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Conflicting Cultural Values on Marine Mammal
Resources:

The Case of a Whale Tourism Project in
Northern Norway

(Draft mode)

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INTRODUCTION

The Western world has a long colonial tradition. Its political and military involvement spans over at least 500 years. One of its major components has, however, been the use of culture as an important instrument for subjugation of other peoples. The use of culture is here understood as both forcing one's own modes of thought and customs upon others as well as manipulating other cultures.

Today, the use of culture is practised in many areas as a more or less invisible lubricant of domination. One of the most influential is tourism. The social and cultural structure of international tourism contains most the elements of traditional colonial behaviour.

This contribution examines such an example in the case of a whale tourism project in Northern Norway, in which the main reason for its introduction is not profit but ideology. It is argued that the conflict which has emerged from it, is due to the cultural impact of two fundamentally different ways of looking at whales as a natural resource.

Tourism itself being a highly international commodity also reveals a more or less explicit idea of "common property", since Western tourists take for granted the exploitation of foreign leisure markets and cultures. This Norwegian case shows similar characteristics, since the entrepreneurs have moved in with the natural right to exploit another culture.

TOURISM AS CULTURAL COMMON PROPERTY

In the nineteenth century, the grandiose policy of global conquest was looked upon as the final stage of the creation of modern civilization. The important work of the colonial rearwards of administrators and missionaries was, however, to provide non-Western peoples with a new world of ideas. In the pacification process of non-Western peoples, culture played a crucial role as a colonial lubricant.

The Europeans observed and interpreted alien ways of life through their coloured spectacles, applying the concepts and values of their own culture. This ethnocentric mode of understanding led to the frequent valuating conclusion that they were dealing with inferior (though innocent) peoples and therefore must be saved and protected by extensive adaptation to Western standards. In the name of Christianity, Europeans regarded it their natural

erty to bring "light" even to the "darkest" corners of the world.

I had been... in closer contact with heathenism than I had ever been before. And though all were as kind and attentive to me as possible... yet to endure the dancing, roaring, and singing, the jesting, anecdotes, grumbling, quarrelling, and murdering of these children of nature, seemed more like a severe penance than anything I had before met with in the course of my missionary duties... The indirect benefits, which to a casual observer lie beneath the surface and are inappreciable, in reference to the probable wide diffusion of Christianity at some future time, are worth all the money and labour that have been expended to produce them. (Livingstone 1857:226)

It was generally understood that if the Western world was able to conquer and subdue other peoples through political and military superiority, then the rest of its culture in the shape of politics, religion, and values must also be superior.

The misguided belief that backwardness due to cultural evolution and isolation had caused peoples outside Europe to stagnate suited the evangelistic zeal to penetrate the minds of natives with ideas of "progress". Colonizing native peoples was simply a way of helping them to survive from extinction and it was taken for granted that "primitive" cultures inevitably had to give way to a change of customs and modes of thought. The idea of cultural evolution tended to justify the politics of imperialism and still does.

Today, rich nations of the First World continually strengthen their means of domination over others. Most of the young and independent nation-states of the Third World has come to realize that they are now involved in a new, neo-colonial relationship with the West, this time with a combination of political and continuing economic dependence. The decolonization of these countries has given way to new, more implicit and sophisticated strategies of domination, such as highly controlled commodity markets and various means of political destabilization.

In the modern Western industrialized society, the most insistent cultural persuaders towards other peoples are tourists. The phenomenon of tourism is linked to many other aspects of modern urban life. Here, two important questions shall be asked about the culture of tourism: (1) What are the incentives in modern urban life for the development of tourism? (2) Why are

these incentives being exported to alien cultures?

The first question relates to the structure of industrial society as a whole. Since the industrial society is dominated by production and consumption, one of its most significant aspects is the creation of leisure. Leisure is not only a consequence of the social organization of industrial labour but has also given way to various means of consumption to satisfy its demands. The same forces that organize the production and consumption of goods, also organize the production and consumption of recreation. Recreation, regarded as a commodity like all others, inevitably becomes an extension of the industrial society.

It seems, however, that most products produced by the industrial society are used to escape from the very same. As Sachs (1984) points out, the automobile as a key symbol of industrial society opens up the road to the opposite of industrialized everyday life. It reveals a paradox of modernity: the occupation of industrialization by anti-industrial motives. It makes it possible to see distant places and experience the taste of adventure by turning new places and landscapes into consumer's items (1984:160-190). According to Bastian & Thiel (1990), this false conception of freedom - Freie Fahrt für Freie Bürger - has deprived modern man of his life room, it has not given him freedom in any real sense of the word (1990:130).

The stress and conformity of urban life stimulates the need to "get away from it all" and have a change of environment in a less hostile place. Burdened by all the duties of the humdrum existence at home, the tourist on holiday wants to lose himself and feel free for a short period of time. Paying a high (and non deductible) price for the pleasure, he expects "full value of the money" and to make the new experiences full justice. He is momentarily free of social obligations and in the absence of responsibility he behaves thereafter.

Recreation as escape thus offers the holiday maker an opportunity to culturally express the often boring and formalized life back home. Therefore holiday adventures can not provide him with an alternative to everyday life. On the contrary they confirm the industrial culture. To do this, every journey must offer him new, constantly changing experiences and sensations in order to fit with the rest of the consumer culture. The dilemma of tourism is, according to Hendriksen (1965), to provide the tourist with a taste of an alien culture without any inconvenience, that is, to offer the tourist the illusion of adventure without sharing unforeseen risks, not even cultural risks (1985:7). The tourist will only see and experience what the promoters

intend him to. The tourist is expected to be a looker, a consumer of the nostalgia and sensations provided for him.

This brings us to the second question raised above, which is more serious, since it concerns people who are not tourists, but rather act as their hosts.

Nash (1978), among others, focuses on an inherent contradiction in the tourist industry: despite the negative consequences of tourist promotion in alien regions, native peoples often "choose" to take the responsibility upon themselves to make the necessary physical and social adjustments to suit the needs of the tourist (1978:41-42). Why is this?

Tourism is one of the world's largest industries, and as such it follows its own economic laws. It is promoted by a variety of economic bodies, all the way from governments and multinational cooperations to larger or smaller travel agencies, local business, and individuals. Its economic basis does, however, already exist in the shape of global structures of dependency. It is due to this structural power, that the tourist industry has developed into such an imperialistic force. It has shown to be a powerful actor effecting social and culture change for those at the bottom of the tourist markets.

The colonial spirit of the western world is in fuller vigour than ever, and the idea of "progress" does in its touristic version, ironically enough, spread to even former, now independent colonies. Charter tourism to "stone age" peoples in New Guinea and Amazon has, due to the introduction of money and the visible presence of outsiders and their demands, reinforced the total process of culture change among indigenous peoples (Smith 1978:14). For other than indigenous peoples, within as well as outside the Western world, the situation is more complex since there is an element of cash economy involved from the beginning. The tourist industry creates jobs but on certain conditions. As Nash (1978) points out, a tourist from a highly industrialized country expects, even demands, that his vacation life abroad meets expectations he takes for granted at home. And the fact that the tourist entrepreneurs guarantees that his expectations are met, makes it up to the hosts to adjust to the guests, not the other way around (1978:35).

As many tourist resorts are located in rural areas or in the periphery of the industrial world, the pressure on the host to make a living becomes strong enough, that he often willingly accepts his subdued role vis-à-vis the guests. This is why tourism is such a mixed blessing for local people.

Quite often, though, dramatic culture change takes place when tourist

entrepreneurs more directly influence the inner structure of other cultures. Then it is not necessarily a question of uneven centre-periphery relationships, but rather a case of focused manipulation of important key symbols.

An excellent example to illustrate this process of culture change within the Western sphere, is the Basque Alarde festival. This is an annual ceremony in celebration of the siege at Fuenterrabia in 1638, in which all citizens withstood a ferocious attack together. The Alarde ceremony reproduces this solidarity by involving all occupational groups in the activity. It is a statement of collective valour and of the quality of all the people of Fuenterrabia and an affirmation of their existence and identity. It is a closing of wounds of gossip and bad faith opened up during the year of town life. Together these people, who most of the time are divided, are a single spirit. It is clearly not performed for outsiders. It is a ceremony whose importance and meaning lies in the entire town's participation and in the intimacy of all the participants and onlookers. It is not a show. It is an enactment of the "sacred history" of Fuenterrabia, a history by its very nature inaccessible to outsiders (Greenwood 1978:133-134).

But the Alarde has the misfortune of taking place during the tourist season. In 1969, local politicians and large national companies specialized in tourism promotion declared that the Alarde should be given twice in the same day to allow everyone to see it. In spite of the fact that the Alarde has never been given twice, the effect of the council's action was stunning. In service of simple touristic motives, it defined the Alarde as a public show to be performed for outsiders who, because of their economic importance in the town, had the "right" to see it. In 1971, the town had a great deal of difficulty in getting the participants to appear for the Alarde. No one actively resisted, but the general lack of interest created serious organizational problems. In the space of two years, what was a vital and exciting ceremony had become an obligation to be avoided. Later the municipal government was considering payments to people for their participation in the Alarde. It was not a performance for pay, but an affirmation of their belief in their own culture. It was Fuenterrabia commenting on itself for its own purposes. By ordaining that the Alarde be a public event to attract outsiders into the town to spend money, the municipal government made it an asset in the competitive tourism market. But this decision directly violated the meaning of the ceremony (Greenwood 1978:134-136).

In the case of Alarde, culture became, by more or less a single key stroke, a

resource, a commodity, which the tourists had a natural right to use. The lurking structural change of the ceremony's inner meaning for the participants, deprived them of an important way to organize their everyday life. Greenwood (1978) concludes, that commoditization of culture does not require the consent of the participants. Tourism simply packages the cultural realities of a people for sale along with their other resources. It can be done by everyone, and once set in motion, its very subtlety prevents the affected people from taking any clear cut action to stop it (1978:137).

This tendency of tourism to move very rapidly within other cultures without necessarily having explicit and outspoken motives towards them nourishes a special kind of cultural imperialism:

It is not the end of an ethnic group if they begin to drink Coca Cola instead of their traditional drink. The consequences depend on many factors... Tourism is like Coca Cola: it is not a plague in itself, but if it is not handled carefully it can bring about irremediable damage. (Rosset 1988:19)

The structural power of the tourist industry to regard tourism as a "common property" for those who exercise it, and to penetrate almost every corner of the world and change the inner meanings and dynamics of other cultures, indeed given a new meaning to the concept "tragedy of the commons".

LOOKING AT WHALES AS A CULTURAL COMMODITY

With this in mind, let us now go to Norway. The town of Andenes, on the northern tip of Vesterålen in the province of Nordland, is heavily dominated by fishing and NATO activities, but also some tourism. Thanks to the town (population 3,500), its infrastructure (airport, hotels, shops, tourist facilities) and an excellent seascape, it has shown to be a very good departure point for whale watching tourism.

After some probing inquiries in 1987, the first organized tours took place in 1988 and has since then grown with amazing speed every year. In the season over 4,500 tourists paid \$100 tickets to see (mainly) sperm whales outside Andenes. Today the tours are organized from a special tour building, the Whale Centre, owned by a company called Whale Safaris. The Whale Centre has a reception for reservations and general information, a souvenir shop, and a cafeteria for occasional visitors. Excursions are organized with access to a whale & whaling exhibition and multi-media.

about whales in 1992 the Whale Centre plans to open a much debated and controversial whaling museum. The Whale Safari Ltd is controlled by four joint owners: the Municipality (40%), local business (20%), the Province Council (20%), and a foreign interest group, CSWD (20%). The two latter are not, however, represented at the board meetings.

The boat tours are operated by an enterprising young man by the name of Ragnvald Dahl. He and his crew on board the family owned whaling boat m/s Kromhout takes up to 40 passengers on 5-6 hour trips out to the whales. Being a third generation whaler from a well known whaling family in Lofoten, he has acquired the special knowledge and great skill necessary for finding whales. On board every trip are also two or three marine biologists working as guides and doing research, since the promoter emphasizes the importance of knowledge about whales and marine ecology.

The promoter is a mainly Swedish organization, Centre for Studies of Whales and Dolphins (CSWD). In 1983, a group of its members made a field trip to Lofoten in Northern Norway in order to investigate the possibilities for an extensive whale research project, but also to "gain insight into the importance of whaling in the Norwegian society today and in the future" (Anonymous 1984b:62). At this early stage of the organization's experience of Norway, the explicit purpose of the project was clear:

How shall the attitudes of the whaling industry be changed, so that all whales and dolphins could live in peace in the future without constantly being threatened by man? Is it reasonable to expect that people who live of whaling should give up their livelihood and income straight off?...Finding appropriate ways for a cautious and sensible development of the whale watching tourism as a new and alternative income...is a typical project of CSWD. It is interdisciplinary, and if it turns out to be a success, it may be a positive contribution to the whales in our part of the world. Today people are working all over the world to save the whales, and...around this activity develops a more and more fine-meshed network. The Centre for Studies of Whales and Dolphins is a part of this whole (ibid:64).

Since then, this outspoken connection between whales, whaling and social change, has been a typical trademark of the organization. This view has constantly been repeated and exploited by most of the marine biologists and leading members of the Centre, as well as by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF).

In recent years, along with the development of the whale tourism project, a cultural conflict has arisen between the tourist entrepreneurs and mainly the whalers in the province. It has, for example, developed into an intricate triangle dilemma between marine biologists, whalers and external financial sponsors as well as a conflict over the planning of a whaling museum in connection to the Whale Centre.

How has this situation emerged? What is its ideological background? Why do foreign interests find it necessary to change the local people's attitudes about whales and whaling, when the whale stocks in question are in good condition?

The CSWD is built up by a variety of people and professions - scientists, artists, craftsmen, media professionals and private people in general - but with a common and active interest in whales and dolphins. The core consists, however, of a limited number of marine biologists and other professionals. In Stockholm in 1983, CSWD organized an exhibition about whales and dolphins. An important part of it expressed philosophical thoughts on the relationship between cetaceans and men.

For the Greeks, the dolphin embodied a part of ourselves the way we wish we are. A child's dream or a grown-up person's innermost yearning back to the bosom or a carefree existence without worries, where you are protected by the ocean, the Mother...The Christians reversed this and placed God up in the air. He becomes the sun which dries up the water, because Paradise must not be in the ocean. The Great Transformation takes place when Christianity renounces the dolphin. It induced humans to commit an infamous action, to become cannibals, tainted by introducing its meat which could be eaten during time of fasting. The dolphin became a fish, food for dinner. Nowadays humans try to get into touch with space. We dare not penetrate the depth, we are afraid of our subconscious, we do not seek in ourselves or in the oceans. We are frightened of the world of the dolphins. The space is the superego. We stretch upwards and far away. We are curbed by the fear of meeting an alien intelligence. We do not want and do not dare, because we have such an inferiority complex (Elyvstam & Dahlquist 1984:60-61).

This is an attempt to bridge the gap and sudden change from an era of millenary harmony - when dolphins were the animals of balance, the unity of masculinity and femininity, pleasure and seriousness of a natural world -

...to the complete obliteration of the disharmony in about the same way as the harmony of the dolphin world was broken into the disharmony of Christianity, it is interesting to note how the original ingenuous philosophy of CSWD, rapidly turned into an outspoken missionary prompt to change the local people's view on whales.

One explanation of this sudden change of attitudes may, of course, be that there is no change at all. The Western missionary way of thinking may not only be included from the very beginning, but also be a prerequisite for building up a seemingly open-minded philosophy. The anthropomorphism of the dolphin then serves the purpose of making way for a more traditional ethnocentric view about other patterns of thought, that is, to create a distinction between "us" and "them".

The philosophy of CSWD is not new or unique in any way. It follows an increasing international trend in the 1980'ies. The key concept is non-consumptive utilization of whales. This idea signifies a fundamentally different view about whales as a natural resource, focusing on personal experience, emotions, knowledge, media, and science.

In the light of the environment age we are beginning to see values in living whales as well as dead ones: values that cannot be bought and sold. We are beginning to measure the importance of the benign uses of cetaceans. They contribute to television, radio and motion pictures, records...books, magazines, paintings, sculptures, the prorated income of environmental organizations, whale watching tours, and observational (or non-invasive) research...We should care about whales because they are beautiful. Within their ranks are some of the loveliest of all animals, a truth which, for centuries has led men and women to admire them. The feeling of humankind for whales is both primal and natural...whales are an earthly good, offering us moral and material support. Our attitude towards them should be sensitive and proportionate, based upon feeling, as well as knowing (Scheffer 1991:17-19).

Its starting point is twofold: it rests on the opposition to the view of whales as food or physical resource, in favour of the emotional relationship between man and whale. The reason for emphasizing this concept today has not, however, emerged from a sudden awakening about the qualities of whales, but from a more pragmatic one:

If harvesting whales is acceptable, there can be little scientific

doubt now that at least some species of whales can in the future sustain a limited, strictly regulated take, without threatening species survival. So the argument against killing whales can no longer be based on preventing extinction. A different rationale is required (Barstow 1991:11).

If whaling cannot be stopped by scientific arguments, it is now obvious that it can be fought by applying other methods. But on what grounds shall such a resistance take place? What does a "different rationale" look like? The answer is a new world moral and ethic standard:

Ethics is a matter of values. Values are based on attitudes. Attitudes derive from knowledge, or the lack thereof, and from feeling. But attitudes and therefore values and human standards of ethics do change. History reminds us that in some societies in earlier times the practice of cannibalism was considered a virtue...Over the past 40 years we have seen a highly significant change in attitude and ethics with regard to whales...Whale protectionists have been accused of narrow-mindedly seeking to impose their own values and ethics upon people in other countries who have the right to live by different standards if they so choose...The fundamental factor, however, is that the issue of whale protection is in fact a global issue which must be resolved in the global arena (ibid:11-12).

According to this philosophical somersault, the relativity of cultures as a universal trait of mankind is overruled by a single political statement. The fact that different peoples in different parts of the world develop different patterns of "feelings, knowledge, attitudes, and values" is of less importance if there is an international problem interesting enough for some to exert pressure on others.

As "ethics" is taken for granted to change, from the worse to the better, according to some evolutionary plan, the change of views about whales in the western world, is seen as natural step in the right direction towards a higher form of civilization. Other cultures, with a fundamentally different view on the same issue, are therefore seen as backward and must give way to change. This is the western colonial world view in a nutshell.

Primitive peoples can, however, thanks to the prescription of non-consumptive utilization, be redeemed from their backwardness with the help from responsible benefactors. As Payne (1991:22) puts it:

We will not get on with the business of stopping the amoral practice of whaling if we destroy our opportunities of dialogue with its practitioners by gratuitously insulting them...Not just whales but many species must hold legitimate claim to moral concern. Getting many people to recognize this claim will require a major change in their intellectual and emotional views towards animals. The difficulty of achieving that is not a reason to delay the process...I say, let us get on with this movement!

Which is precisely the advice the foreign entrepreneurs behind the Norwegian whale tourism project are following. In order to fulfil the ideology of non-consumptive utilization, they have introduced whale watching as a suitable implement.

In order to promote this, several instruments are used. One is mass media, which, needless to say, is the most important ingredient for promoting the tourist project as such. It has thus gained much attention abroad. Television and press from practically all over the world have visited Andenes to cover the tours. On location in Andenes, the two most crucial concepts of the whale Safari activities are research and education. From the very start of the CSWD involvement in Northern Norway, there has been a strong connection between research, whale tourism, and whalers.

The present leader of the research activities in Andenes emphasizes that "the aim is to combine whale research with whale watching. Located in the last stronghold of Norwegian whaling the Centre plays an important role in changing attitudes towards whales" (Similä & Ugarte 1991:18). Whale watching is then expected, according to another marine biologist, to "create alternative employment for whalers and at the same time use their expertise on cetacean behaviour" (Arnbom 1988:189). If whale tourism turns out to work well, it is to "secure a long term platform for whale research and general education about whales, and to create a job alternative to former whalers, now unemployed because of the whaling moratorium" (Lindhard et al. 1988:8).

Even if whalers can provide the marine biologists with local expertise and whale tourism some financial means, the costs for the research must come from elsewhere. The key here is The World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), which has financially supported CSWD and the marine biologists since 1987, mainly by funds derived from large "whale adoption" campaigns. WWF thus offers the public to adopt a whale in Northern Norway. By alarming flyers

titled "Mayday! Save The Whales!", WWF Denmark offers the public to be subscription sponsors for up to \$100 per month. WWF Sweden offers in a similar way the public to adopt a whale whale for \$1,000 and part of a whale for \$100.

As the public is entitled to news about "their" whales, the entrepreneurs provide basic information through photographs taken by the marine biologists (Ostrowski 1989:16). The purpose of the campaign is, according to WWF, to save the last whales of the world from extinction by promoting research and whale tourism (Dybbro 1990, Skat-Rørdam 1990a). There is also an explicit link between research and whaling:

We are launching a research project in Andenes in Northern Norway, which aim is to replace commercial whaling with whale tourism (Skat-Rørdam 1990a).

The firm belief among both marine biologists and entrepreneurs that the whalers quite naturally are expected to give way to another occupation and change their conceptual views about whales, is primarily based on natural personal feelings towards whales, emotions sprung from close, and sometimes daily, interaction with individual whales. This influences the view on the whaling occupation:

Whaling is history...Instead all efforts should be concentrated on finding solutions to the fishing problems by quota allocations. There is the future. The whale hunt only offers jobs for fifty whalers. Fishing offers jobs for many more. The whale discussion has moved beyond logic. They try to find simple solutions to difficult problems. It is the same sort of problem as with sheep-farmers and wolfs. When the discussion has flipped out it does not matter if there are only five wolfs left (Carlson 1991:87).

Showing not only a lack of understanding for fisheries problems, this statement also nourishes the image of the whale as living on the brink of extinction. In 1988, another marine biologist expressed the same idea by stating that "the hunting of the minke whale must be stopped. It is no doubt about it. Norway has perhaps only 10-15 per cent left of the original stock from 1930" (Emanuelsson 1988:23). Few, if any member of the IWC Scientific Committee believes this. A third biologist of the Centre expresses a difficult combination: "protection of whales is both an economical and ethical question: one thing is that the whale is a resource we cannot afford to lose...Another thing is the moral aspect of whether animals shall have the

rights to exist or not, and I mean that they definitely have such rights" (Myklebust 1968:9). And a fourth marine biologist told this writer that "the whalers must accept that their practice belongs to the past. It is over. They stubbornly cling on to an activity which only represent a tiny fraction of the local economy. There is much safer future in whale tourism" (pers.comm.)

In sum, the marine biologists at the Centre are caught in a moral dilemma. At the same time as they are dependent on the expertise of the whalers to perform their research, they promote anti-whaling attitudes themselves and willingly accept financial support from organizations that work out extensive anti-whaling campaigns. Their desire to help the whalers out of their financial problems because of the moratorium, must also be seen against the fact that some of them have actively contributed to uphold the same moratorium in the International Whaling Commission. Captain Dahl's comment on this is straight forward and very typical for coastal people:

These "researchers", or whatever they call themselves, and their WWF friends were the ones who stopped whaling for us. Now they are making money on adopted whales. They have robbed us of our livelihood, but make a profit on the whales themselves. They keep telling us that we do not own the whales, but they sell adoptions as if they own the whales! (pers. comm.)

The standard answer some of the marine biologists gave this writer last summer about this dilemma was simply, that it is important to introduce a "dialogue with the whalers" about the current problems.

The second crucial concept of the Whale Safari activities, education, is linked to the research sector, since the marine biologists also provide knowledge about whales:

Joining whale friends and whalers for a vivid dialogue is an important part of the project. Many locals join the tours out to the whales and learn exciting facts about the whales. Slowly but surely is the image of the whale changing in Northern Norway. That is the purpose. And the mass media is helping (Ostrowski 1969:17).

What are the conditions for such a dialogue and what do concepts like "education" and "knowledge" mean? In a whale tourism context, words like "education" and "knowledge" are not neutral in the dictionary sense, but rather filled with implicit meanings about the nature of them. The citation above indicates, that "knowledge" about whales is something that is provided

by the experts, i.e. the scientists. Local people, who obviously never have been educated by scientists before, join the tours in order to achieve the new knowledge.

Education also plays an important role vis-à-vis the tourists. Prior to every tour, the participants receive guided information in the Whale Centre in order to "enhance the experience of the whales", as the guides put it (pers.comm.). The one hour preparation includes a guided visit to the whale exhibition, a professional colour slide performance, and, not the least, free pills for seasickness. Then the party leaves (in one body) for the boat, and once on board, the guides have another round of information. During the trip the guides make comments on the behaviour of the whales and answer questions from the tourists. This serves an important purpose: it provides the tourists with the "right" knowledge about whales. As one of the crew members on board said to this writer: "you see, if they leave them alone for one minute, we might take the opportunity to correct all the mistakes they say"...

A definitely more clear cut example of the cultural conflict inherent in the whale tourism project is the recent struggle over a whaling museum in the Whale Centre. In 1990, CSWD worked out a plan for an extensive permanent whaling exhibition about "the importance of the whale for the people of Coastal Norway" (CSVD 1990:1). The ambition is to create a complement to the Pelagic Whaling Museum in Sandefjord, Norway. The emphasis is laid upon "the two periods of coastal whaling in Norway" and "impressions, knowledge, experiences, and artifacts" from them (ibid:1). WWF Sweden has granted a contribution of \$50,000 for its realization, and further contributions can be channelled through them (ibid:2). An important marking from the entrepreneurs is, though,

that the work with the museum from the very beginning must be carried out in closed cooperation with whalers and others who defend continuous whaling. The museum must not be perceived as biased by protectionist interests. The basis of the personal experience offered by the museum shall be the ancient local pride over the hunting. Local visitors must find parts of their own identity exposed, though perhaps the pride will be put in a historical context (ibid:2).

By putting together two quite different socioeconomic phenomena in Norway - the historical and industrial large type coastal whaling with the contemporary family oriented small type coastal whaling - into one category and then emphasizing the historical perspective, the entrepreneurs manage to

forward the message that whaling industry was a closed chapter, a historical fact.

Needless to say, this upsets Ragnvald Dahl. He wants no less than go out whaling again. Though being operating whale watching excursions for the moment, his harpoon is mounted on the forecastle head on every trip.

"Why? Because this is a whaling boat, and I am a whaler! I am just waiting for the moratorium to end..." (pers.comm.)

Both the historical purpose of the museum and the acceptance of financial contributions from a strong anti-whaling organization as WWF has also upset local organizations. The secretary of the Norwegian Small Type Whaling Association finds it outrageous, that people who are striving for a total ban on whaling, are touring in Northern Norway to collect artifacts and memories for a mausoleum over whalers' lives at the same time as whalers are fighting for our lives to keep their occupation going (Storhaug 1991:5, Munter 1991:4).

I am among those who wish to develop Norwegian coastal culture with its deep-rooted traditions. But...the expertise will be found among ourselves... what we want is a museum which displays our coastal culture in the past as well as in the future (ibid:5, ibid:4)

Caught in the middle of this cultural conflict are the local partners in Whale Safari Ltd. Being a typical characteristic of coastal societies to constantly look for occupational niches, local entrepreneurs in Andenes immediately realized the economical advantages of whale watching tourism. The managing director of Whale Safari Ltd is more enthusiastic than others about the museum:

Whale Safari Ltd cooperates with WWF and CSWD, because they took the initiative to the project and have...contributed with money, enthusiasm and creativity...Herein lies the condition that there will be no form of propaganda against whaling. It is therefore totally wrong to argue that a whaling exhibition will be a violation of whaling (Hagtun 1991:18).

A museum is, however, seldom a harmless institution. The entrepreneurs have seemingly chosen to present the whaling museum in a thematically "neutral" and "non-controversial" way by the use of history. An exhibition has always a meaning and is communicative by its character. It has a hidden language: someone wants to tell us something and expects us to listen. The

traditional museum also displays authority. The audience is seldom allowed to control the ordering and structure of artifacts. It is merely a consumer of the meanings served.

Being an ecologically and economically sustainable resource in the traditional Norwegian coastal society, foreign entrepreneurs have tried to introduce an image of the whale as something humans only are allowed to consume by immaterial means. The condition here is sharp: it is a matter of either hunting or looking at whales. There is plenty of cultural space in the Norwegian coastal societies to promote both sustainable and recreational harvesting of whales, but the entrepreneurs do not "allow" local people to choose.

Compared to the Basque case mentioned above, however, the whale tourism entrepreneurs in Norway have not succeeded in changing neither attitudes and ethics nor the economic situation for the whalers (since whale watching can never grow to the extent to offer more than a few whalers alternative employment). On the contrary, coastal Norway is (still) a relatively strong society and it is fair to conclude that there is a high degree of cultural resistance among local people, especially since their counterparts come from other countries and represent other cultures.

The whale watching project in Andenes is an extension of the current international trend of non-consumptive utilization of whales in the Western world. Turning the whale away from its traditional cultural context in Northern Norway and introducing instead a fundamentally alien view of the whales, the foreign entrepreneurs have proven to be true missionaries. Being both a mission and a tourist project it recognizes no borders. As a tourist project, it is, however, quite different from others. The standard tourist enterprise around the world is based almost entirely on profit. If there is money to make, there are tourists to encourage. As shown above, the project in Andenes is initiated by ideological reasons. Profit is not bad, but it comes second. This fact may have inspired a Swedish journalist to state that this is an example of "green tourism":

It is a combination of recreation and ecological and cultural insights. Its contribution is to save endangered animals. It creates alternatives for those who are dependent on environmentally harmful occupations. So except for exciting experiences, the whale safari tourist can enjoy a clean environmental conscience (Frieberg 1991:27).

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