whale Fund are aimed specifically to protection of cetaceans, while others – Greenpeace, the World Wide Fund for Nature (alias the World Wildlife Fund, WWF), and the International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW), for example – are more general in their scope but nevertheless earn substantial parts of their incomes from sea mammal campaigns.

People are attracted to the 'save the whale' cause for a number of reasons. Some are concerned about the environment. Believing (erroneously) reports which claim that all whales are endangered, they take part in anti-whaling activities or in other ways support environmental organizations. They might lose interest and turn to other issues if and when scientific data convince them that a carefully monitored exploitation of certain whale stocks does not put these in jeopardy. This is the attitude of the largest Norwegian environmental organizations, which are no longer opposed to whaling.

Others are concerned about the well-beings of individual whales, and a distinction ought to be made here between animal rights and whale rights advocates. The former are concerned with all kinds of animal, at least in theory, as any animal has an intrinsic

value on its own (Regan 1984:264). But, as pointed out by Tester (1991:14), it has never been the intention of these advocates to extend rights to all animals. Rights are extended to an inner circle of mammals (although seldom to wild rats and mice) with reptiles, fish, and molluscs on the margins. Insects and bacteria have no rights.

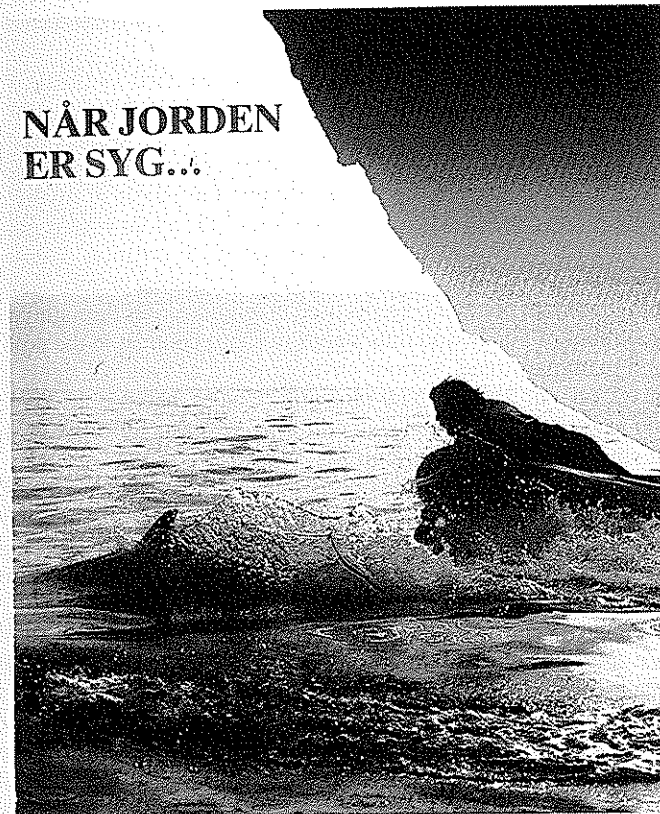
The whale rights advocates take their rhetoric from the animal rights philosophers and explicitly use it to a limited number of species, i.e. cetaceans. To these people whales are uniquely special. Barstow, founder of CSI, for example, claims that whales are biologically, ecologically, culturally, politically, and symbolically special. This uniqueness, he claims, merits special moral and ethical standards (Barstow 1991:7).<sup>4</sup> He stops short of claiming rights to whales, but in a lengthy article D'Amato and Chopra (1991) argue for whale rights while explicitly denying such rights to all animals.

There is a tendency among the whale rights advocates to indulge in the 'super-whale' myth, and in this they join company with those whose interest in cetaceans springs from spiritual sources. The director of Sea Shepherd and co-founder of Greenpeace, Paul Watson, for example, claims that in 1973, after he had been initiated into the Oglala Sioux at Wounded Knee, a bison approached and instructed him in a dream to save all sea mammals, whales in particular (Scarce 1990:97). Since then he has embarked on a violent crusade against whalers and sealers, in what he envisions as the Third World War (Gabriel 1991:56). But not all are violent, of course. In the New Age movement whales, especially dolphins, are often seen as sacrosanct; pure agents for a higher existence and awareness. In a leaflet distributed by a group calling themselves 'Sanctuary in the Pines,' dolphins are depicted as a kind of Messiah, having been sent to the Earth so that the 'crystalline energy within their brain will activate the energy of the earth's group mind.' Once this has been accomplished 'their mission will be done,' and they will leave our planet. This theme can also be found in science fiction<sup>5</sup> and in the beliefs that dolphins and human infants have similar brain waves which facilitate telepathic communication between infants (or even unborn children) and dolphins (Dobbs 1990:181; Cochrane and Callen 1992:28). Equally speculative are the claims that we have much to learn from cetaceans (e.g. Lilly 1961).

Finally, there are those who see in the anti-whaling campaign the potential for profit-making as well as for influence and fame. Greenpeace's interest in whales and seals, for example, seems to follow such considerations. 'We are strategic opportunists,' says Harald Zindler, leader of Greenpeace-Germany (Schwarz 1991:105), a view fully supported by its international director, Steve Sawyer, who has stated that the philosophy of the organization is very pragmatic: the leaders choose issues they are able to win (Pearse 1991:40). Greenpeace pays opinion-research institutes to uncover popular issues among supporters (Schwarz 1991:99), but also readily join issues proven popular by other organizations. The whaling and sealing campaigns are cases in point.<sup>6</sup> Both issues were developed by others and were well on their way before Greenpeace entered the scene. Others had opened the fields, but Greenpeace stole the show.

The odds of winning are important considerations when selecting issues and making strategies – not only because the money this gives the organizations, but also because success attracts people to the cause. A large number of members and supporters makes the organizations more able to function as strong pressure groups while at the same time enabling them to play the role of stewards of nature and distributors of 'green' legitimacy. Before a campaign is launched, the chances of winning must be considered

## NÅR JORDEN ER SYG...



Når jorden er syg, vil dyrene begynde at forsvinde,  
da vil regnbuekrigerne drage ud og redde dem.

*"When the earth is ill, the animals will begin to disappear. Then the rainbow warriors will set out and save them." From a Greenpeace-Denmark publication.*

good, the issue must be 'in' and the campaign activities must be able to reach a wide audience through mass media (Eyerman and Jamison 1989).

### *The 'Super-Whale'*

Sidney Holt (1985:192-93), one of the leading whale protectionists and scientific advisor to IFAW, has given two reasons why it should be easy to save whales, i.e. to win and thus divert the commodity path. One reason<sup>7</sup> is that:

[whales] are extremely attractive forms of wildlife; some of them sing, and many people have become familiar with their underwater performances on film and video. In many cultures whales and dolphins have an ancient and revered place as intelligent and benign companions of humans...

Cetaceans are indeed animals which can easily be ascribed symbolic significance. Whales form an anomalous category of animals (Kalland and Moeran 1992:5-6) since they do not fit into our simple categories of mammals and fish. Whales are 'betwixt and between,' and it is, according to Mary Douglas (1966), exactly those animals which are difficult to fit into our cognitive maps that become the object of myths and taboos. Moreover, whales move in salt water. We know very little about what is going on in the oceans, which opens the sea to manipulation and myth creation (Pálsson 1991:95; Kalland and Moeran 1992:7-8). Finally, the ocean – consisting largely of salt and water which are both important purifying agents used in religious rites throughout the world – becomes *the* symbol of purity, and thus stands in sharp contrast to the polluted soil on which we land mammals tread. Various environmental and animal rights groups have skilfully played on our susceptibility towards whales because it is precisely our predisposition towards these animals which forms the basis for these groups' success in commoditising whales on their premises.

Whale protectionists tend to talk about *the* whale in the singular, thereby masking the great variety that exists in size, behaviour and abundance between the about 75 species of cetaceans. By lumping together traits found in a number of species an image of a 'super-whale' is created.<sup>8</sup> We are told that the whale is the largest animal on earth (this applies to the blue whale); that the whale has the largest brain on earth (the sperm whale); that the whale has a large brain-to-body-weight ratio (the bottlenose dolphin); that the whale sings nicely (the humpback whale); that the whale has nurseries (some dolphins); that the whale is friendly (the gray whale); that the whale 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 – whose validity is often questionable – emerges. Such a creature does not exist.

Whales are often anthropomorphised by given human traits as well. They are depicted as living in societies similar to our own. They live in 'families' rather than in pods (e.g. Cousteau 1988:191), the humpbacks 'compose' music (Johannsen 1990:83); and they think and feel like humans (e.g. Nollman 1990). The 'super-whale' is endowed with all the qualities we would like to see in our fellow humans: kindness, caring, playfulness. While commercialization has penetrated most human relations, leaving many people with a nagging bad conscience for not taking care of aging parents and for not giving the children the attention they need, whales are depicted as the guardians of old values. The 'super-whale' cares for the sick and dying, baby-sits and runs nurseries, without

charging anything for these services. Not only does it care for its own kind, time and time again it rescues humans in danger.

In short, whales 'represent the closest approach to civilization, not as defined in terms of machine or technology, but as realized among all intelligent beings, cetacean or human, where communication and social bonds transcended the mere exigencies of life' (Abbey 1990:80). What *Homo sapiens* is on land, cetaceans are in the sea (Barstow 1991:7). They are our brethren, they have become 'the humans of the sea' (Gylling-Nielsen 1987). In Lévi-Strauss' terms, whale society has become a metaphor for the lost human paradise or utopian world and caring for whales has become a metaphor for kindness, for being 'good.'

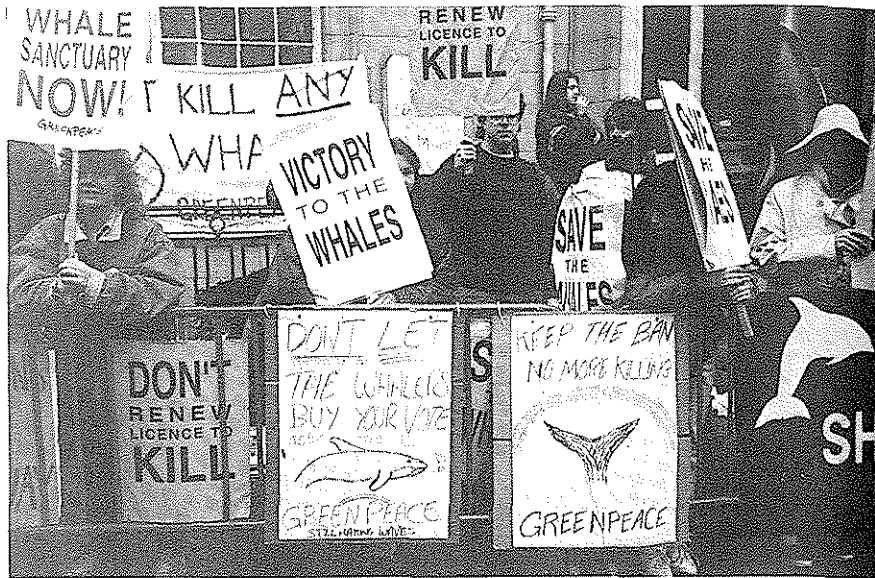
### Turning the 'Super-Whale' into a Commodity

This 'super whale,' with all its cetacean and human qualities, has proved to have enormous economic and political potential. What has turned this image into a commodity, however, is the emergence of a new demand among individuals, companies and governments to appear 'green.' This demand has been created by the growing environmental awareness among people, fuelled by the crisis maximizing strategies of many environmental groups. In the ecological discourse, whales have come to play the role of a metonym for nature and the image of the 'endangered whale' has become a symbol for environmentalists. 'Saving whales is for millions of people a crucial test of their political ability to halt environmental destruction,' writes Holt (1985:192). If we cannot save whales, what else can we then save?

The whaling issue has become a symbol to the environmental and animal welfare movements because this issue provides them with an easily identifiable enemy and a sense of urgency, two factors a consultant to Greenpeace identified as the requirements for raising money (Spencer 1991:179). The creation of an enemy and an urgency are closely associated with the animal welfare and ecological discourses, respectively. Tournaments of value provide the arena and ecological and animal welfare discourses provide the cultural framework that protect transactions between companies, governments and environmental/animal welfare groups from being classified as bribes or blackmailing.

### *Creating an Enemy*

The war metaphor is a favourite one among the 'Green Warriors.' At one level the metaphor is used to convey an image of a uneven fight between 'defenseless' whales and 'greedy' whalers, often ending in 'massacres.' In their rhetoric whales are depicted as 'lovely,' 'gentle,' 'peaceful,' 'graceful,' 'magnificent,' 'delightful,' 'beautiful,' 'playful,' 'loyal,' 'innocent,' and so on. The list of positively valued characteristics can be extended almost endlessly. 'Whales and dolphins are one-dimensional beings. They are only *positive!*' writes Paul Spong (1992:25), who brought the anti-whaling issue into Greenpeace (Brown and May 1991:32), and goes on to claim that we love to watch whales because 'they model such a perfect form of existence that they take us away from ourselves.' Another of Greenpeace's founding fathers, Patrick Moore, says that to get people 'save the whale you have to get them believe that whales are good' (Pearce



From an anti-whaling demonstration outside the hotel where the 44th Annual IWC Meeting was held, Glasgow 1992.

1991:27). That the killer whale is the largest predator on Earth is, on the other hand, concealed as is recent research showing that most species are promiscuous, suitors often engage in brutal fights over females, commit 'gang rapes' and might secure females by chasing and harassing them into submission (Carpenter and Schmidt 1992:60-1; Winton 1992:18).

The whalers are portrayed as the whales' opposite. They are 'cruel,' 'brutal,' 'reckless,' 'barbaric,' 'insatiable greedy,' 'butchers,' 'savages,' 'sadists,' and so on. They are 'pirates' engaged in 'evil' and 'criminal' activities 'defying' international law. D'Amato and Chopra (1991:27) suggest that whalers are more likely to commit genocide of 'inferior' human beings, and World Society for the Protection of Animals (WSPA Circular No. 881406) suggests that children exposed to hunting activities more likely will show violent, criminal behaviour toward others. One of the more extreme expressions – which emphasizes the contrast between peaceful, innocent whales and savage whalers – comes from Brian Davies (1985:1), the founder of IFAW.<sup>9</sup> In his words the Faroese pilot whaling is:

a savage harvest ... the most *brutal festival* you can imagine. Peaceful pilot whales are herded together and then lured close to land through their *loyalty* to a captured comrade from their pod or family group. And there they are simply hacked to death. (Underlines as in original, italics added.)

The above quote brings to light yet another aspect of the rhetoric, namely how the whales are put to death. Some of the more moderate organizations claim that whaling methods are 'inhumane' and not worthy of 'civilized' nations without going into detail. But

others – and the mass media seems to take the lead – think that the crueller the slaughter can be depicted, the better. The Faroese whalers 'smash gaffs into the flesh' of the pilot whales and 'hack' them to death, and the 'gentle' minke whale is left 'to trash around for hours in its death throes' (*Daily Mirror*, June 25, 1992, p. 30).<sup>10</sup>

At another level the war metaphor seeks to divide mankind into 'good' and 'bad' people. In the world view of the whale protectionists, the positive qualities ascribed to whales are extended to people who 'defend' them and 'fight' against the 'bad' whalers and their supporters. Through this process the anti-whalers create a totemic dichotomy of mankind, with whales as the totem for themselves and with money as the totem for the whalers (Kalland 1993), a world view strongly opposed by the whalers.

One of the oppositions in this scheme, is that between the civilized (whale saver) and uncivilized (whaler). Whalers are uncivilized, and to Sir Peter Scott, who held the post as WWF's chairman for more than 20 years, 'no civilised person can contemplate the whaling industry without revulsion and shame at the insensitivity of our own species' (quoted in Davies *et al.* 1991:2). Caring about whales has become a mark of personal and societal maturity (Scheffer 1991:19) and a qualification for membership in the 'world community' (Fuller 1991:2). Envisaged is a convergence of national cultures (Holt 1991:8), where all people feast on the 'super-whale' myth. The whaling issue provides a cheap way to satisfy people's demands for being 'civilized' member of the 'global village.'

Whalers make excellent enemies. That there are few nations engaged in whaling means that the cost of the moratorium is born by the few and makes whalers easily identifiable and thus ideal scapegoats for environmental disasters and human cruelty to animals. Moreover, they tend to live in remote areas with only limited possibilities to influence central governments.<sup>11</sup> Nor are their products regarded 'necessary' by the anti-whalers. This is the second reason why Holt (1985:193) believes it is easy to save whales.

The 'need' argument has been introduced by animal rights advocates in order to solve the contradiction between life and death. For, as Albert Schweitzer (1950:189) once remarked, life depends upon taking life. To Peter Singer (1978:9), because 'animals should not be killed or made to suffer significant pain except when there is no other way of satisfying important human needs, it follows that whaling should stop.' Singer has nutritional needs in mind, but there are other needs to consider. Subsistence and cultural needs were taken into account when the IWC authorized aboriginal subsistence whaling (Donovan 1982). Most of the anti-whaling groups have endorsed this kind of whaling even though, compared with modern commercial whaling, it inflicts far more pain on the whales due to its simpler technologies.<sup>12</sup>

Whereas a concession has been given to aboriginal peoples who are allowed to catch whales to satisfy subsistence and cultural needs, this has been denied commercial whalers. Needs are seen strictly in material terms, and the whalers have no need to catch whales because they share the general prosperity of the capitalist societies in which they live and work. They can afford to buy pork, beef and turkey.<sup>13</sup> But whaling is more than making a living. Whaling is a way of life and must be seen 'as a process whereby hunters mutually create and recreate *one another*, through the medium of their encounter with prey' (Ingold 1986:111). To deny them cultural needs, the protectionists take an extreme materialistic attitude, which may surprise many people who have taken their general

anti-capitalist rhetoric at face value. But by arguing that there is no need to kill whales, they turn whaling into a 'senseless' activity which can only be understood in terms of 'greed' and 'short-term profit.' Again the whalers can be presented in a negative way, making them easy targets for hate campaigns.

### *Exaggerating Crisis*

A recent survey conducted in four non-whaling countries (Australia, England, Germany, U.S.A.) and two whaling countries (Japan and Norway) indicates that knowledge about whale populations is poor – particularly in the non-whaling countries where between 65 and 70 per cent believed (wrongly) that all large species are in danger of extinction (Freeman and Kellert 1992). But only a few species are in fact endangered (Aron 1988). The minke whale – which Greenland, Iceland, Japan, and Norway want to harvest – can hardly be regarded as endangered and, with estimated stocks at 750,000 animals in the Antarctic, it may well be more abundant there than ever (Gulland 1988:44).

It seems to be easier for the animal and whale rights groups than for the environmental groups to accept the new estimates of whale populations since the argument of the former is not based on ecological considerations but on the ethics of killing. Their argument is thus not 'endangered' by higher whale population figures. To groups who pretend to be concerned with ecological issues, however, the logical consequence of higher estimates ought to be a feeling of relief accompanied by a switch to more urgent matters. But this has by and large not happened. Some of anti-whaling advocates have changed their arguments from ecology to ethics, thus crossing the line between environmentalism and animal welfare,<sup>14</sup> while others stubbornly keep to the ecological discourse or argue from both perspectives at once.

At the government level, the U.S. commissioner to the IWC, John Krauss, for example, said in an interview (*Marine Mammal News*, 17(5), May 1991, p. 4) that he would continue to defend the U.S. position against commercial whaling on ethical grounds since he could not do so any longer on a scientific basis. And the British Minister of Agriculture, John Gummer, turned to the argument of 'inhumane' killing methods after first pointing out that minke whales are plentiful (*The Guardian*, May 27, 1991; *The Times*, May 29, 1991).

In the anti-whaling organizations, the president of CSI writes that 'the science is now on [the whalers'] side. We can't even talk about extinction. Our arguments now focus on ethical, aesthetic, and moral reasons for the protection of the individual whale, not the population or the species' (Shields 1992). Michael Sutton of WWF-USA admits that the organization will 'have a hard time continuing' to argue ecologically (Bright 1992:69). So WWF has now taken the position that 'even if the IWC ... could guarantee that whaling was only carried out on a truly sustainable basis, WWF would remain opposed to the resumption of whaling' (WWF 1992:1) and wants to change the Whaling Convention from one regulating whaling into one protecting whales (Sutton 1992:2). Greenpeace has taken a similar position (Ottaway 1992:3).

Knowing that ecological arguments against whaling are more palatable than ethical and moral ones to a number of people, firms, and government agencies, and realizing that the 'terms of the [whaling] convention have required that this debate be conducted in a scientific guise' (Butterworth 1992:532),<sup>15</sup> many protectionists are more than

reluctant to change their rhetoric from an ecological discourse to one based on animal welfare or rights. Instead they stick to the myth of the endangered whale by accusing the scientists behind the new estimates of being incompetent, biased and 'bought' by governments of whaling nations, by refusing to accept new population estimates, by refuting their relevance or by introducing new arguments into the ecological discourse.

Some continue to argue as if all whale species are close to extinction. Greenpeace launched a 'Save the last whales' as late as in 1992, just in time for the annual IWC-meeting, and writes that the Norwegian government 'seems hell bent on waging a war of eradication on marine mammals' (Ottaway 1992:13). And in its 'SOS Save the Whale' campaign WWF-Denmark recently rather emotionally appealed for support to save the last whale (WWF-Denmark 1990). Many of these organizations, as well as media, live by crisis maximization and, by giving the impression that the moratorium is about to be lifted (e.g. *The Mail on Sunday*, June 21, 1992), they exploit upcoming IWC meetings to launch fundraising campaigns.<sup>16</sup>

It is also claimed that the whale population is irrelevant because commercial whaling will – by a law of nature, it seems – lead to over-exploitation and extinction. They tend to take the history of pelagic, industrial whaling as evidence (e.g. Greenpeace International 1992:1). But such an argument ignores the progress in IWC's management procedures during the 1970s, when the IWC entered a short period of science-based approach to whale management (Hoel 1986; Freeman 1990). The argument further denies mankind the ability to learn from past mistakes. Finally, the argument overlooks important differences in whaling regimes. To liken contemporary minke whaling with the old industrial whaling distorts the issue because: (1) whereas the main product for industrial whaling was oil, the most important product for minke whaling has always been meat for which there is a limited market; and (2) the minke whaling boats are, with the exception of Japanese minke whaling in the Antarctic, small and family operated under an economic rationality different from that of the large pelagic expeditions (ISGSTW 1992). There is thus little continuity between the two forms of whaling.

A recent strategy used by protectionists is to bring in new arguments into the ecological discourse (Butterworth 1992), a strategy whaling nations perceive as foot-dragging. While the protectionists may accept the new estimates, they argue that our knowledge on fertility and mortality is insufficient; that we do not know the impact on whale resources from pollution, depletion of the ozone layer, fishing and other human activities; that we must manage the whales stock by stock and we have a long way to go before we can safely delineate separate stocks; that inspection and enforcement must be written into the revised management procedure; introducing concepts like 'protected status,'<sup>17</sup> and so on.

### *Tournaments of Value*

The images of enemies and crisis are brought into prominence during tournaments of value, and media has turned some of these encounters into major events. The most spectacular are the annual IWC meetings in which privileged participants compete for status, rank, fame, and reputation by contesting central values in an attempt to diversify 'culturally conventionalized paths' (Appadurai 1986:21). Member countries send dele-

gations ranging from the large Japanese and American ones with dozens of delegates down to the one-person delegation, each with one vote regardless of size. In addition to diplomats and bureaucrats, delegations may also include scientists (mainly natural scientists but increasingly also social scientists), environmentalists and animal rights advocates (in the case of anti-whaling nations) and whalers (in the case of whaling nations). Their task is to contest opposing values pertaining to whales and their exploitation (Moeran 1992b) and to give scientific legitimacy to their positions.

A large number of non-governmental organizations (NGOs) are allowed to attend the proceedings, without rights to vote or speak.<sup>18</sup> They tend to form two major blocks. The largest is composed mainly of environmental and animal rights groups, while the smaller is composed of groups working for indigenous peoples or for sustainable whaling in general. The NGOs have several tasks during the IWC meetings. Firstly, they lobby the delegates and try to convince the general public through the mass media that their world view is the correct one. In addition to press conferences and demonstrations, about 20 protectionist groups jointly issue a paper called *Eco* during IWC meetings, while the High North Alliance publishes *The International Harpoon*. Secondly, they report directly back to their followers without going through the whims of mass media, thus enabling them to control the distribution of information regarding their own activities. Finally, and this is the most important point for our discussion, the NGOs monitor the proceedings and report their interpretations and evaluations of the delegates' performances to their supporters or to the mass media that do not have access to the conference room. By this arrangement the NGOs are in a unique position to manipulate the flow of information, to put pressure on national governments and politicians, to endorse their opinions and statements thus enhancing their prospects of being reelected, and to create a 'ranking list' of the most 'progressive' delegations and nations.<sup>19</sup>

The last actor at the IWC meeting is the mass media without whose participation the meeting would have been a much less attractive arena for contesting the commodity path. But the press is severely restricted in their work as it has no access to the conference room, and only parts of the proceedings are transmitted to the press room. Instead, pauses in the proceedings have been turned into intense press-briefing sessions where the media rely heavily on the services of the NGOs and some of the delegates. With anti-whaling NGOs in majority and with most of the media coming from anti-whaling nations with strong anti-whaling populations, it should come as no surprise that anti-whaling sentiments dominate the newspaper columns and news broadcasts. Anti-whaling demonstrations also contribute to this situation. Moreover, the media willingly reports from the latest anti-whaling publications, particularly if they are sensational in character and grossly exaggerate crises. In short, the IWC meetings provide environmental and animal rights group a rare opportunity to get their message out to millions of people.

Whale strandings offer other occasions for tournaments of value, with different sets of participants. Whalers and their supporters are usually excluded, and these tournaments are left to protectionists, companies, and government agencies – which may compete in leadership, in suggesting solutions, and in getting credit for progress. For example, in a recent stranding of 49 false killer whales in Australia rescue work – undertaken by several animal welfare groups in addition to National Parks officials, employees of marine parks and Sydney zoo, the Army and the Salvation Army – suffered

from conflicting advice and priorities, culminating in the walk-out of the Organization for Research and Rescue of Cetaceans in Australia (Wheatley 1992:14-5).

At times rescuers make strange bedfellows, as when Greenpeace and the Alaskan oil industry in October 1988 joined hands with each other and with Eskimo whalers, U.S. and Soviet government agencies, and industrialists to free three gray whales trapped in Alaskan ice. The media may well have turned the case into 'the World's Greatest Non-Event' (Rose 1989), but were only a tool in the P.R. contest between the rescuers, each trying to outbid the others and not be left behind.<sup>20</sup> And most of all, the media attention and all the calls from people wanting to help made it possible for the anti-whaling groups to strengthen the boycott against Iceland's fish products in the attempt to bring an end to that country's whaling activities and thus further remove whale meat from the commodity state.

Direct confrontations during the hunt constitute another important arena which helps to bring about a diversion of the path. They usually take place far from shore and therefore provide the activists with the opportunity to invent news – a role much appreciated by Greenpeace's co-founder Robert Hunter (Pearce 1991:20) – or to monopolize news coverage. Although a nuisance to whalers these actions are not necessarily meant to bring forth an immediate termination of whaling activities, but they tell the world that the activists are concerned about the environment, that the issue is urgent and cannot wait, and that they fight against powerful enemies and great odds. The activists are always depicted as underdogs; it is the small zodiac against the big catching boat, or swimming greenpeacers in front of a Japanese factory ship. The situation is ideally suited for presenting a picture of David fighting Goliath. By skilfully manipulating the mass media, an enormous sympathy to their cause is brought forth, which is one reason behind their success in removing whale meat from the commodity state and placing the 'super-whale' in its stead. It matters little that the picture is false and that with environmentalism being a multi-billion-dollar industry, it is rather the whalers who are the weak party.

### Consuming the 'Super-Whale'

Through the mass media, the public can participate as spectators in such tournaments of value, which are, moreover, important marketing devices for 'low-consumptive' use of whales. Tournaments and 'low-consumptive' use of whales allow millions of people to partake in the 'super-whale' myth, which provides the backdrop and *raison-d'être* for whalewatching, movies, books and so on. But the 'super-whale' is a symbolic type of commodity and what is consumed is not really the symbol itself, but human relations (Moeran 1992b), for which the 'super-whale' is a metaphor. Therefore, the 'feasting' on the 'super-whale' does not exhaust the 'super-whale' but adds to its economic and political power, at least up to a certain point. Whalewatching in particular is seen as a means to educate people in the 'proper' way of appreciating the qualities of the 'super-whale' (Hoyt 1992:1) and thus give further impetus to the mystification of whales and the anti-whaling campaign. But, as we shall see in the last section of this paper, by becoming too successful, the 'super whale' might put itself in danger of being removed from the commodity state.

### Whale Tourism

One of the first 'low-consumptive' uses of cetaceans appeared in the dolphinariums which still are very popular and have probably done more than anything else to foster a feeling of emotion toward cetaceans. But the dolphinariums are not completely 'non-consumptive' because the mortality rate is quite high for dolphins. Moreover, to view dolphins in captivity is not any longer regarded as authentic or the real thing. Animal advocates have turned against dolphinariums.

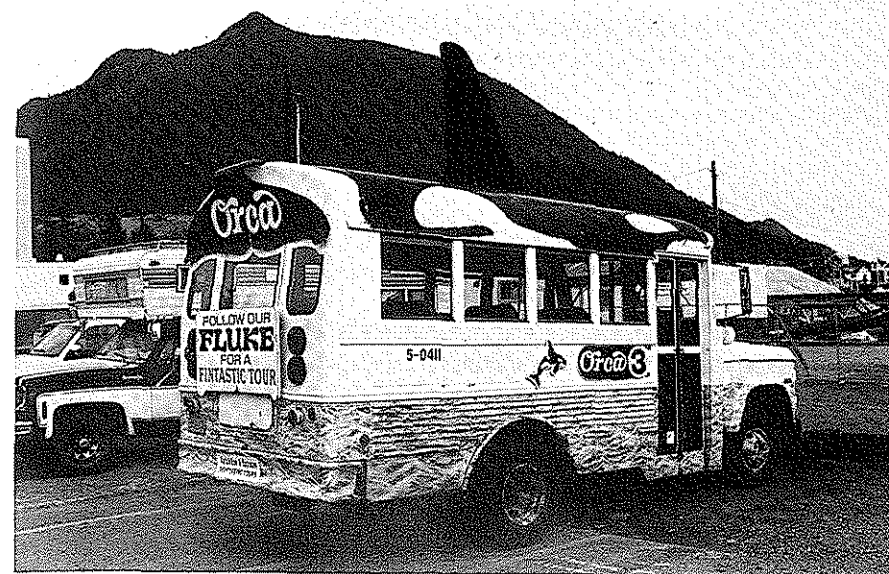
The 'real thing,' of course, is to watch the whales in the wild, and more than 4 million people reportedly spent more than US\$300 million on whale watching activities in 1991 (Hoyt 1992:1). Many of the environmental and animal rights groups organize whale safaris, and those organized by the WDCS from London must be among the most exclusive: a tour to Alaska from £2,995, to Baja California from £2,070, to Galapagos from £3,260, and to the Antractic and Falkland Islands from £5,350.

Patricia Corrigan (1991) has been able to trace more than 200 commercial whale-watch operators offering more than 250 different tours in North-America alone. The tours range in durations from an hour to a fortnight, and prices vary from \$7 to \$3,000 (Corrigan 1991:7). They all offer special excitements. One operator invites us 'to reach out and touch nature' while we 'travel in safety aboard a comfortable cruise vessel, in harmony with nature and at nature's own pace' (p. 182). Some seek to enhance this 'one-ness' with nature by using small kayaks so as to be less separated from the water environment, while others prefer to observe nature through panoramic windows from a delux bar aboard a liner carrying 700 passengers.

Many of the tours also feature cultural attractions. One operator offers homemade Portuguese specialties and folk music; while a company in Newfoundland announces that 'the captain will sing for you and dance with you as part of the entire cultural experience' (p. 255). Some operators tempt potential tourists with such attractions as Indian and Inuit villages *en route*. Among the more bizzare attractions is one offered in Newfoundland, where the human/cetacean encounter has been turned upside-down by guiding 'people into our spectacular marine environment so that the whales can watch them!' (p. 250). In short, there is something for everyone. To bring that message home, many operators offer tailor-made trips which 'exactly suit the desires of the client.'

It is interesting to note that so many of the operators claim that they operate in an 'area where whales abound' and are able to guarantee sighting success or a new trip. This impression is underscored by Hoyt (1992:1), who can calm those believing the rhetoric of these same organizations that whales are on the brink of extinction, by stating that all 'the large whale species and many dolphins and porpoises can be seen regularly on a wide range of tours.'

These whale watching trips often develop into cult-like seances. Anybody who has witnessed the unison *ooohhhhhh* from deck when a whale 'waves' its tail in 'goodbye' will be struck by the strong sense of community aboard the vessel. One tour operator at Hawaii exploits this and announces that those who learn a whale song during the voyages, which last from 1 to 3 hours, are 'treated to an unofficial initiation as honorary crew members' (p. 173).<sup>21</sup>



Whale watching is advertised in many ways. This bus operates from Ketchikan, Alaska.

### Swim with a Whale

Not everybody is satisfied by watching cetaceans from deck, however. More and more people want to swim with cetaceans. In Hong Kong 'dolphin-lovers' have broken into the Ocean Park at night, in order to have a free ride (Carter and Parton 1992:5), and in West-Australia people are queuing up to be in the water with a group of dolphins (Winton 1992). Babies born in close proximity with dolphins are believed by some to be more harmonious and to develop exceptional talents (Dobbs 1990:181), and might even develop into *Homo delphinus* (Cochrane and Callen 1992:30). In the United States there are several licenced dolphinariums with 'swim-with-dolphins-programmes' (Hatt 1990:247), and these institutions claim that their programmes are of therapeutic value for handicapped and distressed people.<sup>22</sup>

Others, who dislike that dolphins are kept in captivity, have taken these programmes into the wild. The relatively few friendly dolphins become famous and attract large crowds of people, some of whom are seeking therapy. To the initiate, dolphins like Jojo, Fungie, Donald, Opo, Percy, Simo, Horace, Dorah, and Jean Louis have become intimate friends and cult objects, and apparently it matters little in which corner of the globe they appear. Many of the 'dolphin lovers' seem to belong to the jet set.

One of the most celebrated 'dolphin therapists' is Horace Dobbs who holds a Ph.D. in psychiatry. In a series of books and movies he describes encounters with dolphins and the reactions among his depressed patients. Several of Dobbs' patients testified that they felt relaxed among dolphins. Being with the animal released them from the anxiety

of having to perform; to live up to other people's expectations. Together with the dolphin one can behave 'naturally,' as the following testimonial clearly shows (from Dobbs [1990:82-3]):

I felt like a Princess being taken away to another land by her Prince ... My Prince was taking me into his world beyond the realms of fantasy .. We were together as one ... I was him and he was me. Complete harmony and love....

I did not speak, we communicated with our hearts. I was totally and completely in love ... This beautiful dolphin loved me for what I was in my heart. It didn't matter whether I was old, young, fat or thin. I didn't have to impress him with a string of degrees. I was loved and accepted for myself, for the person I was. Simo was far superior to me in every way in the water. I did not have to compete, all the stresses of human values and life no longer existed.

Testimonials, through which individuals can share experiences and receive emotional support from a small group of likeminded people, is a common feature in many New Age sects. Those who share the experiences are typically described as good and sensible people. The only person mentioned in Dobbs' book *Dance to a Dolphin Song* and who did not have a spiritual experience with the dolphin is described as 'the very fat, rich, American lady' who got only fleeting attention from the dolphin (Dobbs 1990:97). To be rejected by a dolphin can thus imply rejection by the support group, but when good people meet in the water marvellous things can happen (Dobbs 1990:95).

#### *Whales in Literature and Arts*

Whale-watching guide books have started to appear to cater for whale tourists, and books about friendly dolphins help to satisfy the 'searching minds.' Such books might well be the latest genres of whale literature appearing on the market. But it is by no means the only genres. Melville's *Moby Dick* was probably the first best seller having a whale as one of the main characters. Other novels have followed. Lloyd Abbey's book *The Last Whales* (1990) takes the genre in a new direction in that all the characters are whales. In his novel interspecies communication is common, and the oceans would have been a paradise had it not been for human beings and killer whales.

Whales figure also in other genres of literature. A steady flow of beautiful picture-books are being published, and Heathcote William's odyssey to whales – which combines exiting photographs and emotional poems – has already become a sort of a classic to whale lovers (Williams 1988). Some writers of science fiction are also intrigued by cetaceans. In *Startide Rising* written by David Brin (1983), for example, the space craft *Streaker* is crewed by humans and *neo-dolphins*, the latter being a result of genetic engineering. Interestingly, considering the Japanese positive attitude to whaling, the *neo-dolphins* communicate in Japanese *haiku* verses.

'Writers of science fiction have often speculated about what it would be like to discover, on a planet in outer space, a much higher form of intelligence,' write D'Amato and Chopra (1991:21), and continue: 'Stranger than fiction is the fact that there already exists a species of animal life on earth that scientists speculate has higher than human intelligence.' This is the whale.

Quoting Dr. John Lilly as proof, and ignoring all scientists of a different opinion, D'Amato and Chopra seem to have taken the step from science to New Age. They are

not alone in so doing. A number of books can best be described as examples of dolphin cults. Titles like *Dolphin Dreamtime*; *Behind the Dolphin Smile*, *Dance to a Dolphin's Song*, *Dolphins and Their Power to Heal*, *Pictures in the Dolphin Mind* and *The Magic of Dolphins* are all telling. At the same time, 'cetacean artists' have appeared on the stage painting pictures or recording music in praise of whales and dolphins. Books, movies, videos, 'whale music,' 'art objects,' stickers, posters, photos, stamps, bags, T-shirts, soft toys, buttons, jewellery, computer games, and so on provide nourishment and visualize people's commitment to the cause and thus help build a community of believers.

#### *Selling Green Images*

Individuals may go on whale watching tours, pay for a swim with a whale, buy some of the many artifacts carrying whale symbols, or send a check to one of the many anti-whaling organizations and get peace in mind believing they have done something for the environment. Government agencies acquire, as has been argued in this paper, their 'green' images by supporting, and thus giving legitimacy to, the anti-whaling movement. In this section we shall focus on industrial firms, some of which cause the greatest threat to marine life.

There has in recent years been a 'green' marketing boom in which companies try to take advantage of the ecological discourse. This can be done through 'totemic classification' by which a relationship between nature and product is established, or through 'eco-commercialism' by which a company can create an image that it is aware of the environment (Moeran 1992a:197-98). One way to do this is, of course, to claim in their ads that they are 'green,' by planting a tree for each car sold, for example. But the claim is more trustworthy if it can be endorsed by outsiders.

It is precisely here that the environmental and animal welfare groups have a role to play. In the rescue of the gray whales, for example, oil companies and other industrialists worked side by side with Greenpeace (Rose 1989), and the work was transmitted worldwide for everybody to see. It is in this context one must analyse many of the transactions between environmentalist and animal welfare groups and industrial concerns.

The WWF, for example, has on several occasions been willing to sell 'green images' to companies in need of one. In Denmark, WWF allowed the Norwegian Statoil company to use the WWF logo in ads and to announce that the oil company supported WWF's work for endangered species in order to get more Danes to fill their tanks with Statoil products. One million Danish *kroner* (about US\$150,000) seems to have been a reasonable price to pay for having WWF to legitimize advertisements for products that others might argue are harmful to the environment.

More companies than Statoil are in need of a 'green' images, and these may be actively targeted by environmental and animal rights organizations.<sup>23</sup> In a letter to Danish business leaders, WWF-Denmark (1990) writes (after first claiming that the whaling moratorium was about to be lifted, causing the eradication of all known whale species for all future):

Therefore I send you this SOS for assistance in WWF's fight for an extension of the moratorium. Here your company can give a cash contribution by sponsoring a whale for 50,000 *kroner*. The

sponsorship will in a positive way connect your activities with WWF ... Through a sponsorship your company has the opportunity to show your associates that it takes the environment and 'the green wave' seriously... I am sure that you will see the opportunities which a whale sponsorship will imply to your business. (Author's translation from Danish.)

The letter seems to have brought about the results it was expected to, and one of the companies that decided to sponsor a whale was the Danish chemical company, Børste. In order to celebrate its own 75 years anniversary the company placed an advertisement in the *Børsen*, the Danish equivalent to Wall Street Journal telling that: 'We bought a giant sperm whale from WWF, World Wide Fund for Nature, as a birthday present to ourselves ... We know from the seller that he has more whales, in many sizes.'<sup>24</sup>

WWF has taken the lead in developing whale adoption as a fund raising measure. WWF-Denmark has alone earned more than £200,000 from persons and companies that have adopted, or 'bought' as it is frequently termed, sperm and killer whales outside the coast of North-Norway during the second half of 1990. The price is about £4,500 for a sperm and £450 for a killer whale. If this is too much, people are welcome to co-sponsor whales. Other organizations have similar programmes. WDCS, for example, offers 'peaceful' orcas off British Columbia (the term 'killer whale' is not used in the ads, for understandable reasons) (*Sonar*, No.7:4-5). Mingan Island Cetacean Study in Quebec offers 210 blue whales, each costing \$100 per person, \$1,000 for a corporate adoption (Corrigan 1991:311). Allied Whale announces that 'about 35 individual finback whales are available for \$30; a mother and calf cost \$50' (*ibid.*). Save the Whales International in Hawaii invites interested people to 'welcome a Hawaiian humpback whale into their extended family' (*op. cit.*, 312). Through these programmes, people can adopt whales in distant waters, in the same way as many people in rich countries 'adopt' children in the Third World. And, as with the adoption of a child, the whale's 'adopted parents' are provided with a picture of 'their child' and annual 'progress reports.'

In all the activities we have analysed a feeling of belonging is created through the partaking in the 'super-whale' myth. This is most obvious on whale watching tours and in 'swim with a whale' programmes, but participation in whale saving operations and adoption programmes can also be a boost to company moral (*cf.* Rose 1989:234). By displaying the proper buttons, T-shirts, jewellery, photos, bags and art objects, one's belonging to the movement is communicated to the world. And through books, movies and computer games, consumers are educated to appreciate the qualities of cetaceans in the 'correct' way, which is a learning process that starts early in the childhood.<sup>25</sup> But the very success of the 'super-whale' poses also a threat to its exotism and its future. Although the 'super-whale' may survive, the cultural framework in which it has been commoditised may not. A cessation of all whaling activities will mean a *de facto* appropriation of the whales by the anti-whaling movement, leaving the ecological and whale welfare discourses meaningless.

### Whose Whale?

Appadurai (1986) talks about the path through which a commodity travels from production to consumption. From a whaler's perspective, *he* is a part of such a path; he

is a step in a long chain of interconnected parts. His task is to hunt and capture whales and bring the carcasses to processors or merchants. Meat goes one way in the chain of exchange and usually money goes the other way, although a lot of whale meat is also bartered or gifted. The money thus earned, the whalers spend on various things, including equipment and provisions.

The whaler possesses only a fraction of the total body of knowledge which is required in order to bring a whale from the sea to the dinner table. But his knowledge is crucial, and includes how to find whales, how to identify the species, how to chase them, how to manoeuvre the boat so that the gunner can aim and hit a moving target from an unsteady boat, how to secure the animal once shot, how to winch it aboard and flens it, how to handle the meat so that it does not spoil, and so on. But knowledge regarding whaling also includes rules of the game. In this context the most important rules are regulations pertaining to rights in whales.

In fisheries which are based on free access to marine resources, ownership rights to fish are usually obtained through investment of labour. Fish trapped on hooks or in nets are not any longer nobody's property but belong to somebody, usually the owner of the gear. Rights in fish can also be acquired by spotting or initiating a chase, and in whaling all principles are at work.

Striking a whale implies in many cases ownership, even should the whale subsequently be lost. Old Norse laws, for example, have detailed regulations about ownership of whales found drifting with marked arrows, spears or harpoons in their bodies (Martinsen 1964; ISG 1992:22). Today, a whale is rarely lost and hitting a whale implies *de facto* ownership. But what about sightings?

In Japan and Norway, at least, sighting in itself is usually not enough to appropriate a whale. A chase has to be initiated. Only when a whale has been sighted *and* a chase has been started will the other boats recognize the claim to ownership. But the claim is void if the whale escapes.

If only one whale can be chased at the time, it makes little sense to lay claim on a school of whales. This has far-reaching consequences for communication between boats. In Japan, where boats operate near land and are obliged in most cases to land the carcass to a designated shore station before nightfall, a boat can seldom take more than a whale or two on any one trip. It might be optimal in such a situation to inform other boats about a school. In Norway, however, boats often operate far from shore and they may stay at sea for three or four weeks at a time. They winch the whales aboard, where they are flensed while the crew can pursue a second whale. The meat is laid on deck to cool. The limiting factor is deck space and the stability of the boat. Most boats may be able to keep 20 metric tons or more on deck. Only when the boat is 'shot full' – at which time the crew is forced to take a rest – might they inform others. Until then the crew might be tempted to keep silent in order to harvest the school alone, or together with a partner. Consequently, silence on the radio is often an indication that whales have been sighted.

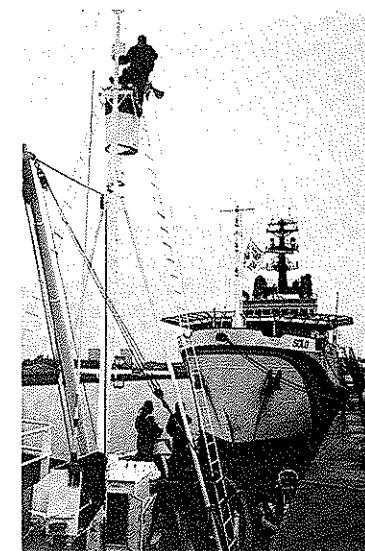
Management information might be different in Japan and Norway as a result of different technologies and regulations, but in both countries whalers possess knowledge on how and when whales are appropriated. Ownership does not imply, however, that the whaler is free to dispose of the whale as he sees fit. In all societies there exist complicated rules as to how the animal shall be shared or the profit used. In the Faroe

Islands, the pilot whales belong to the community and the distribution of the meat follows set rules (Joensen 1990), as did minke whales captured in bays outside Bergen in Norway until the beginning of this century (Østberg 1929). In Inuit culture, sharing the prey with others is fundamental to the successful continuation of relations between whales and Inuits and serves to legitimize hunting (Wenzel 1991). In Japan people obtain rights in the catch by giving gifts of *sake* (rice wine) to the owners and crews before the commencement of the whaling season (Akimichi *et al.* 1988; Kalland and Moeran 1992). Moreover, whaling enterprises are obliged to support the communities from which they operate. These are 'long term transactions' which are 'concerned with the reproduction of the social and cosmic order' (Moeran 1992b). Such rules are also among the pool of knowledge required for a successful appropriation of natural resources.<sup>26</sup>

It goes without saying that one must 'own' or have 'rights' in an object in order to turn it into a commodity of exchange value. But it is important to keep in mind that ownership is not a relationship between object and person but between persons. 'Any statement of property or of rights is a statement what can be done by the owner to the non-owner if these rights are infringed,' says Maurice Bloch (1984:204). Whalers' rights' in whales are recognized only as long as the whaler is able, or his society is willing, to sanction infringements. In order to secure his society's favour and support, the whaler has to live up to the social obligation expected of him, which restricts his freedom to dispose of the carcass as he sees fit. In return for support and recognition of property claims, the whaler must forego some of his rights in the whale.

The protectionists play a different game in their attempts to deny whalers access to the whale resources. One strategy has been to make the resources of no value to the whalers by destroying their markets and thus removing their products from the commodity state through legal means. Norwegian catches of bottlenose whales, for example, came to an end when the UK banned imports of whale meat for pet food in 1972 (ISG 1992:32). A number of other restrictions have been introduced on the trade of whale meat. The Washington Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), which was established in 1973, covers several whale species. In 1979 IWC prohibited imports of whale products into member states from non-members. In 1986 a resolution was passed recommending that products from scientific whaling should primarily be consumed locally, which means that no more than 49 per cent may be exported. In 1981 the European Community (EC) introduced licences for importing whale products into the community, and in the U.S.A. the 1969 Endangered Species Conservation Act and the 1972 Marine Mammal Protection Act both prohibit imports of whale meat into the U.S.A. On the ideological level, the 'super-whale' has made it barbaric – bordering to cannibalism – to eat whale meat (cf. *Daily Star*, May 11, 1992). Today more people feel adersion to eating whale meat than most other kind of meat (Freeman and Kellert 1992:29).<sup>27</sup>

But there are still people in Japan, Norway and elsewhere who cherish such meat, and a second strategy has therefore been to claim that whales are not a free good owned by nobody until spotted, chased or captured. On the contrary, attempts are made to turn whales from being 'res nullius' to become 'res communes' (Hoel 1986:28), which means that nations without previous interests in whales – like Switzerland, for example – share property rights and management responsibilities with the rest.<sup>28</sup> It is claimed that whales are everybody's property, as 'the heritage of all mankind.'



*Goliat fighting David. A small Norwegian whaler (foreground) has been occupied by Greenpeace activists from the Greenpeace ship 'Solo' (background) at Glasgow harbour during the 1992 IWC meeting.*

Whalers see the policy of the anti-whaling movement as an attempt to close the whale fishery and appropriate the whales for themselves in order to 'sell' them or give them away in 'adoption' (against a price, of course).<sup>29</sup> The whalers are facing a new, and to them incomprehensible, regime of appropriation with other rules and sanctions. The moratorium has – in many people's opinion, although not according to international law – given legitimacy to sanctions against the whaling nations.<sup>30</sup> Such sanctions are of two kinds.

The U.S.A. has introduced legal measures which can be used against whaling nations. Under the 1971 Pelly Amendment to the Fisherman's Protective Act, the President is authorized to prohibit import of sea products from whaling nations, while the 1979 Packwood-Magnusson Amendment to the Fisheries Conservation and Management Act gives the Secretary of Commerce the option to reduce the fishing quotas of whaling nations within the U.S. 200-mile zone by 50 per cent and then cancel it altogether.

The U.S.A. has certified, or threatened to certify, whaling nations under these two provisions. Moreover, these laws have given the environmental and animal rights groups the legal tool by which they have sued the U.S. Government to force sanctions on Japan (Sumi 1989). It is highly questionable whether these sanctions stand up to international law, however (Hoel 1992; Sumi 1989). Also, the U.S.A. has been criticized by a General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) panel for its embargo of Mexican 'non-dolphin-friendly' tuna. It is therefore likely that consumer boycotts organized by the environmental and animal welfare groups will pose the biggest threat to the whaling nations. Boycotts of sea products have already been used against Iceland (with ques-

tionable result) and will undoubtedly be tried again. Several organizations have so far indicated that they will try to organize boycotts not only of Norwegian fish but also of other Norwegian products and services if Norway resumes commercial whaling in 1993.<sup>31</sup> These sanctions all have one aim in common: to close down whaling once and for all and turn the whale resources into a 'common heritage of mankind.'

At first sight one should believe that low-consumptive use of whales, such as whale watching, and whaling could co-exist, particularly where tourists and whalers seek different species. The 'swim with a whale' programmes, as well as the use of cetacean in literature and art, should be even more able to co-exist peacefully with whaling. But this is not the case. The same cultural framework which has turned the 'super-whale' into a commodity, has also de-commoditized whale meat and oil and created the 'evil whaler.' Consequently, the 'super-whale' cannot coexist with whaling. Moreover, western urbanites tend to impose their totems on others, and it is this blending of totemization of whales and cultural imperialism which has turned the whale issue into a stalemate. With powerful environmental and animal rights groups behind them, anti-whalers have gained political and moral recognition. WWF with its many members and royal patronage has gained a position from where it can appropriate nature and farm it out to those who will pay for a good conscience or a green image. Greenpeace with its millions of members has also gained power and international recognition sufficient to lay claim on being a steward of nature. Both organizations have been able to form coalitions with national governments, international bodies such as EC, UNEP and IUCN, and industrialists. In doing so these coalitions have redefined the whale as a commodity and managed to interrupt the path.

Appadurai refers to this phenomenon as 'diversion of commodities from their preordained path.' One kind of diversion is theft, and many whalers see the sales and adoptions of whales – and here they include sales of whale images which have contributed so importantly to the finances of environmental and animal rights groups – as theft; not only of the whales, which they feel belong to them through several generations' involvement in whaling, but theft of their livelihood, pride, and of their culture.

## Notes

1. 'Cetacean' and 'whale' will be used interchangeably in this paper to mean all great whales, dolphins and porpoises.

2. The IWC operates with two main categories of whaling. The moratorium applies to *commercial* whaling, while *aboriginal* whaling for subsistence has been authorized. For critiques of this distinction, see Kalland (1992); ISG (1992); Moeran (1992b). Moreover, the member states are, according to the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW), entitled to issue permits for scientific whaling for research purposes.

3. The term 'environmental group' refers to a group of persons who through an ecological discourse expresses concern for the environment as a *system* in order to secure habitats and species diversity. Animal welfare groups are concerned with our treatment of animals, including killing methods, while animal rights groups condemn the killing of animals *per se*. They are engaged in an animal welfare (or animal rights)

discourse. (For simplicity, no distinction will be made between animal welfare and animal rights groups or between animal welfare and animal rights discourses in this paper.) There is no sharp line between environmental and animal welfare/rights groups (Wenzel 1991:36). Animal rights groups become increasingly concerned about ecological systems in order to protect the habitats of animals, and environmental groups have recently engaged themselves in the protection of non-endangered species. The confusion also afflicts U.S. lawmakers (Manning 1989). I have used the terms 'protectionist groups' and 'anti-whaling groups' interchangeably to denote groups of people who are against lethal use of whales.

4. See Kalland (1993) for a critique of his argument.

5. In the movie *Star Trek IV*, for example, two humpback whales were propelled into the 23rd century in order to communicate with an enormous space craft threatening to destroy the Earth. In Douglas Adams' *So Long, and Thanks for All the Fish* (1984), on the other hand, the dolphins gave up their mission as saviours and left the Earth in disgust with human ignorance.

6. Greenpeace-Germany, for example, jumped on the anti-sealing bandwagon in order to grow big:

It was surely important to Greenpeace at that time to get bigger. Greenpeace was very small. At that time I found it completely legitimate to use a cute animal with large eyes... That I found OK. That was no issue. (Wolfgang Fischer, leader of the German section's anti-sealing campaign in Bayrischer Rundfunk's TV program 'Live aus dem Schlachthof,' 15 January 1990. Translated from German by the author.)

Today, Greenpeace has grown to one of the largest environmental and animal rights groups with an annual turnover of about US\$ 142 million, with DM 57 million being collected in Germany (Schwarz 1991:88-89). This is only surpassed by the US division which has 2.3 million members and a budget of US\$ 50 million (Gifford 1990:73). Only a few of the members have influence, however. Greenpeace, like many of the anti-whaling groups, is centrally controlled. Of the 700,000 German members only 30 are entitled to elect the seven board members (Schwarz 1991:88-89), while in Sweden only 11 of the 150,000 paying members have the right to vote (Eyerman and Jamison 1989:106). In the last couple of years there has been an economic set-back for the organization and the Danish newspaper *Politiken* (Dec. 4, 1991, p. 8) attributes the falling membership in Denmark to the 'Leninist' leadership structure. It will be interesting to see whether some very critical coverage recently in the press (Fox 1991; Schwarz 1991; Spencer *et al.* 1991) will have a further negative impact on Greenpeace.

7. The other reason will follow later.

8. I have elsewhere (Kalland 1993) analysed in greater detail the creation of a symbolic 'super-whale,' which has taken on characteristics of a totem for the environmental and animal welfare groups, particularly in western urban society.

9. In all fairness it should be stressed that not all anti-whalers partake in this rhetoric. The president of the WDCCS, Roger Payne (1991:22), for example, asks his colleagues to stop accusing all whalers of cruelty, and Robbins Barstow apologized for insulting remarks made by British politicians and others at an anti-whaling rally in Glasgow in connection with the IWC meeting there in 1992.

10. Cases of long sufferings are told again and again, but such incidents occur in all kinds of hunt and is rather the rule in bull-fights, fox hunts and executions of convicts. Yet, the governments in Spain, the U.K. and the U.S.A., all strongly against whaling because of its 'inhumanity,' equally strongly defend bull-fights, fox hunts and executions. In the rhetoric of the protectionists whaling is never compared to hunting or other sports involving animals, but only to what goes on in abattoirs and slaughterhouses.

11. The sealers make good enemies for the same reasons. Environmental and animal rights groups have gone against hunting of seals off Newfoundland, although by no means were the seals endangered (Wenzel 1991). At the same time 'international conservation organizations [including Greenpeace and WWF] are allowing one of the world's most endangered species [the Mediterranean monk seal] to slip silently into extinction' (Johnson 1988:5). The monk seal of which there are only a few hundred left, is victim of massive degradation of their habitat due to military activities, high population concentration around the ocean and millions of tourists flocking to its beaches every year. It is almost impossible to identify and give 'face' to the enemy, and the forces behind the depleting of monk seals are powerful and influential. Add to this that there is no 'face-to-face' confrontation between the monk seal and the killer, no dramatic deaths and no blood. Compare this with the seal hunt off Newfoundland which is conducted during three short weeks in a very limited area. The white ice makes the perfect photographic background for slaughter and spills of blood of white pups with big, black eyes. These are the ideal conditions for making dramatic footage, while the Mediterranean setting is not.

12. Aboriginal whaling does not pose a problem to the most of the protectionists, perhaps because it is defined as *subsistence* whaling which, almost by definition, prevents products from these whales entering the commodity state. See Appadurai (1986) and Moeran (1992a) for a critique of the notion that commodities are confined to goods under a capitalist mode of production.

13. The argument, of course, begs the question of how to decide what we need without being ethnocentric or cultural imperialist. And why is there apparently a need to hunt foxes and big game for sport when there are non-lethal recreations like cinemas and soccer games?

14. This caused an editorial in *The Times* (June 30, 1992) to observe that 'the moratorium was flawed. It was introduced originally in the name of conservation, at a time when the extinction of virtually all whales seemed imminent. Its continuation is demanded now in the name of animal welfare. Iceland and Norway are entitled to accuse the anti-whaling majority of nations in the International Whaling Commission of changing the rules half way through the game.' The editorial concludes that 'the IWC's mistake has been to present the moratorium on minke harvesting as an issue of preservation, needing international cooperation. It is not. Norway and Iceland have at least taught the world a lesson in candour.'

15. Since this is becoming more and more difficult to do with integrity, WWF and U.S. Marine Mammal Commission, among others, have voiced the opinion that it is time to rewrite the whaling convention so that it can take account of 'non-consumptive values' of whales (e.g. U.S. Marine Mammal Commission 1992).

16. Often this approach goes hand in hand with a tendency to exaggerate the potential scope of commercial whaling. 'Once again the blue whale... will be ruthlessly hunted, although there are probably less than 1,000 remaining from 250,000 that used to roam the oceans,' complains *The Mail on Sunday* (June 21, 1992, p. 8). Beside offering an incredible low figure for the remaining blue whale population, the newspaper fails to mention that blue whales have been protected since 1965 and that there is still unanimity as to upholding this protection.

17. The South-African mathematician Butterworth takes issue with scientists pursuing this strategy and, with special reference to the Antarctic minke whale population, thinks the time is overdue 'to speak out against the near-farcical pronouncements of some international organizations regarding endangered species' (1992:533). The 'protected status' is imposed on any whale stock below the 0.54K level (54% of original abundance) 'to give the public the impression that a stock placed in this category would be in danger of extinction' while the 0.54K value was originally 'related to catch-maximization considerations and had nothing to do with any likelihood of extinction' (1992:532).

18. It was the U.S. government that took up the issue of admitting NGOs and mass media to the IWC meetings, apparently in an attempt to mobilize international public opinion (Sumi 1989:344) and to have its own 'greenness' reported to the electorates.

19. The EC parliament as well as some national parliaments can also be seen as tournaments of value where NGOs are given the opportunity to lobby for cessation of whaling and to endorse opinions and voting behaviour of the politicians, thus providing politicians and political parties arenas where they can compete in being 'green.'

20. In his book *Freeing the Whales*, Tom Rose (1989) vividly narrates the \$5.8 million rescue operation and the prizes at stake. To Greenpeace the event meant the biggest source of new money and members in its history and for the National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), which led Operation Breakout and activated a new satellite ahead of schedule in order to provide the Soviets with ice information, it meant its 'coming of age.' The oil industry improved its image considerable only to lose much of the new-won goodwill in the *Exxon Valdez* oil-spill five months later. But its involvement in freeing the whales helped VECO, Alaska's largest oil constructing company, to land the prime contract to clean up the mass after the spill. The Eskimos benefitted by suddenly being pictured as good-natured humans and not as greedy whale killers and, by his personal interest in the affair, President Reagan tried to shape up his environmental record, as did the Soviets who, by providing ice-breakers, presented a 'human face' to the faltering regime and made the world forget that Soviet is the only nation hunting gray whales. Industrialists got their products advertised worldwide.

21. The song goes (Corrigan 1991:173):

Yo ho, yo ho, a sailor's life for me!  
Yo ho, yo ho, a sailor's life for me!  
We sail this ship upon the sea  
in search of humpback whales.  
We see them breach,  
We see them splash,  
We see them wave their tails!  
Oh ... oooooh, yo ho, yo ho, a sailor's life for me!

22. The effect of animal therapy is, however, controversial and scientifically poorly documented (cf. Beck and Katcher 1984; Cochran and Callen 1992:32-37).

23. Such offers are not always accepted. In 1992 Greenpeace-Denmark approached the association of supermarkets in Denmark with a suggestion that the organization should, against a token payment of course, give the shops' products a 'green' stamp. The offer was perceived by the association as an attempt at extortion and therefore declined (*Politiken*, January 18, 1992, 3. section, p. 5).

24. The advertisement continued by appealing to congratulators to donate money to WWF rather than to send flowers to the company. Their contributions would be displayed at the 'birthday' reception. Thus, the chemical company mediated 'green' images between WWF and its own business partners.

25. During a quick browse in a small book-store in Juneau, Alaska, I observed in 1992 about a dozen children's books on whales.

26. That the loss of such knowledge can cause conflicts was clearly expressed when a minke whale was killed in a bay outside Bergen in 1960. Not having caught any whale for decades, a controversy took place between the farms around the bay as the tradition of distributing the meat had been lost (Friland, Bergen Fishing Museum, personnel communication).

27. In the survey of people's attitudes to whales, only seal meat met with the same disapproval as whale meat among the following alternatives: chicken, deer, horse (ranked 3rd after whales and seals), kangaroo, lamb, lobster, seal and wildfowl.

28. This interpretation of whale ownership might well contradict the principles of the New Ocean Regime as well as the Convention for the Regulation of Whales, but I leave it to people more competent in international law to discuss that matter.

29. When organizations singlehandedly appropriate whales to be used in 'adoption' programmes, they not only contradict their own ideology that wildlife is everybody's property, but also face the problems of recognition of such claims and of sanctioning infringement. Some have tried to solve these problems by shooting photographs of whales and giving them names. A few species can be identified by their flukes or colour patterns, and it is precisely these species which are appropriated by WWF and other organizations and offered for adoption.

30. The importance of photos for claiming ownership to individual whales surfaced in a recent dispute between WWF-Denmark and the Center for the Study of Whales and Dolphins (CSWD) in Sweden. CSWD photographs whales outside northern Norway in order to identify and name individual animals, while WWF, who has sponsored these activities, sent such photos to the adopted parents of whales. An agreement was finally reached out of court when WWF-Denmark paid compensation for the use of the photos and promised to curtail the adoption program.

31. Norway is, for example, not legally bound by the moratorium since the country in accordance with the whaling convention has objected both to the moratorium and to the classification of the Northeast Atlantic stock of minke whale as 'protected.'

32. It is worth pointing out that both the U.S. imposed sanctions and consumer boycotts hit innocent third parties, which might be intentional in the hope that this will cause internal conflicts in whaling nations. But it might very well have the opposite effect because whaling is becoming a symbol of national sovereignty (Brydon 1990; Kalland and Moeran 1992:192-95; IWG 1992) as well as of an enlightened environmental policy securing sustainable exploitation of marine resources according to best scientific advice. This may increase their resistance to economic and diplomatic hardship.

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