

Beyond the Whale

Japan, The West & The Whaling Issue



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*To my Norwegian friends, who wanted to serve me whale steak in Oslo,
To my Japanese friends, who applauded me for not condemning their whaling culture,
To my Dutch friends, who despise the killing of whales.*

*Special thanks to
Midas Dekkers
Pavel Klinckhamers
Paul Guernsey*

Introduction

Whales appear to evoke strong feelings all over the world. Issues that concern whaling consistently make the headlines; and it goes beyond that. Not only did the whaling discourse produce articles, stickers, advertisements, films and songs, there even exists a flourishing business in the manufacturing of T-shirts saying: “Save the Whales, Harpoon a Honda”, or “Save the Whales, Eat Hello Kitty Instead” (De President 2010; Red Bubble 2010). The whaling issue is very much alive in international affairs, popular culture, environmental circles and in the academic world.

The Western world¹ has grown so accustomed to the current anti-whaling norm, that one would almost forget that things used to be different before. Actually, there has been a dramatic swift from a world where the hunt for whales was widespread and undisputed to one where it is morally wrong, and the ones who do so are frowned upon (Epstein 2008, vii). These changing international norms are influenced and constructed by cultural identities. In the process, Japan has been put into an outlaw position.

Identity matters to international relations (2008, 5). International society is a world full of ‘Selfs’ and ‘Others’- relations that are constructed. In this way, our relation to the whale is socially constructed as well. Here, the anti- and pro-whaling debate will be explored focusing on the *why*’s and *how*’s, essentially demonstrating that there is more to the whaling debate than whales alone.

The first chapter travels through time to respectively highlight the (historical) construction of Western and Japanese relations to whaling and how this has resulted in the current state of affairs. The second chapter explores the anti- and pro-whaling discourses and how they have become alive in (popular) culture. The last chapter seeks to break down the whaling issue to see what is really behind it, and essentially, wander through the way in which national identities and international relations are intrinsically linked to each other. In the eye of this hurricane, we find the whale.

¹ In the anti-whaling discourse, the “Western world” generally includes Europe, the U.S., Australia and New Zealand.

1. The Tide of International Norms

The International Whaling Commission (IWC), founded in 1946, holds its 62nd Annual Commission Meeting from 21 to 25 June 2010, in Agadir, Morocco. The year 2010 has been a turbulent one in the whaling world; clashes between the activist group Sea Shepherd and Japanese whaling vessels escalated to what the media described as an “all-out whaling war” in the beginning of the year (Bryant 2010). Whilst Tokyo put an anti-whaling activist on trial in May 2010 for trespassing on a Japanese whaling ship, Japan itself is taken to court by Australia, who argues that the annual whaling hunt in the Southern Ocean is in violation of the international ban on commercial whaling (BBC 2010; Maquieira 2010). Against the backdrop of these struggles, and with all eyes of the international community directed at Agadir, the IWC faces serious challenges; while anti-whaling nations will try to fix a better deal for the conservation of the whale, pro-whaling ones (Japan, Norway, Iceland) will not be prepared to give up what they consider to be their rights (Maquieira 2010).

From the 1960s to the present, the stance of the members of the IWC has altered radically as the international norms have shifted to an overall anti-whaling one. Through the “whale wars” it becomes clear that the construction of an acceptable framework for global political order is an intensely political battle (Clapham et al 2006; Norris et al 2003; Hurrell 2007). Who the ‘good guys’ and the ‘bad guys’ are, after all, depends on one’s perspective. How, and why, have these norms on whaling changed through time? Every year, during the IWC meeting, Japan is spat on, shouted at, and sprayed on with red paint by activists for hunting and eating whales. Japan is portrayed as an economic devil and environmental outlaw (Catalinac & Chan 2005, 133). Are the Japanese whale-hunters indeed cruel killers, or just simply upholding their “traditional customs”? Before the construction of the international norm is further discussed, we dive into the background of the whaling industry.

The Background of Whaling

Humans have been hunting whales since the beginning of time; it is an ancient craft that can be traced back to around 15.000 B.C. Commercial whaling has existed as early as the 12th century (Epstein 2008; Lawrence & Philips 2004). In ‘Hogei no Hikaku Bunka Ronteki Kousatsu’ [A Comparative Study on Whaling Cultures] (2006) Kakinuma points out that Japanese and Western whaling traditions have always differed since the various whaling nations of the West mainly used whales for their oil, whereas the Japanese mostly treasured the nutritional aspect of whales. From the perspective of commercial, whales were seen as a resource that was common property; it did not belong to some user or nation in particular, and no single user could prevent the other from exploiting it (Lawrence & Philips 2004, 695). The sea, in other words, belonged to the whole world. Whaling in Japan had previously always been on a small scale. It is estimated that in the 17th century, Japan only took about sixty whales per year (Abel 2005, 323).

Kakinuma describes how the American whaling industry was flourishing and unrivalled from 1820 tot 1880, as described in the famous novel *Moby Dick* (1951) by Melville. In this novel, American whaling ships pass by Japan; a country that is portrayed as exotic, dangerous and seemingly lawless. Those whaling ships were “the pioneers in ferreting out the remotest and least known parts of the world” (Melville 1851, 118). As Melville writes through the voice of Ishmael, the protagonist: “If that double-bolted land, Japan, is ever to become hospitable, it is the whale-ship alone to whom the credit will be due; for already she is on the threshold” (119). Japan was a “locked” country, but would not remain one for long. In the decades around 1800, merchant ships and whalers from Europe and the U.S. kept on sailing Japanese waters with growing frequency. Ishmael calls the whale-ship “the true mother of that now mighty colony [America]” (119). The persisting ships indeed were powerful symbols of capitalism and modernization, that wanted Japan to open up its shores. The capturing of European and American shipwrecked sailors on Japanese soil had to be stopped; Japan needed to be brought to the “enlightened” Western world. The whaling ships could fulfil this task as ambassadors of modernization (Abel 2005, 319; Gordon 2003). When Commodore Perry arrived in Japan in 1853, and managed to “open up” Japan, he immediately demanded provisioning stops to whalers. Although Perry was

not a whaler himself, he did sail in the wake of an enormous group of whalers (2005, 319; 2003, 49).

An important and fascinating story in the Japanese whaling tradition is the account of Nakahama Manjiro, the founder of the Japanese whaling industry (Vlasopolos 2007, 169). While Manjiro is now the hero of many Japanese comic and children's books, he was once a shipwrecked fisher boy of 14 years old, stranded on a remote beach along with four companions. After months on the beach, an American whaling ship rescued the Japanese fisher boys in 1841, commanded by William Whitfield. It was this Captain Whitfield who singled out the smart, young Manjiro to stay on board and teach him all the techniques he needed to know on whaling. During a period of ten years, which he spent both on the ship and in New England, Manjiro adopted Western attitudes towards nature and got educated in the industrial-scale hunt of whales. He got back to Japan in 1851; a country that was still locked and unfriendly to foreign visitors at that time. After an interrogation of two years by the suspicious and xenophobic Japanese shogunate in Nagasaki, Manjiro was finally released and became a primary informant to Japan on the West. He taught American navigational, surveying and whaling techniques, and in this way initiated the reinvention of Japan as an economically competitive nation that could get diplomatically involved with other nations (Vlasopolos 2007 167-170; Abel 2005, 321-323). What is important to note here is that when the Japanese whaling fleet, inspired by Manjiro's experiences, sailed out with a multitude of international vessels, they actually sailed out into the world. Their participation in whaling meant a participation in international society. Whaling, in this way, was an undeniable characteristic of a "civilized" and modern nation (2005, 328). As Abel points out: "(...) it was indeed whalers who helped begin the process of integrating Japan into the "lawful" and "civilized" imperialist world" (328). In other words, by being involved in whaling, Japan was no longer the "outlaw" in international society.

As whaling was the norm in "civilized" global society, it was certainly big business. From the 1830s to the 1870s, approximately 600 ships annually sailed out from the U.S. alone. Vlasopolos estimates that there must have been tens of thousands of whales killed every year (171). Not only was whaling considered a civilized thing, it was also considered something positive, and mainly associated with strong, tough men who went to sea. Old advertisements as the one by Ballantine Ale, underline this image.



International Norms & Whaling

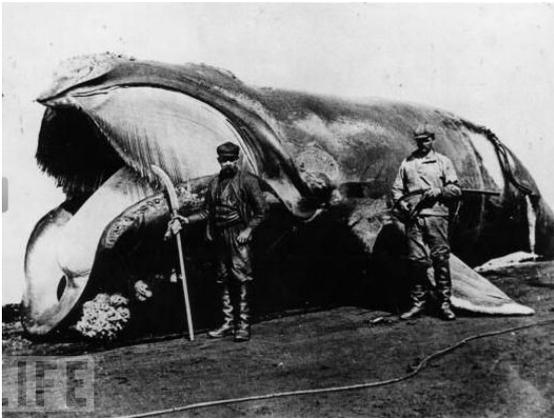
By the beginning of the twentieth century, Japan had adapted to the international norms on what it meant to be a “civilized” nation; Japan had become one of the leading whaling nations of the world (2005, 328). In *Postcolonial International Relations* (2002), Ling stresses that in the past 150 years, the West has succeeded in superimposing a Western system of competitive states onto the Confucian world-order of East-Asia (18). Although East Asia had its own “world” for nearly two millennia, Ling emphasizes that:

[Western] international relations claim that all previous structures and norms (‘traditions’) are irrelevant for today’s (‘modern’) world. Accordingly, many presume that the only alternative for those conquered by the West is to emulate the West (18).

This is exactly what Japan did when it went to sea; by imitating the West, it adhered to norms that were new to Japan. But how do international norms actually evolve? When is something a norm?

Actually, the answer to this question is circular: as is stated in Reus-Smit (2009), norms are shaped by behaviour. At the same time, though, behaviour also shapes the norm. What is important to stress here is how the identity and interests of the individual actor is defined through established norms and ideas. Through these

norms and ideas one can also explain the economic, political and cultural activities individuals are involved in (221, 222).



Hunters and Their Catch, circa 1900 (Life)

The whaling norm came into the world because of its economic benefits. From around 1900 (see images), well into the second half of the 20th century, the world was largely a whaling world since whaling was just as essential then as the oil industry is today. International society largely depended on whale oil as a source of energy (Epstein 2008, 1). Whales were also used as a resource in the production of creams, lipstick, candles, soap, perfume, etc. The year 1931 was a record in the history of whaling, and the beginning of the greatest decade of whale slaughter in history (38). According to Watson (2006), in 1931 alone, 37,438 blue whales were killed in the Southern Oceans.

We explain our interests through norms. The whaling norm initially was generated simply because it was economical and fruitful, and thus became widespread. The fact that interests are explained through norms also highlights how problematic it is to define international norms, since interests will be divergent for different actors. Ling has stressed how it was the West who actually made the norms, and how it was East Asia that copied them.

Ling makes an important statement, saying that “multiple norms, institutions and practices must borrow from and reframe one another on a daily and intimate basis to make sense of the world” (2005, 20-21). According to Ling, it is the mix of rationalities that form new norms (21). In other words, different discourses of norms need each other to conceptualize themselves; it is the things that make them different that make them come alive. This is what Ling means when talking about “selves-in-

others” and “others-in-selves”; the West has become a part of Asia, just as Asia has become a part of the West. They are products of each other (18-20).

In this way, one could say the Japanese pro-whaling norm is a result of the confrontation and emulation with the Western (pro-whaling) norms. Japan adapted these norms, and eventually, made them their own.

The whaling norm was strengthened in the period after the Second World War, when Japan had almost lost its entire whaling fleet. Its whaling industry, however, quickly recovered because the allied occupation promoted the consumption of whale meat to solve the acute food shortages (Abel 2005, 324). The benefit for the United States would be that whilst Japan got the meat, they got the oil. Around this time whale meat became an indispensable part of the Japanese diet, making up 47% of the total protein consumed in Japan (2005, 325; Watson 2006).

Japan often defends its whaling practices by calling it their “tradition”. In ‘The Truth about “Traditional” Japanese Whaling’ (2006), Paul Watson, founder and president of the Sea Shepherd Conservation Society, condemns this stance, claiming that it is “not fair” to use this approach, since whaling was only practiced by a few Japanese villages as far back as the 16th century, and that less than 10% of the Japanese people were consumers of whale meat in the time before 1930. Considering that today only a small percentage of the Japanese people eat whale meat, Watson rejects the Japanese claim that whaling is their “tradition”.

However, Watson is not quite right to put a time limit on something called a “tradition”. In fact, “traditions” that claim to be old are often quite recent, and, additionally, most of them are invented. In ‘The Invention of Traditions’ (1983), Hobsbawn points out that traditions are not as natural or self-evident as we may think. On the contrary, tradition is something that is constructed to implant certain values and norms of behaviour by repeating, which suggests a continuity with the past (1). Hobsbawn makes a distinction between certain types of traditions:

- a) Those establishing or symbolizing social cohesion or the memberships of groups, real or artificial communities, b) those establishing or legitimizing institutions, status or relations of authority, and c) those whose main purpose was socialization, the inculcations of beliefs, value systems and conventions of behaviour (9).

Hobsbawm states that it is beneficial to study traditions because through them, we might discover problems that would otherwise remain unnoticed. He thus sees traditions as indicators of existing problems (12). Human's relation to the past is unravelled through the study of tradition. Therefore, the study of tradition is highly relevant to the concept of 'nation' (12,13).

The study of tradition shines a new light on Japanese whaling "tradition". If we look at it from Hobsbawm's perspective, one could say the Japanese whaling really became a tradition to legitimize the status of the West. Not only did Japan start whaling to follow the Western example, it actually adhered to the policies promoted by the allied occupation after the war. Later on, it became a tradition that was relevant to the nation, since it instilled the idea of a Japanese whaling culture. Japan had become identified with their norm on whaling; it was now their "tradition". And so, it becomes evident that the tradition of whaling is an "invented" one; a tradition mainly invented to benefit Western dominance. Instead of a natural tradition, whaling actually is the "symptom" of a Japan that was re-inventing its cultural landscape and was articulating new concepts of "Japanese-ness" (Gordon 2003, 108-109). In this way, though "invented", whaling indeed can rightly be called a Japanese "tradition".

Although the IWC was previously focused on the regulation of commercial whaling, its focus shifted to the conservation of whales. In the 1982, the IWC decided to temporarily halt commercial whaling altogether through a moratorium that was accepted by Japan. However, despite these IWC measures, Japan has never fully adopted the anti-whaling norm. Tokyo started a "scientific" whaling program by invoking their rights, as stated in Article 8 of the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling (ICRW). Critics of the status quo argue that Japan's "scientific" whaling programs is commercial whaling in disguise, since the whales are killed and their meat is sold on the open market for consumption (Hirata 2005, 130-136). This has remained a sensitive issue up to the present.

The next chapter will analyze how the international norm on whaling changed to an overall anti-whaling one, and how this discourse was constructed.

2. The Whale and The World

In the first half of the 21st century, there was a global trend towards the regulation of whaling. According to Watson (2006), this was due to the excessive take of whales. This is true to a certain extent. Already in 1925, the League of Nations warned that whales would become extinct if there would be no regulations (Abel 2005, 325). It is widely assumed that the West stopped whaling simply because it had become uneconomical. However, Epstein stresses that it is not so much the question why whaling stopped, but why it went on so *long* in the West; since it went on long after it had already become uneconomical (2008, 28). Petroleum, plastic and butter all proved to be good substitutes to whale oil, whalebones and margarine (Kakinuma 2006, 6). Furthermore, as the whaling methods kept improving and more whales were caught, the sales were beginning to dwindle (2005, 325). Whales were thus caught in excesses, but, as Davis and Gallman (1988) point out, there is no persuasive evidence that U.S. whaling collapsed because stocks were running out (595). Nevertheless, a gradual swing of international sentiments towards the conservation of whales had already been put into practice. The International Whaling Commission was already set up in 1946 to provide for the conservation of whale stocks and orderly develop the whaling industry (IWC Website). Catch limits were set for each species of whales. Since the calculations of the size of whale stocks were so complex, since the 1970s the IWC has struggled to reach agreement regarding the catch limits subject to commercial whaling (Lawrence & Philips 2004, 696).

Save The World, Save the Whale

Slowly but surely, Japan has been put into an outlaw position in the international debate on whaling. These developments relate to the overall tendency in international affairs; since the late second half of the 20th century, the environment and the climate have started to play a growingly important role in international society. The question of the need to protect the environment actually exploded, and has been of crucial importance ever since (Cassese 2005, 482). From the 1960s on, superpowers have attempted to create global norms on how they are supposed to treat animals and how to handle the environment. Before this period, environmental issues did not play an

important role in international relations. This was because pollution was still a relatively small issue. The U.S. also still took a very traditional realist stance in international dealings; each state needed to take care of its own business, and the shared resources of the international community, like the sea, were not considered serious issues in international relations. Public opinion also was not sensitive yet to potential dangers of pollution and the risks of an unhealthy environment (2005, 482).

The new tendency of protecting the environment rose with a myriad of green parties and new social movements throughout the 1970s and 1980s. They challenged the dominance of political organisations. In general, these movements strongly doubted the capability of the leaders in power to deal with the crises facing humanity and the natural world. These groups and parties all stressed peace and self-management, rejecting the realist view that violence is inevitable (Doherty & De Geus 1996, 5). Greenpeace evolved from these peace movements in the early 1970s, as did Sea Shepherd (1977), and the World Society for Protecting Animals (WSPA) (1981) (Greenpeace, Sea Shepherd, WSPA 2010). In all of these movements, especially in the Sea Shepherd, the campaign against commercial whaling has had great priority.

The international norms regarding the protection of animals are, to a great extent, determined by cultural identities. On a rational level, these norms are determined by the idea that the environment and endangered animals have to be protected. Generally, all players in the international field agree on this; this is a culturally *homogeneous* idea.

On an emotional level, these norms are determined by the way the endangered animal is perceived. How an extinct animal is valued and perceived, however, is culturally *heterogeneous*. This relates to an earlier remark stating that the world's connection to the whale is socially constructed.

The “Top 10” of Endangered Animals

Within the range of endangered animals, there is some kind of “emotional ranking” that sets the priority for certain animals. In ‘Ten to Watch in 2010’, the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF) counts ten animals amongst the world's most threatened species. The tiger, panda and polar bear all make it to the list (WWF). In other lists, such as the one by Guernsey (All About Wildlife), the Northern Right Whale and Rhinoceros also make it to the list. It seems coincidental that the most popular animals of the Western world also happen to be in the “top 10” of most threatened animals. According to renowned Dutch biologist and writer Midas Dekkers (Personal

communication, 17 June 2010) this is no “coincidence”. Actually, there can be no such thing as a “top 10” of endangered animals, since there is a lack of proper information considering all the animal species in the world. Guernsey (Personal communication, 17 June 2010), supports this view, claiming that since thousands of animal species around the world are so close to extinction, that there is little scientific justification for a “top 10” list. According to Guernsey, the animals in the “top 10s” are what he calls “charismatic mega fauna” –large and appealing creatures that people can identify with. These lists of endangered species differ per organization, per country and per year, as organizations shift their priorities (Guernsey 2010).

As a consequence, the range of “endangered animals” listed by organizations as WWF does not only come from a culturally constructed view; they also point to a marketing-driven view. After all, if the Chinese salamander or African spider were put amongst the world’s most endangered species, less people would feel inclined to donate to these causes.

The “Super Whale”

The tiger, whale, elephant or gorilla are all impressive animals that, figuratively, “compete” over attention in campaigns for endangered animals. When one looks at this range of animals, the whale takes in a special position. Pavel Klinckhamers, Greenpeace’s leader on the oceans and toxics campaign, states that the whale has always served as a symbol for the organization, not only because of it’s endangered position in nature, but also due to its intelligence. Furthermore, since the whale suffers a relatively long and painful death in the process of killing, it serves as a proper symbol for the overall destruction of nature (Personal communication June 13 2010).

There have been multiple important factors that helped construct the “save the whale” discourse. American researcher John Cunningham Lilly, in 1961 and 1967, published books about the highly intellectual mind of the dolphin. The period of these works collided with the popular television series ‘Flipper’, which generated a public fascination around dolphins and whales in general (Dekkers, 2010). Kalland and Blok (1993; 2008) individually describe the “construction” of the whale, claiming that whales have been turned into a “totem” in the West (Kalland 1993, 3). There are several arguments for this, one of them being that whales do not easily fit into the categories we have of mammals versus fish. The whale thus forms an unusual category in the animal world, which makes it a grateful subject to project both myths

as taboos on (4). As there is relatively little known about everything that goes on in the depths of the oceans, the whale is automatically shrouded in the realm of mystery. The thought that the sea is a symbol of purity adds to this idea. One of the most important remarks Kalland makes in his article, is the fact that there is a common idea of what 'the' whale is. The blue whale is the largest animal on earth. The sperm whale is said to have the biggest brains. The humpback whale has a unique singing sound. The grey whale is characterized by its friendly nature. In the anti-whaling discourse, all these traits are combined to construct an image of a single whale that possesses all of these qualities; turning it into some kind of "super whale" (1993, 4).

There is another important contributing influence to the constructed image of the whale. Dekkers (2010) states that the Western fascination of the whale was induced in the time of the green movement, which was also the time of the peace loving "hippies". Not only did the impressive size and the intelligence of the whale speak to the imagination of the people, there was also a clear image of a shared enemy in the battle to "save" the whale: the Japanese. In contrary to other animals in the "endangered" category, the survival of the whale does not merely depend on the scale of its territory, but is directly connected to commercial whaling and the consumption of whales. The endangerment of other popular animals, such as the elephant, are not only connected to, for example, the illegal hunt for ivory, but are, more importantly, strongly related to decrease of territory. One could generally state that the entire international society is to "blame" for the endangerment of the tiger, polar bear or elephant, since there is not one guilty party or perpetrator, and thus the "crook" has no face, nor an identity. On the contrary, in the case of the whale, the guilty party has both a face and an identity. One specific Greenpeace campaign of the 1980s clearly uses the national "face" of Japan, the geisha, to support this idea.

In the birth of the "save the whale" campaign, there was the general image of the innocent, smart and impressive whale on the one side, while there was the image of the whale-killing and distant Japanese on the other. The whale, quite literally, became the embodiment of "murdered innocence" (Dekkers 2010). This has led to the whale becoming a symbol for the overall endangerment of animal species in general. After all, there was "somebody" to blame for its endangerment, and that "somebody" had a face and an identity: Japan.



The “humanification” of the whale further added to the strength of the anti-whaling discourse, as exemplified by this Greenpeace advertisement, where the whale is compared to the human in its characteristics.

Are whales “almost human”?

Parallels between a whale's life and that of our own make whale deaths even more disturbing.

Whales live in family groups. An unquestionably intelligent creature, the whale has a gentle nature and is known to sing, play, even to cry. Each whale has a distinct personality.

After 10 months of pregnancy, a whale is born. Mum cares for her calf closely until its “teen-age”.

Fuberry. The young whale plays with other young whales in rehearsal for choosing a mate.

Maturity. The whale finally chooses a partner for life.

Old age. At around 50 or 70 years old, depending on species, the whale dies after a full and active life.

Don't wait to save a whale. Join Greenpeace this minute.

GREENPEACE

A.C.N. 002 643 852 100% recycled and unbleached paper.

It can take 30 minutes to kill a whale.

Or 3 minutes reading this to save it.

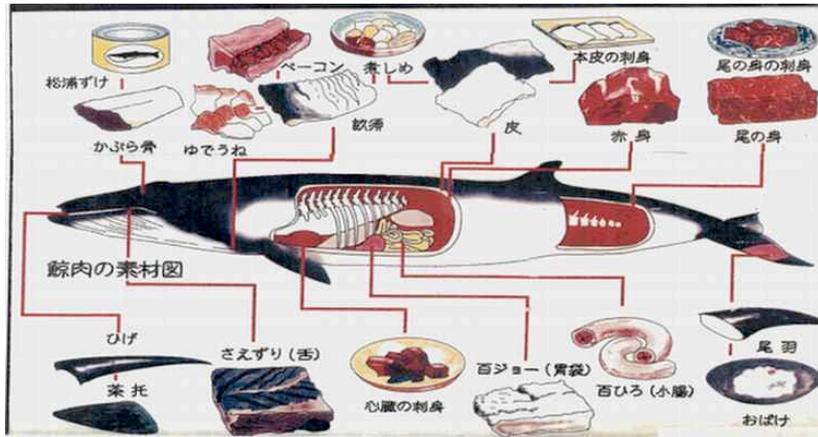
GREENPEACE AUSTRALIA - 93

Eat The Whale

The whale is not only an endangered species, it has become a shared symbol for all endangered animals, due to the characteristics that are ascribed to it, and the clear-cut image of its “killer”. There seems to be a general idea amongst environmental groups like Sea Shepherd that, in order to save “the world”, we need to save the whale. Consequently, the whaling industry played a crucial role in shaping perceptions of Japan in the world community (Walker 2005, 16); Japanese whaling practices generally became looked upon as “evil” or “barbaric”; leading to Japan being somewhat of an international outlaw in environmental issues. The idea of Japan as the “evil killer” is ambiguous in multiple ways.

As explained in the previous chapter, whaling has become a Japanese (“invented”) tradition, and thus has become a part of Japanese cultural identity. Especially the post-war period contributed to this idea of Japan having a national whaling culture, as the departures of the Antarctic whaling expeditions were celebrated as annual national events. The whalers were seen as the new patriots in a nation that was completely defeated by war (Epstein 2008, 228). To the Japanese, whaling, in this way, is a symbol of national proud, self-sufficiency, and, most importantly, it is an articulation of sovereignty (2008, 222-231).

Secondly, the Japanese do not necessarily relate to the whale as being a human-like, spiritual, or friendly animal: it is food. The idea that whales, due to their intrinsic value, should be protected is related to the (Western) concept of animal rights; an idea that finds no resonance in Japan. Many Japanese people do not differentiate between the killing of a cow, a sheep, or a kangaroo and the killing of marine mammals such as whales or seals, and find it hypocritical that Westerners consider it morally wrong to kill certain mammals whilst considering it acceptable to kill others (Catalinac & Chen, 2005: 147; Hirata 2005, 142). Dekkers (2010) also points out this general hypocrisy concerning the hunt for animals; if one 1000 kilo whale is caught, the whole world watches, whilst if it was a catch of thousands of other fish weighing the same all together, nobody cares. The Japanese also stress the fact that every piece of the whale is used for some purpose, and thus, they see the whale as an extremely sustainable resource (Kakinuma 2006, 13).



The serious endangerment of the whale is also a great disadvantage to Japan; Japan benefits from the protection of the whale. Since the whale is part of Japanese cultural heritage and food-culture, Japanese would not want the whale to become extinct. Therefore, the Japanese government has always supported the idea of the conservation of natural resources for future generations. However, one considerable difference with the West is that Japan greatly values science in its formation of Japanese environmental policies (Catalinac & Chen 145). Decisions and views on whaling are therefore based upon scientific rather than moral grounds.

Lastly, it is relevant to keep in mind that Japan has always chosen to stay in the IWC. Although they have made their preferences on whaling clear, they officially still abide by the rules of the IWC. Even the Japanese research programme, that is heavily criticized, is conducted in accordance with the ICWR, which states that members of the IWC are allowed to kill or take whales for scientific research. Japan does this “research” in an open way; publishing both English and Japanese material for the public in which they detail their methods and findings (Catalinac & Chen 143).

These last points validate the Japanese perspective that they, in reality, are not the “evil killers” the West has made of them.

3. Beyond the Whale

The previous chapter has illustrated how the world's relation to the whale is socially constructed. The world's relation to or (non-) identification with the whale alone, however, does not fully explain all the implications of the current whaling discourse and how it influences the international norm; there is another layer that goes beyond the whale. This "layer" is formed by two important questions in the whaling issue. The (academic) world is often puzzled why Japan has adhered to a pro-whaling policy that has brought the nation international disapproval (Hirata 2005, 129). Japan is not the only pro-whaling country in the world. Why has Japan been singled out as "whaling's bogeyman" when other nations hunt for whales as well (Owen, 2008)? These questions are both connected to the dichotomy in international relations of the 'Self' and the 'Other'.

The first chapter has shortly shined a light on this; how different discourses of norms need each other to conceptualize themselves and the idea of "selves-in-others" and "others-in-selves". This idea is essential in the deconstruction of the whaling issue. The implicit division between 'Self' and 'Other' results from a (neo) realist worldview; a way of thinking that still dominates present-day international society (Ling 2002, 46). Classical realism believes that states have an innate desire to dominate others (Walt 1998, 31). Through the lens of realism, the world actually becomes quite black and white. There is often talk of how 'the world' should handle Japan's pro-whaling stance. But who, in the end, is 'the world'? This is what Ling (2002) is critical about. In the realist view, the Self clearly identifies with Europe; a "Europe" that is masculine, rational, and white. This Self sets the standard for all others by making sure the Other does not have access to the "rules of the game" (46). In this way, the Self has the power to make and define the world and its norms. Furthermore, the Self convinces the Other that this power situation reflects reality. The red thread in this process is that the Other always remains the Self's negative.

Shining a light on the whaling issue, it becomes clear that the 'West', including New Zealand and Australia (that can be counted amongst Japan's biggest antagonists in the whaling issue) form some sort of "Self", arguing against the "Otherized" Japan. The art, advertisement and campaign images on the anti-whaling side clearly convey this idea of Japan as "the Other" – taking the whole nation as an

identity and holding it responsible for its barbaric ways that are undeniably different from the West. The national colours and symbols of Japan are combined with the idea of bloody slaughter. In this way, the images make the gap between the non-whaling West and whaling Japan only bigger.

Orientalism

Other nations than Japan are also involved in substantial amounts of whaling. Contrasting with Japan, these nations openly defy international conventions on whaling. Whilst Japan whales under the auspices of research, Norway and Iceland still have commercial whaling programs. Although Japan is the biggest whaling nation, Iceland and Norway also catch a substantial amount of whales. To illustrate this: in 2007 Japan caught 866 whales, whereas Norway took 545 (Owen 2008).

In 1992, Norway declared they no longer accepted the cultural imperialism imposed by the members of the IWC and thus resumed commercial whaling in 1993. Iceland also voted against a moratorium. Japan, in fact, is the only government who's determination to continue whaling exists next to the persistence to abide by the rules of the IWC, and thus, the rules of international society (Catalinac & Chen 2005). And yet, it is the national symbols and national traditions of Japan that are being criticised. In this research, an anti-whaling campaign straightly directed at Norway or Iceland's national identities were nowhere to be found. Posters, like the following image, are existing, but not specifically aimed at cultural symbols, and thus not necessarily portraying the whole nation as an outlaw.



Regarding Greenpeace's objectives, "it has never been an intentional choice of Greenpeace to specifically attack the national symbols of Japan," says Klinckhamers (Personal communication, 2010). According to Klinckhamers, there have also been

controversial Greenpeace campaigns directed at Icelandic and Norwegian embassies. Willie MacKensie, the ocean's campaigner for Greenpeace U.K., claims that Japan is "the head of the zombie that needs to be cut off" (Owen 2008). Klinckhamers also stresses this point. According to him, Japan is the motor of the whaling industry.



A compilation of anti-whaling images.

Organizations like Greenpeace expect that Japan's ending of whaling will also stop international whaling in general, and thus, their campaigns are mainly directed at Japan.

However, there seems to be more to this issue than priority alone. Using Ling's framework, Japan is the Other through which the West projects itself. In relation to this issue, a Norwegian citizen plainly stated that the anti-whaling discourse is not so much directed against Iceland or Norway due the mere fact that "we have blue eyes and blond hair" (Personal communication). Although this is a crude conclusion, there may be some truth to it. In *Cultural Governance and Resistance in Pacific Asia*, Callahan (2006) emphasizes that the mainstream approach to politics in Pacific Asia tends to reproduce stereotypical views of East and West that leads to an Orientalist discourse as proposed by Said. In *Orientalism* (1978) Said underlines the significance of considering connections between culture and power. As Callahan states:

(...) the East/West division was not a distinction of equals, but a hierarchy of governance that turns the difference of multiple cultures and political-economies into a general Oriental Otherness: the strong, mature, wise, progressive, male Occident over an Orient that is constructed as weak, needy, ignorant, backward and female (7).

Through the eyes of Callahan and Said, it becomes clear that the anti-whaling campaign exists along a broader framework of East versus West, the Self versus Other, where it only comes "unintentionally", as Klinckhamers stated, or unconsciously, that the Otherized Japan becomes the main target for attacks based on cultural identity. Norway and Iceland, whale meat-loving as they might be, are harder to define as enemies in the struggle for a non-whaling world. After all, it much easier to criticize the other than yourself.

Occidentalism

The issue of Japan as an environmental outlaw in international society, especially in comparison to Norway and Iceland, leads to the next question as posed in this chapter. In 'Why Japan Supports Whaling' (2005) Hirata also explores why Japan has always adhered to a pro-whaling policy, although it has brought the country international disapproval and hardly generates any profits.

Japan's choice to stick to their whaling policy is especially noteworthy since it

is not in line with Japan's position on other environmental issues (129). In her article, Hirata mainly stresses that it is the country's domestic cultural and political structures that have prevented Japan from taking a different stance on whaling. Also, the fact that bureaucratic actors dominate the domestic political system leaves little space for anti-whaling supporters. As Hirata says: "Close state-business relations allow Japanese business interests to prevail in the political decision-making process" (138); this strongly influences Japanese whale policy. This has also been demonstrated in a 'Times' article of June 13 2010, where an undercover operation proved that Japan pays for hotels, business class flights or even girls, to get delegates at the IWC of countries that have no interest in whaling themselves, as long as they support the pro-whaling stance. However, as Catalinac and Chan (2005) point out, there have also been activist groups who paid IWC membership for states that had nothing to do with whaling themselves; ten new states joined in 1981 and five more in 1982, with a proportion of membership being paid for by Greenpeace. By 1982, 28 out of 39 IWC members did not whale themselves (139).

The crucial question Hirata raises, essentially, is why Japan would risk harming its reputation in international relations when whaling only generates marginal profits and hardly does any good for the economy. Although she explains some cultural concepts that are at the root of the whaling tradition, the arguments do not seem strong enough to elucidate the reasons for the Japanese anti-whaling norm. She only explores the anti-whaling norm in terms of Japan's domestic cultural and political structure, without looking beyond these constructions in terms of Japan's relations to other states, or its position in international society. She instills the idea that the lack of congruence between the anti-whaling norm and the domestic cultural values explains Japan's policies. This argument is actually a loop, since it does not explain the question at all. The main problem, therefore, remains unsolved here.

Ling points out that the portrayal of world politics with a strong West, and a passive and singular East Asia is disputable (47). It is indeed disputable, both from a Western as East Asian perspective. This leads to "Occidentalism", as explained by Buruma and Margalit (2004):

The view of the West in Occidentalism is like the worst aspects of its counterpart, Orientalism (...). Occidentalism is at least as reductive; its bigotry simply turns the Orientalist view upside down (10).

The idea of Occidentalism attempts to explain a general hate for the West from an Asian or Muslim perspective, where the West comes to embody “a mass of soulless, decadent, money-grubbing, rootless, faithless, unfeeling parasites” that is like a “form of intellectual destruction” (10-11). This also shines through in the comment one Japanese journalist made in 1982, in *Asahi Journal*, when the IWC had shifted to the anti-whaling norm:

American anti-whaling and environmental conservation groups... cried, “Whale stocks are nearing extinction,” and “whaling destroys the ocean’s ecological system.” These reasons for opposition have no scientific basis, so when circumstances took a turn for the worse, they changed their call to “Because whales have a high level of intelligence and are mammals, we must not kill them,” and then “Killing whales is unethical,” and “We shouldn’t kill such cute whales” (Abel 2005, 327)

This comment reveals how the West is conveyed as being foolish and ignorant.

Occidentalism lives through Orientalism. In essence, it is a historically constructed attack on the Western mind where profitable calculations get priority over the higher things in life (75). Using Ling’s perspective, it is basically a critique of the realist state of mind.

Through this framework, we see a Japan that has adapted to Western norms. Once the norms were set, the West again shifted them, and now it was up to Japan to stand up to the West. This also becomes clear in a bigger framework; from 1989 to 1996 a collection of essays was published, titled *The Japan that Can Say No*. In the essay ‘Let’s become a Japan that can say no’, Morita (2010) states that saying “no” actually represents a “deepening of mutual understanding” (39). Japan should begin to make it a habit to say no when its position is negative, since it is already a custom in the West to say “no” whenever one’s position is clearly negative. According to Morita, “no” is not the beginning of a discussion, but the beginning of a new collaboration, since it promotes more awareness for the Japanese position (40).

The IWC of June 2010 will show if Japan resists further adaptation to the anti-whaling norm. Probably, whaling will remain a Japanese “tradition” for a long time to come. Whaling is a way to express Japanese sovereignty. Mostly, through whaling, Japan loudly and clearly proves that, Japan, indeed, can say no.

The Sea Ahead

Environmental groups like the Sea Shepherd or Greenpeace will not give up their fight for a non-whaling world. The end of the whaling issue, therefore, is not yet in sight. How should the “world” handle the whaling issue?

As long as the “whale wars” continue, whaling will not end. The whaling issue is not a suitable issue to analyze through a realist perspective. It is, in fact, not a black and white issue where two sides need to compete for hegemony in the issue whilst attacking the other nation and its symbols. As long the world keeps engaging in the battle for a non-whaling or whaling world as they have in the past decades, the disputes and clashes will only be kept alive. In other words, as long as Asia is still “Otherized”, the issue will not be solved. The world therefore has to look at the issue from different perspectives, and this awareness is slowly reaching environmental groups like Greenpeace.

Klinckhamers (2010) states that negative anti-whaling campaigns in Iceland or Norway are not effective – and actually are contra-productive (Personal communication). Greenpeace therefore strives to keep its campaigns more low-scale and low profile in these countries, and tries to reach its goals via different routes. For example, Iceland might need to change its whaling policies if it wants to become a member of the European Union.

The aggressive attacks on whaling activities that do not work for Norway or Iceland, actually have not really worked for Japan either. Klinckhamers admits that there has been some (Western) ignorance in the way the anti-whaling campaign was lead in Japan, but that there is a growing awareness now on how to reach the nation. Instead of blood-smearred flags, Greenpeace is now trying to convince Japan by slogans like “We love Japan, but whaling breaks our hearts”. Klinckhamers expects this method will prove to be more effective.



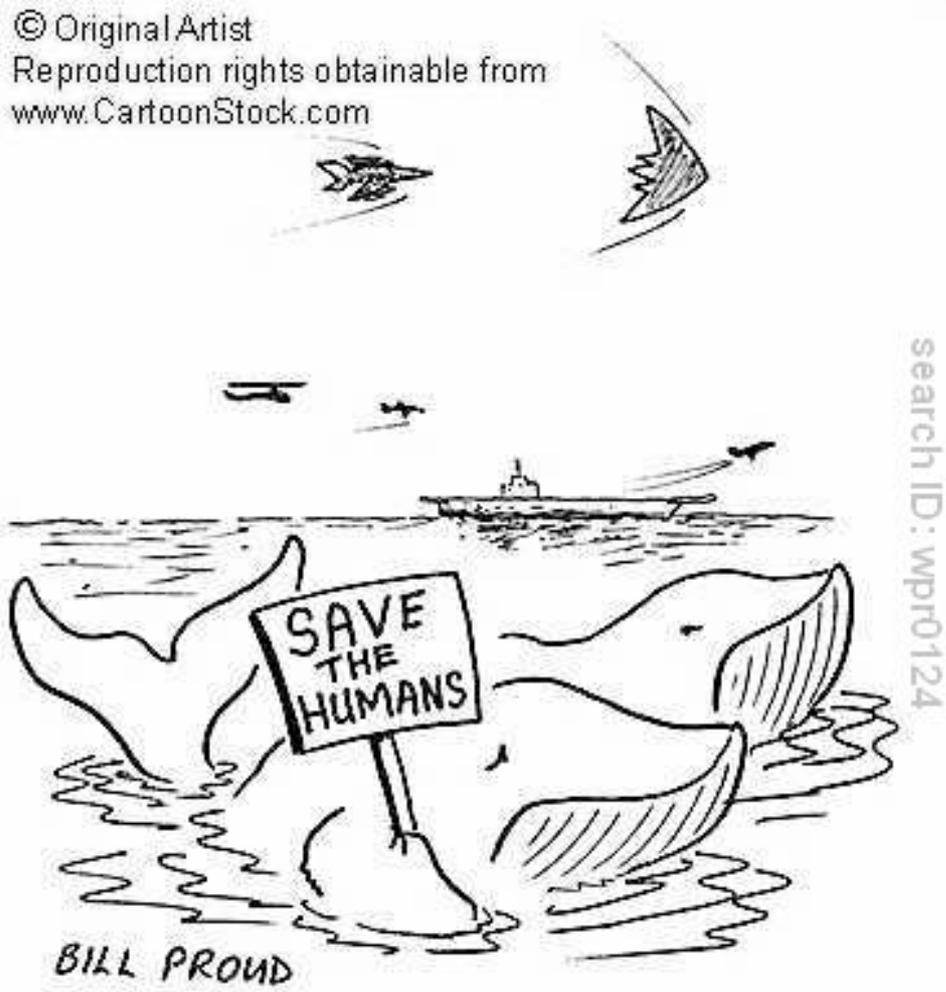
Greenpeace, February 14, 2007. A “message of love” to the Japanese consuls in Sydney and Melbourne.

It is very possible that Klinckhamers is indeed right. Instead of turning Japan into a black sheep, crook or outlaw, the West needs to engage in a dialogue where the Self and the Other as explained by Ling or Said need to be let go of. The “Other” needs to be integrated as both a subject and method to and in international relations (Ling 47).

This is also the stance of Guernsey (2010), who states that, instead of an overall non-whaling norm, it would be best to let Japan, Norway and Iceland sign a strong, well-thought-out whaling agreement that allows them to harvest a small quota of non-endangered whales. This might be a good “trade off” where both parties, both the anti- and pro-whaling, might be satisfied with.

Klinckhamers is optimistic. He believes there will be a breakthrough in negotiations with Japan within approximately five years. That is, he says, if Japan finds a way to gracefully quit their whaling practices, without losing face. This last comment might very well be crux to the whaling issue. Not only does Japan need to give up a piece of their national pride to reach consensus, the West also needs to adjust and be aware that there is more to whaling than whales alone. A deep understanding of each other’s cultural identities and their constructed relations with the whaling tradition or the whale itself – this will eventually do a lot more good to the international community than ramming into whaling ships. Violence, corruption

and denigration, eventually, will not save whale species, nor will it save the human race.



Conclusion

This thesis does not advocate whaling, nor does it condemn it. By “de-layering” or analyzing the whaling issue, one can see that there is more to the whaling issue than simply being “pro” or “anti”.

The norms that live in the international community are not per se natural or inherent. They are rooted in international events and national histories and have been influenced by cultural movements and changing international landscapes through their way up to the present. The art of finding one’s way in the whaling issue is thus not to think “pro” or “anti”, but to think how these international norms are culturally constructed and to critically assess the mainstream notions on whaling that are alive in the world today. The Japanese boy Manjiro, Moby Dick, the Second World War, the green movement, commercial campaigns and even Flipper, all constitute a small part in the bigger story of whaling and the whale. In this way, it becomes evident that the whale itself might essentially not even be the main part of the whaling issue.

The continuous battle between Japan and “the world”, between pro-whaling and anti-whaling, between East and West, between the Self and the Other, eventually is like a battle between magnets, where attraction and rejection perpetually keep the discourse alive like a perpetuum mobile. There can only be a breakthrough in this perpetual motion when (international) society, both at government and grassroot-level, realize that there is more to this debate than whale (meat) alone. If we divide the world in ‘good’ and ‘bad’ guys, nothing will eventually be solved. Only when we look beyond the whale and analyze ourselves, we can find a self within the other, and work towards a brighter future.

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