Ecotourism in Donsol—ecofeminist perspectives

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Chapter 1

This chapter will cover, a background of the study, the aims, and research questions and a short outline to describe the structure of this thesis

Introduction

1.1 Background of the study

This study started with an interest in the green labelling of products as a tool for managing problems with the environment, as well as a marketing tool directed to environmentally conscious consumers. With this initial interest, arose the problem of limitation: to study green labelling as a whole would be pretty comprehensible for a master thesis. At first I thought about choosing one or possibly two environmental labels, but when I started to read about different green labels a friend came with the idea of ecotourism. Couldn’t ecotourism be seen as a green label? After reading some about ecotourism, this seemed to be an interesting issue. Unfortunately, ecotourism was about as wide as a subject as green labelling. My supervisor gave me the idea of performing a case study, in order to limit myself. What case study then, would be of interest? The choice finally fell on whale shark ecotourism in Donsol, in the Sorsogon province of the Philippines. The reason for this is due to that I know some people that have been there, and also because I was going to the Philippines myself.

After establishing what to investigate, the question came up of how to go about and what angle to pursue. Personally, I found classical perspectives within environmental ethics (such as anthropocentrism, ecocentrism, and so on), to be too constricted and formal for the subject of ecotourism in this thesis. Instead, I turned to post-modern theories. I was particularly inspired by two articles in the book “Environmental Ethics” edited by Michael Zimmerman. These were “The Power and promise of Ecological Feminism” by Karen Warren and the article “Death of nature” by Carolyn Merchant. Warren and Merchant are both
ecofeminist scholars. These articles had a big impact on me, and after reading them I knew how I would like to use the perspective of ecofeminism to evaluate ecotourism.

However, simply discussing ecofeminist perspectives on whale shark ecotourism now felt too narrow, just as ecotourism as a whole felt too general. From the general I would have had to interpolate to say anything specific, and from the specific (as the case study of Donsol), I would have the problem of extrapolation. I felt that both levels were needed to be able so say something substantial about both ecotourism and ecofeminism, so I made a compromise by also starting to study theories related to ecotourism and its compatibility with ecofeminist thought. From that theoretical and general level, I worked myself down to the national level, and finally the local level in the Philippines, or that is, the case study of whale shark ecotourism in Donsol. By doing this I also placed the case study in a wider national context, and all three levels: theoretical, national and local, came to be analysed through ecofeminist “eyeglasses”.

1.2 Aim

The aim of this thesis is to study, and take a stand on the environmental ethics of ecotourism on three levels. The first is the theoretical and global, the second is the national, more specifically in the Philippines, and finally, the third, which is the local level, in this, case whale shark ecotourism in Donsol. This will be done from an environmental ethical standpoint, influenced by the ecofeminism of Karen Warren and Carolyn Merchant.

1.3 Research questions:

1. Is the theory of ecotourism compatible with an environmental ethical standpoint based on ecofeminism?
2. Are the governmental policies and guidelines about ecotourism on national level in the Philippines compatible with an environmental ethical standpoint, based on ecofeminism?
3. Is whale shark ecotourism in Donsol compatible with an environmental ethical standpoint based on ecofeminism?
4. Can there be an ecotourism based on ecofeminism?

The first three questions will be answered in chapters four, five and six. The fourth question will just be handled briefly in the Epilogue.

1.4 Outline

Chapter 2 is supposed to be a briefing of ecotourism as a theory, on a national policy level in the Philippines and on a local level, that is the case of whale shark ecotourism in Donsol. Here, most of the facts will also be presented and introduced, but a deeper analysis of them will be saved for the later chapters. Chapter 3 is an introduction to the ecofeminism of Merchant and Warren. To do this, I will present Merchant’s “twin domination thesis”, taken from her book “Death of Nature”, and I will also present Warren’s thoughts on “conceptual framework”, “logic of domination” and “first person narrative”, finally summarizing their thoughts. The points and “tools” I shall derive from the ecofeminism of Merchant and Warren will then be applied in the following chapters. In chapter four, I will apply the ecofeminist thoughts to the theory of ecotourism, in chapter five to ecotourism policies at a national level in the Philippines, and finally in chapter six to the case study of whale shark ecotourism. The last chapter is an Epilogue, which function is to give a short summary, and connect back to the aim and research questions. The fourth research question will also be answered here.
Chapter 2

In this chapter ecotourism will be presented in relation to other forms of nature associated tourism as well as mainstream mass tourism. Ecotourism will also more specifically be presented on a national level in the Philippines, as well as on a local level in the form of whale shark ecotourism in Donsol.

Ecotourism – background

2.1 Ecotourism

The tourism industry

Tourism is a giant industry. According to the World Tourism Organization (WTO), over 700 million people\(^1\) travelled abroad in 2002, those people generated an estimated 474 million dollar income\(^2\). Tourism is also a growing business. From the first world environmental conference in Stockholm 1972 to the one in Rio de Janeiro in 1992, the world tourism increased by over 300%. According to WTO, tourism generates over 212 million jobs around the world, that is one out of nine jobs in the world. This number is expected to increase by over 60% to 340 million jobs within ten years\(^3\).

The figures above are from Peter Hanneberg’s book “Ekoturism eller Ekoterrorism\(^4\)”. This book was published ten years ago so the figures in it are a bit old, but they show the same trend and tendencies as later figurers. The latest figures I found were estimates for year 2006 from a World Travel and Tourism Council (WTTC) report. In that report, travel and tourism in 2006 will contribute to 3.6%\(^5\) of the worlds GDP. This is expected to rise to 10,3%

\(^{1}\) Not counted as individual peoples but in arrivals.
\(^{2}\) Dielemans 2004 October 24.
\(^{3}\) Hanneberg 1996, p. 8.
\(^{4}\) “Ecotourism or Ecoterrorism”, free translation from the author
\(^{5}\) This figure (1,754.50 billion USD) is much higher than the 474 million stated in Dagens Nyheter, but figures in the latter show income for tourism only, while the WTTC figures show the total turnover for travel and tourism.
of the world's GDP within ten years. The annual growth during that period is estimated at 4.2% per year.\(^6\) Travel and tourism generates 234,3 million jobs, that is 8.7%, or one out of every 11.5\(^{th}\) jobs in 2006. This is also expected to rise within ten years until 2016 to 279,35 million jobs. That is 9.0% or one out of every 11.1\(^{th}\) jobs.\(^7\)

The figures from WTTC differ to some extent from Hanneberg’s figures, as all of these estimated values and numbers depend on a wide variety of different factors and as such tend to vary a lot. However, even if they are not perfectly accurate in all contexts, they all point at the same direction: all show that tourism is a major business, and a business on the rise. The figures above show that tourism is a big business promising a good possibility of gaining profit. That sounds good, but is there another side to this promising industry as well? As many big enterprises, a giant industry as tourism also carries giant impact on its environment—impacts that affect both culture and nature. Before discussing what these impacts are more specifically, let me first use an analogy from Hanneberg’s book. Like king Midas, modern tourism has transformed many places into pure gold. But is gold all that we value, especially, like in the case of King Midas and modern tourism, when gold is gained from the loss of other valuable things, such as one’s daughter or nature, for instance?\(^8\)

A more concrete example in tourism can be the mass charter flights. This kind of tourism has throughout history brought economical development to previously remote and poor places. There has been a price to pay for this though. The untouched nature, the beautiful beaches and the existing culture have been lost in the in the process of pursuing maximum profit. The mass tourism that gives the gold is here also the source for adverse effects, such as environmental degradation and erosion of the original culture—in other words, it can lead to the destruction of the things and “attractions” that originally attracted tourists to these places. Also, there are other negative effects of tourism. According to Martha Honey, “…mass tourism has become synonymous with the “four S’s” sun, sea, sand and sex, and has given rise to derogatory—and often—accurate stereotypes pf the typical tourist. Host countries, as well as tourists began growing disappointed with this type of tourism”\(^9\).

These negative effects can be especially seen when it comes to tourism in developing countries, many of which saw mass tourism as a clean industry and a way of getting economic benefits and employment. Contrary to their expectations however, the economic benefits have proven to be low, as tourism in developing countries is often run by foreigners who have little

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\(^7\) World Travel and Tourism Council 2006, p. 6.
\(^8\) Hanneberg 1996, pp. 22-23.
\(^9\) Honey 1999, p. 9.
or no cultural sensitivity and whose only goal is economic profit. Thus, most of the money gained by tourism often finds its way out of the country anyway. The only thing that is left is low paying jobs as waiters, cleaners, and so on, leading to uneven development and exploitation of the locals.\textsuperscript{10} The resulting social and environmental costs have meanwhile been high. The Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) put up a more detailed list of these adverse effects of tourism, encompassing both social and environmental aspects. I will not put the whole list here, but some major points are: pollution, loss of arable land, loss of wild nature, a threat to flora and fauna, wear on historical and culturally significant places, crowding, increased traffic, conflicts with the local population whom has to adapt, competition with the traditional jobs, which can lead to an imbalance which is not always favourable for the regions in question.\textsuperscript{11} Exploitation—both in terms of culture and nature in these tourist destinations—seems to be the key word when it comes to the negative effects of tourism, and the developing countries themselves are not blind to these resulting negative consequences. In 1980, for example, the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism gathered in Manila. The result of this meeting was The Manila Declaration on World Tourism, which acknowledged that “tourism does more harm than good to people and to societies in the Third World.\textsuperscript{12}

But after this, a question still remains: how are the ones in the tourist industry as well as policy makers to deal with these problems within the tourist industry? Stopping all tourism does not seem possible since it gives some economical gain. Perhaps alternatives to regular tourism, such as ecotourism can be the salvation for the problems tourism brings? If this is right, the future of tourism looks promising. We can see this in the estimates by WTTC and Hanneberg, where a growth in the business of travel and tourism was projected at around 4\% per year.\textsuperscript{13} The growth of nature- and ecotourism is expected to be even faster, with a average speed of 15-20\% per year\textsuperscript{14}. This figure described the increase of growth in nature- and ecotourism, which I will be describing below.

\textit{Nature-associated tourism}

\textsuperscript{10} Honey 1999, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{11} Hanneberg 1996, pp. 30-31.
\textsuperscript{12} Honey 1999, p. 9.
\textsuperscript{13} Hanneberg 1996, p. 4.; World Travel & Tourism Council 2006, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{14} Hanneberg 1996, p. 4.
It is possible to distinguish between many different kinds of nature-associated tourism. I have chosen these three kinds: First, environmentally sustainable tourism, second, nature-based tourism and third, ecotourism. The first one, environmentally sustainable tourism is based on sustainable development and is the incorporation of the thought of environmental sustainability into tourism.

Sustainable development, however, is a wide and complex concept. Roughly it can be divided into modern and post-modern perspectives. In the modern perspective of sustainable development that is the basis for environmentally sustainable tourism, development is compatible with the institutions of modern western society, it’s also compatible with capitalism with the belief of that the market will lead to a “green” growth, that economic growth in turn will solve all problems as long as it’s managed in the right way. This perspective is called ecological modernisation. In the post-modern perspective, modernity and capitalism is instead seen as the problem. While the proponents of ecological modernisation generally are positive to the influential definition of sustainable development given in the Brundtland report, proponents of more radical and post-modern environmental standpoints on the other hand, tend to see sustainable development, defined by the Brundtland report as a cover for “business as usual”, and as a consequence of this they tend to avoid this, to them only “rhetorical” and false concept.

I see environmentally sustainable tourism as an expression of sustainable development as ecological modernisation, described by Maarten Hajer as when the un-environmental friendly structures of today’s society get green-washed, or merely get a green label. This is because ecological modernization uses the language of business, and in it, environmental pollution is only a matter of inefficiency in a system of economic rationality. Environmentally sustainable tourism doesn’t ensure any real solution of the problems of tourism in my eyes though, as I agree with the critics of sustainable development that it is mainly nothing more then a mere green label. Sustainable development can in this light be basically anything, good as bad. That means that any tourism can be more or less adapted to environmentally sustainable tourism. From mass charter tourism to small-scale ecotourism, almost everything can be more or less environmentally adapted while still maintaining the old structures of tourism.

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16 Olsson 2005, pp. 84, 88.
17 Hajer 1995, p.31.
While ecologically sustainable tourism can be basically anything with a green label, the second kind of nature-associated tourism is a narrower field. In nature-based tourism, nature, or rather the experiences derived from it, is the basis for travelling. This kind of tourism has a long history, one example of early nature-based tourism is The Sierra Club outing program in the United States, which started its activity in 1901. The focus for this organization was the preservation and conservation of natural areas and species. This, among other things, led to the approval from the U.S. Congress to start the U.S. National Park System. After the U.S., Austria (1879), Mexico (1998), Argentina (1902) and Sweden (1909) soon followed by setting up their own national parks in which the citizens can enjoy unspoiled nature.\textsuperscript{19}

Although narrower than ecologically sustainable tourism, the concept of nature-based tourism also includes a wide variety of tours, making it hard to say anything general about it when it comes to how good or bad it is for the environment. Nature-based tourism can be anything from hunting and killing animals for pleasure and profit, to tourism whose focus really is in the experience of nature and respects cultures that exist in the area.

The third kind, ecotourism is a kind of nature-based tourism. Although the line between ecotourism and nature-based tourism is blurry there are some noticeable differences. In ecotourism, as opposed to nature-based tourism, the main goal is not only to experience nature, but also to travel with a caring attitude towards nature and the local population. It is not nature per se, but rather positive effects on the local nature and economy that are the most important goals of ecotourism. Ecotourism is also knowledge tourism, where the travelling also is a part of gaining more knowledge about the destination in question. The knowledge can then be said to be holistic: it incorporates not only aspects of nature, but also aspects of indigenous culture and economy.\textsuperscript{20}

\textit{The beginnings of the concept of ecotourism}

The first definition of the concept of ecotourism can be traced back to 1983 and Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin, who at International Union for the Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources (IUCN) first introduced the concept.\textsuperscript{21} This claim is in dispute though, as some experts claim that it instead is Kenton Miller that is the father of the concept ecotourism when

\textsuperscript{19} Honey 1999, pp. 10-11.
\textsuperscript{20} Hanneberg 1996, p. 15.
\textsuperscript{21} Hanneberg 1996, p. 16.
he coined the term eco-development in 1978. Anyway, who was first is not of any particular interest for me, as the concept of ecotourism was probably—as many other concepts and inventions—a result of the exchange of different but similar ideas in a discourse. Both Héctor and Kenton were probably mostly influenced by the same ideas that were circulating at the time. For me, the important matter is that the idea of ecotourism appeared at approximately the same time, and that it contains basically the same elements:

Héctor Ceballos-Lascuráin describes ecotourism as tourism where the attitude of the traveller is just as important as the activity. He also advocates a more holistic approach, instead of a narrow view often adopted by tourists in common tourism. By this holistic approach, it is meant that the ecotourist has to be sensitive to several issues behind and besides nature itself, such as culture, aesthetics. Kenton Miller also describes his eco-development in terms of a holistic approach where considerations such as biological, economic, social and political must be taken in order to meet the needs of both humans, and the environment. The holistic outlook, as well as the attitude and considerations of the traveller, thus play a important part in ecotourism.

The concept of ecotourism was further developed during the eighties. A big part of this can be accredited to the conservation conferences by IUCN in 1982, 1992 and in 1996. Another contribution to the development of ecotourism was the foundation of The International Ecotourism Society in 1990, an organization with the sole purpose of working with ecotourism. In the first of June 1991, The International Ecotourism Society’s branch in the U.S. decided on a definition of ecotourism, which many people agree on:

Ecotourism is a responsible kind travelling that conserve the natural environment and at the same time maintains the wellbeing of the local population.

This definition was the foundation when the World Wide Fund For Nature (WWF) Project Ecotourism started in 1994. This project complemented the definition of the

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23 Hanneberg 1996, p. 16.
26 The International Ecotourism Society website.
28 My translation from Swedish to English from Hanneberg 1996, p. 17.
Ecotourism Society with a more detailed list of what ecotourism should be. 29 To the list, the original thought of ecotourism that the attitude of the tourist was of importance, was included. 30 This list by the WWF, together with a list stipulated by the Ecotourism Society on what real ecotourism should be 31 and a similar list formulated by the UNDP (United Nations Development Programs) 32 are all influential in ecotourism. Since they are pretty long to bring up in detail here, I have instead derived several points that are common to them below. The first four points of the shortened list I have translated directly from Hanneberg’s book “Ekoturism eller Ekoterrorism” on what ecotourism is said to be, since these also seem to go together with other definitions of ecotourism including the one accepted by the Ecotourism society 33 (www.ecotourism.org). These points will be presented here and discussed further in chapter 4:

- Ecotourism is gentle and caring towards the nature and culture it uses for tourism.
- Ecotourism is contributing to both economic development to the local population, as well as to the conservation of nature at the destination in question.
- Ecotourism emphasizes knowledge about nature and culture for the ones involved in it.
- Ecotourism is supposed to increase the public understanding for nature, culture, development, and so on, issues.
- Ecotourism is based on stakeholders rather than shareholders.

What I can say for now though, is that in short, ecotourism is meant to be ecological- as well as economically sound tourism. Even if the definitions differ in detail with each of the groups who define it, ecotourism is tourism with a holistic approach, where many different perspectives and values are included.

29 The list can be found in detail in Hanneberg 1996, pp. 19-20.
33 The International Ecotourism Society website.
2.2 Ecotourism in the Philippines

The Philippines is economically a poor country, but on the other hand it is a country rich in nature.\(^{34}\) Partly because of this, tourism has become a promising source of money for the Philippines, and stands for a significant part of the national income. Understandably, this has translated to a big interest from the government to further develop tourism and make the Philippines a big tourist destination in the stiff Southeast Asian competition. The Philippines is indeed being marketed as a tourist destination that features predominantly wild and untouched nature of high mountains and white beaches.\(^{35}\) That a country such as this so rich in nature would see ecotourism as a good economic alternative is in this sense not strange. However, it would be interesting to see how such an ecotourism would look like.

For this chapter, I will not yet be introducing the philosophical concepts or theories, but will be very descriptive on the state of tourism in the Philippines as well as its formulation of ecotourism guidelines. The following discussion will therefore be like a historical backgrounder to how ecotourism emerged in the Philippines. A description of how the ecotourism concepts are applied will also be discussed, through the example of whale shark ecotourism in the Philippine town of Donsol. A more in depth discussion of the ecotourism guidelines as well as the case study will follow in chapter 4 and 5 where I will discuss them in terms of ecofeminist thought introduced in Chapter 3.

Tourism seen as the key to Philippine economic development

The expectations of what tourism can give are big in the Philippines. The Philippines are today a comparably poor country where the economical development has been less than expected and hoped for.\(^{36}\) The reasons for this will not be discussed here, but tourism is seen by the Philippine government to offer some sort of salvation, and foreign money. In fact, tourism plays today a big part in Philippine economy. In 1997, according to the WTTC, tourism represented 8.7% of the Philippine GDP, compared to the world average 3.6% of GDP in 1996.\(^{37}\) On top of that, tourism is considered to have a big potential for development since the Philippines is rich in untouched nature with more than 7,000 islands, big cities, and

\(^{34}\) CIA World Factbook.

\(^{35}\) See Chapter 2

\(^{36}\) CIA World Factbook.

pleasant climate. As a consequence, tourism is expected to grow until 2007, where it is expected to stand for 10.9% of the country’s GDP.

In the year 2000, the tourists who come to the Philippines were mostly from the United States (24%), followed by Japanese (18.5%) and on third place Koreans (7.7%). Koreans though, have had the highest increase in tourist arrivals to the Philippines with an increase of 45.2% compared to previous the year, that is in 1999. The majority of the tourists to the Philippines though still come from North America; in fact, the Philippines hosted 18.2 of all North American tourist arrivals to the Asia-Pacific region in 1998. This is not nearly enough for the Philippine government though, whose Department of Tourism (DOT) has set a goal of a 20% increase in foreign tourist arrivals to the Philippines during the first part of the 21st century. The Department of Tourism itself is set up for the purpose of increasing foreign tourism to the country, and hence the generation of foreign currency and employment. In short, its goal is for tourism to be one of the bigger contributors to the economic development of the Philippines. This reflects that the Philippine government does in fact see the tourism industry as a key to the country’s economic development.

The competition in the area of tourism is stiff, however, with competitors such as China, Japan and Thailand. On top of that there is the terrorist scare in the southern Philippine island of Mindanao, where bombings and kidnappings sometimes occur. In light of this, the foreseen solution to lure tourists and win over the competition from other countries is to niche the tourism into more and more specific groups and offer the different groups exactly what experience they want to pay for. Examples of these niches are tours for veterans, students, and other groups; adventure tours, cruises, and of course, ecotourism. The adoption of the ecotourism was also influenced by the growing environmental concern in tourist destinations. In short, if the government plans to make tourism as a big factor in its economic growth, the kinds of tourism, including ecotourism, should be viable and sustainable over a long period of time. Environmental degradation in the nature-rich tourist destinations should thus be kept to a limit.

40 Alejandrino 2002, p. 175.
42 Alejandrino 2002, p. 175.
44 Alejandrino 2002, p. 175.
Ecotourism as sustainable tourism

The concern for the environment within Philippine tourism can in fact be said to spring from issues of sustainable development as defined in the Bruntland report with fulfilling the needs of today without compromising the possibilities of the future generations to fulfil their needs.\textsuperscript{45} Another important concept that influenced the Philippine government was Agenda 21, from the summit in Rio 1992, where the concept of sustainable development was widened from the focus on carrying capacity and fairness between generations to also include global justice and local level engagement in environmental issues.\textsuperscript{46, 47} These concerns, according to W.M. Andrada, lay the foundation for the Philippine Council for Sustainable development (PCSD) in 1992, and later the adoption of the Philippine Agenda 21 in 1995.\textsuperscript{48} The resulting shift in environmental thinking and policy also influenced the so-called Philippine Tourism Master Plan (TMP), which was the result of a cooperation between the Philippine DOT and UNDP in 1992. This Tourism Master Plan was one of the first Philippine government plans with the focus on sustainable development.\textsuperscript{49} Its objectives are how to make tourism sustainable in the Philippines, and to involve organizations and agencies in integrating sustainable development thinking into the tourism sector. Eventually, the TMP also led to the introduction of ecotourism as an important part of tourism based on sustainable development. The National Ecotourism Development Council (NEDC) was formed because of this,\textsuperscript{50} and a milestone in ecotourism in the Philippines was a workshop in 1994, where several major actors were involved to set up the goals for ecotourism in the Philippines. Ecotourism was here described as:

\begin{quote}
\ldots an environmentally sound tourism activity, sustainability implemented in a given ecosystem yielding socio-economic benefits and enhancing natural and cultural diversity conservation.\textsuperscript{51}
\end{quote}

From this, others soon followed suit. Not immune to the political winds at the time, the Philippine Senate passed a bill concerning ecotourism in 1997, and the then president Estrada

\textsuperscript{45} Olsson 2005, p. 13.
\textsuperscript{46} Cruz 2003, pp. 11-12.
\textsuperscript{47} Olsson 2005, p. 14.
\textsuperscript{48} Andrada 2002, p. 168.
\textsuperscript{49} Andrada 2002, p. 168.
\textsuperscript{50} Andrada 2002, p. 168.
\textsuperscript{51} Alejandrino 2002, p.176.
joined in by passing the Executive order No. 111\textsuperscript{52} that echoed the results of the 1994 workshop\textsuperscript{53}. Another important single actor in the development of guidelines for ecotourism in the Philippines was professor Carlos M. Libosanda Jr., who was working for the Asian Institute of Tourism in the University of the Philippines. His influential book “Ecotourism in the Philippines” presented one of the most comprehensive studies of ecotourism in the Philippines.

All of these individual and collective efforts led to the first National Ecotourism Congress in Tagbilaran, Bohol, in November 1999, where the two pillars were to develop a national ecotourism policy, as well as the development of a strategy to bring more foreign tourists to the country.\textsuperscript{54} Concerning the first agenda of formulating a national ecotourism plan, the following definition of ecotourism was accepted:

A form of sustainable tourism within given natural and/or cultural area where community participation, conservation and management of biodiversity, respect for culture and indigenous knowledge systems and practises, environmental education and ethics as well as economic benefits are fostered an pursued for the enrichment of host communities and satisfaction of visitors.\textsuperscript{55}

The National Congress, with the addition that stressed that the state should play an important role in this plan, accepted this national policy.\textsuperscript{56} The latest definition concerning ecotourism policies in the Philippines however, comes from the Second National Ecotourism Congress, which was held in Tacloban City, the 25\textsuperscript{th} of April 2002.\textsuperscript{57} Here three main principles for ecotourism in the Philippines are added and stressed. These principles as well as the key issues are here presented but will be discussed more thoroughly in chapter 5.

- An ecosystem approach to development, to sustain and improve sustainability of biodiversity and other natural resources.

\textsuperscript{52} An Executive Order is not a law, but works as a recommendation from the President.
\textsuperscript{53} Alejandrino 2002, p.177.
\textsuperscript{54} Alejandrino 2002, p.177.
\textsuperscript{55} Alejandrino 2002, p.170.
\textsuperscript{56} The Congress stated that “…the State shall pursue, promote, manage and develop ecotourism anchored on sustainable development through environmental management and education, community empowerment, cultural enrichment and entrepreneurship to improve the quality of life for present and future generations.” Alejandrino 2002, p.177.
\textsuperscript{57} Terence 2002 April 25, in the United Nations Development Program website.
- A people centred approach to development, based on access to resources and community based management.
- A capacity development approach to enhancing the capacity of society and public systems in particular to balance the short and long term, the market and society. 58

From this framework four key issues were also highlighted:

- The importance of the rights of minorities, their cultures and their right to say NO!
- Guaranteeing access to land and other natural resources as rights, often associated with indigenous peoples.
- The critical need to manage and resolve if not prevent conflict by building social capital and access to justice for those whose rights are affected.
- The significance of building effective partnerships, involving especially local governments, private sector and civil society 59

2.3 Whale shark ecotourism

The municipality of Donsol is located some 500 kilometers south east of the capital Manila in the Sorsogon region of Philippines. 60 Through the ages, whale sharks have gathered to feed eight months every year in the nutrient rich waters of the Donsol river’s estuary. 61 The whale shark (Rhincodon typus) is the world’s largest fish, and can weigh as much as 125 tons 62 and reach a length of over 21 meters. 63 Whale sharks can be found in tropical and warm temperate seas and are highly migratory. They feed by filter feeding (like a vacuum cleaner) and prey on zooplankton to smaller fish and squid. 64 As a species, whale sharks are sensitive, partly because their long maturation cycle. It takes around 30 years for a whale shark to reach

60 Ordóñez 2005 September 27.
61 WWF-Philippines website. Donsol’s Gentle Giants.
63 Shark Trust Whale Shark Project website.
64 Shark Trust Whale Shark Project website.
sexual maturity.\textsuperscript{65} This, combined with overfishing has made the species endangered. Hence, whale sharks are red listed as vulnerable species.\textsuperscript{66}

In the Philippines however there have also been a long tradition of hunting whale sharks. According to a WWF-Philippines and Silliman University study, it was originally only five villages involved in hunting whale shark using traditional fishing methods. The meat was eaten or sold locally. In 1996, that number was 15 villages, who each captured around 26 whale sharks per year each. The reason for this was increased demand for whale shark meat in Asia, foremost Taiwan, Japan, Hong Kong and Singapore. It started with new whale shark fisheries opening in at least five Philippine provinces, and over fishing begun for real. At first more whale sharks were captured, but after a while numbers declined.\textsuperscript{67}

In 1998, the plankton bloom attracted whale sharks in unusual numbers to Donsol.\textsuperscript{68} Thus, in the same year, the Sorsogon Provincial Tourism Council saw the potential for Donsol to be an ecotourism site. Media promotion eventually followed, attracting tourists as well as hunters in big numbers to the small and insufficiently equipped society of Donsol.\textsuperscript{69} In Angela Quiros words: “This event attracted tourists, poachers, media and government agencies interested in obtaining a piece of the whale shark pie.”\textsuperscript{70} The whale shark ecotourism was also still a bit ad hoc, with local fisherman taking people out in their boats.\textsuperscript{71} But as the tours became more and more popular, the sensitive whale sharks became more and more disturbed, and some animals even had propeller gashes on their bodies.\textsuperscript{72} Studies show that the whale sharks survivability could decrease if they are disturbed during the important feeding month, if they have to divert their energy from feeding to avoiding humans.\textsuperscript{73} Ironically, Donsol also had never been a site of whale shark hunting before the Sorsogon Provincial Tourism Council’s campaign.\textsuperscript{74} Now, the area was plagued with problems with regards to the tourism as well as the whale shark hunting

To counter these problems and to help improving the whale shark ecotourism, WWF-Philippines was invited, and with financial support from UNDP they started a more organized program for whale shark ecotourism.\textsuperscript{75} The local government of Donsol also issued a local

\textsuperscript{65} Quiros 2005, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{66} Norman 2000.
\textsuperscript{67} WWF-Philippines website. \textit{Whale Shark Fishing in the Philippines}.
\textsuperscript{68} Quiros 2005, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{69} WWF-Philippines website. \textit{Whale Shark Fishing in the Philippines}.
\textsuperscript{70} Quiros 2005, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{71} Quiros 2005, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{72} WWF-Philippines website. \textit{Donsol’s Gentle Giants}.
\textsuperscript{73} Quiros 2005, p. 43.
\textsuperscript{74} Alava and Yaptinchay 2000.
\textsuperscript{75} Alava and Yaptinchay 2000.
ordinance for the protection of the whale sharks.\textsuperscript{76} The later had not brought out the desired effect of stopping whale shark hunting, but a media exposure of the killing of six whale sharks outside Donsol soon started the ball rolling.\textsuperscript{77} The consequence of this media exposure was a national outcry, which in turn led to the issue of the Fisheries Administrative Order 193,\textsuperscript{78} in which whale sharks were given special protection from killing, wounding, catching, selling transporting and exporting.\textsuperscript{79}

On its part on solving the problems caused by tourism, the WWF-Philippines also later presented the Donsol Butanding\textsuperscript{80} Ecotourism Management Plan to counter the adverse tourist effects.\textsuperscript{81} According to this plan, the Local Government Unit (LGU) was now to manage the ecotourism in the local area. Regulations were also formulated for those who wanted to watch and swim with the whale sharks, such as registration to the Visitor Centre of the Donsol Tourism Office, payment of a registration fee and taking a brief information lecture about whale sharks. Regulations on what boats to be used and the maximum number of passengers in them were also formulated, as well as the casting of Butanding Interaction Officers (BIO), spotters and skippers. To minimise the disturbance to the whale sharks, the crew are all trained in whale shark interaction tour handling by WWF-Philippines.\textsuperscript{82} Finally, the Donsol Butanding Ecotourism Plan also led to eight guidelines for whale shark interaction, which are:

1. Do not touch or ride the whale shark.
2. Do not restrict the movement of the shark or impede its natural path.
3. The recommended distance from the whale shark is 3 meters from the head or body and 4 meters from the tail.
4. Do not take flash photography.
5. Do not use scuba, scooters, jet-skis or any other motorized underwater propulsion.
6. A maximum of 6 swimmers per shark is allowed
7. There must only one boat per whale shark\textsuperscript{83} (Guidelines for proper ws interaction, http://crmsd.wwf.org.ph/donsol/main.php?key=guide , this page

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\textsuperscript{76} Alava and Yaptinchay 2000.
\textsuperscript{77} Quiros 2005, p. 42.
\textsuperscript{78} The Fisheries Administrative Order 193 is also called as the Whale Shark and Manta Ray Ban.
\textsuperscript{79} Alava and Yaptinchay 2000.
\textsuperscript{80} Butanding is the Filipino (Tagalog) word for Whale Shark
\textsuperscript{81} WWF-Philippines website. Donosl’s Gentle Giants.
\textsuperscript{82} WWF-Philippines website. Donosl’s Gentle Giants.
\textsuperscript{83} WWF-Philippines website. Donosl’s gentle Giants.
has ceased to exist, but similar guidelines for WS interaction, although not specifically for the Donsol, can be found at, Code of conduct\textsuperscript{84}

The WWF plan is also somewhat of a business plan to create more jobs and generate more money into the area. From their suggestion, the registration fee at Donsol is a present USD 2 for locals and USD 6 for foreigners, multiplied by some 7000 foreigners who travelled to Donsol in 2005 alone. Besides this, whale shark ecotourism creates other small jobs in the area, such as jobs as whale shark spotters, drivers, hotel- and restaurant employees—all totalling to around 300 jobs. All in all, the total income generated in Donsol over a six- to eight-month season is estimated at USD 623,000.\textsuperscript{85} Although more than nothing, this income at Donsol is comparably smaller than in other whale shark ecotourism destinations. For instance, at Nigaloo Reef in Australia whale shark ecotourism gives an annual income of 18 million Australian dollars.\textsuperscript{86} The WWF business plan development study pins the reason for this as a consequence of the inadequate tourist facilities and lack of tourist infrastructure in Donsol. Conversely, an increase in these is projected to bring in more tourists, and thus more income to the area.\textsuperscript{87}

Although economic profit is the goal for the WWF business plan, it also stresses environmental concerns and the development for the local economy. That the money goes to the local community is just as much of an issue as the environment, since only 20\% of the Donsol whale shark ecotourism profits stays in Donsol.\textsuperscript{88} The WWF business plan then plans to ameliorate this by helping to “prevent economic leaks locally by identifying and supporting more community-based enterprises.”\textsuperscript{89} An example of how this can be done is the home stay program planned jointly by WWF-Philippines and the DOT project, where tourists can live with local families.\textsuperscript{90} New rates and pricing structures will also increase the available capital for the local LGU, for them to invest in environmental services such as the provision of clean water, creation of roads, and the management of waste, among other things.\textsuperscript{91} If things goes as planned, the future for ecotourism in Donsol looks bright.

\textsuperscript{84} Shark Trust Whale Shark Project website.
\textsuperscript{85} Biota Filipina 2006 January, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{86} Biota Filipina 2005 April, p. 6.
\textsuperscript{87} Biota Filipina 2006 January, p. 7.
\textsuperscript{88} Ordóñez 2005 September 27.
\textsuperscript{89} From interview with Ruel Pine, Community-based ecotourism and Costal Resource Management Project Manager of WWF-Philippines. In Ordóñez 2005 September 27.
\textsuperscript{90} Ordóñez 2005 September 27.
\textsuperscript{91} Biota Filipina 2005 April. p.7.
2.4 Conclusion

International tourism is today a giant industry, an industry which is also growing, but as king Midas discovered, everything is not gold that shines. The pursuit for profit has led to exploitation of nature as well as people. It have been shown that tourism often does more harm then good, especially for development countries, of whom many are big tourist destinations. Traditional mass tourism is often run by foreigners without cultural or environmental sensitivity, who’s only goal is profit. To counter these negative effects of tourism, other non-traditional forms of tourism have been considered, including tourism associated with nature such as nature-based tourism, ecologically sustainable tourism and ecotourism.

Nature-based tourism is, as it sounds, tourism that has nature as its main attraction. This form of tourism has its roots in the conservation movement of the 19th century. Ecologically sustainable tourism on the other hand has its foundation in the concept of sustainable development. This concept rests on the implementation of environmental sustainability in mainstream thought. Mainstream thought though, is said by some to be modern thought, and critics of sustainable development say that the concept of sustainable development rather means ecological modernization.

Ecotourism is a more holistic perspective, where many different contexts are considered, such as biology, ecology, economy, culture etc. Another central theme in ecotourism is the consideration for the local population and their culture as well as the nature. Ecotourism can also be said to be more postmodern.

In order of bringing nature associated tourism, and especially ecotourism down from this general and theoretical level, I’ve chosen to discuss the issue on more concrete examples on national and local level. On national level I chose the Philippines, a poor country with a lot of nature, which is also dependent on tourism, and have plans to develop tourism. On national level, the government of the Philippines has, since the start had a big part in how ecotourism is supposed to look like. Environmental issues in the Philippines have since the nineties been closely connected with sustainable development. A consequence of this is that ecotourism also have been seen as sustainable development when its been implemented in the Philippine administration. The Philippine government also has big plans for tourism, and they seem very happy to micromanage the development of tourism in their country, ecotourism is no
exception. Even if ecotourism in the Philippines, on a national level is seen as a part of ecologically sustainable tourism, some of the basic thoughts of ecotourism have had an influence the Philippine tourism policy. The question is, is this enough? In order to answer that, I will use a specific case concerning ecotourism. The case is whale shark ecotourism in Donsol, a town in the Philippines.

Although whale sharks have traditionally been hunted in the Philippines by a small number of villages, increased demand led to over fishing before their potential as an ecotourism highlight was seen. The latter was realized when whale shark numbers where on demise, and a bloom of plankton outside Donsol led to an aggregation of whale sharks not previously seen. This led to the first attempts of ecotourism as well as whale shark hunting in Donsol, both of which previously never been a place where whale sharks been hunted. Legislation later stopped the hunting, and to solve the problems brought about by tourism, the local government sought that the ecotourism in the area be more organized. As the first whale shark ecotourism tours were in the beginning a bit ad hoc, the organization of ecotourism was achieved largely with the help of WWF-Philippines. Today there are strict guidelines for whale shark interaction, and WWF have plans for expansion of whale shark ecotourism in Donsol.
Chapter 3

This chapter will give an introduction to ecofeminist thought as I’ve chose to describe it in this thesis. In order of doing that, I’ve relied on the works of Carolyn Merchant and Karen Warren. To present and support the twin domination thesis, I’ve mainly used the book “the Death of Nature” by Merchant. When it comes the more theoretical ecofeminist tools, I’ve rely mostly on Warren’s conceptual framework, logic of domination and the first person narrative.

Ecofeminism

3.1 Ecofeminism

Ecofeminism is a wide concept; it is not only a theory but also a social movement. In fact, ecofeminism, in contrast to most other theories, has its basis in the immanent social struggle of women to keep or to restore nature, especially women in the third world. An example of this can be the 27 women of the 1974 Chipko grass root movement in India. The Chipko movement was a movement initiated and consisting of women to stop deforestation of species of trees that women in particular were dependent on for their livelihood. Although I, will focus more on the theoretical side of ecofeminism, its origins as a social movement should not to be forgotten since it is defining for the theory itself, and its focus on woman and nature.

Ecofeminism as a theory is based on the twin domination thesis, that is, that the subjugation of women and nature is similar. Karen Warren illustrates this in her article “The Power and Promise of Ecological Feminism”, where she states that: “…any environmental ethic which fails to take seriously the twin and interconnected dominations of woman and

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nature is at best incomplete…” More about how this thesis is supported will be described more in the next section.

On a short note though, the twin domination thesis, as can be interpreted from both from the works of Carolyn Merchant and Karen Warren, has its basis in (male) enlightenment and modernity. This is expressed in ecofeminism in that it doesn’t focus on modern individuality and universal rights, but rather relationships and care. As a consequence, ecofeminism does not assume that it as a theory is objective, universal, or free of bias. Since ecofeminism does not believe in value-neutral or unbiased thinking and knowledge, it instead puts focus on what the conditions are that form the knowledge we use, that is in what context. Like other feminist thought, ecofeminism acknowledges power as vital for what knowledge, discourse, rationality is to be the prevailing one.

The enlightenment, which came to be central in modernity, carried “freedom, equality and brotherhood” as its slogan. The “sisters” weren’t given much thought, as well as anyone who wasn’t white, or well off economically for that matter. This narrow focus continued and influenced modern thought. In contrast to this, ecofeminism, which is also a postmodern idea, is instead inclusive in the sense that it also includes the knowledge and discourses of people who are other than male, well off, white brothers. This also makes ecofeminism ethically pluralistic, meaning it recognizes more than one ethical principle. What principle to choose is again dependent on the context, which in turn often is decided by power.

I will in this thesis rely mostly on Karen Warren’s ecofeminist tools, while I will use Carolyn Merchant’s “Death of Nature” to support the important twin domination thesis.

3.2 The twin domination thesis

To support the twin domination thesis, Warren uses a lot of examples that can be found in today’s society. These examples range from water, forestry and agriculture issues: “It is estimated that women farmers grow at least 59 percent of the world’s food, perhaps as much as 80 percent”. One of Warren’s arguments though, is that men are the primary recipients of training in technology, even though women are just as much dependent on it, especially since

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95 Kronlid 2003, p. 15.
96 Kronlid 2003, p. 25.
women do most of the basic work with which we all need to live. At any case, the central point is that women carry out a lot of work that has to do with nature. They are as such very central in society, but despite this have very little say, or very little power in decision-making. The example that caught my attention, however, has not to do with either agriculture or technology, but is what Warren calls “Sexist-Naturist Language”. This she describes in the chapter carrying the same name in “Ecofeminism – Woman Culture Nature”.

Firstly, she describes how women are often called in animal terms: “Women are described in animal terms such as pets, cows, sows, foxes, chicks, serpents, bitches, beavers, old bats, old hens, mother hens, pussycats cats, cheetahs, birdbrains, and harebrains”. In our modern culture, where animals and women are seen as inferior to man, this example show one of these connections between the oppression of women and nature. That modern rationality is an oppressing rationality is also illustrated by the fact that good arguments are generally described in domination metaphors: “good reasoners knock down arguments; they tear, rip, chew, cut them up, attack them, try to beat, destroy, or annihilate them…” Bad arguments are on the other hand described in metaphors of the dominated, they “fall flat on their face’, are limp, lame, soft, fuzzy, silly, and ‘full of holes’”. These examples show that both women and nature are dominated in language by male rationality that has built the language, and that the dominance of this rationality is based on power rather than on good reasoning alone. Following Warren, I interpret the connection between sexist and naturist language, as that issues of sexism and naturism are connected, under the domination of modern (male) rationality. This is the spirit of the twin domination thesis.

Warren focuses on the contemporary issues to criticise how modern rationality is universal, ahistoric, and acontextual. Like ecofeminists, I agree that the context is important. Warren though does not provide much to support the twin domination thesis through historical context, which I think is especially important. Thus, I have chosen to discuss that here using Carolyn Merchant’s book “The Death of Nature”, which in a really thorough way deals with the historical connections between the oppression of women and nature.

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99 Warren 1997, in the chapter called “Taking empirical data seriously”
Merchant begins by describing the pre-modern view of nature, and how that was linked to the female gender. On the one hand, nature was in pre-modern times described in metaphors such as the nurturing mother. On the other hand, women also came to represent the erratic and unpredictable in nature. Female sexuality was thus seen as threatening and powerful. This idea of nature was kept until the beginning of modernization. The difference was that modernization and enlightenment put man (men) in contrast to and in conflict with nature (women) — the ordered opposed the wild. With modernity, the focus was changed from living under nature’s care and nature’s law to becoming its master, that is, the master of the previously uncontrolled. Modernity and the modern sciences that lay the foundation for modern thought, are often represented by Francis Bacon, the founder of the Royal Society, and the father of the modern sciences. This is why Merchant uses Bacon as the example of how the new modern way of thinking was, and how the domination of nature and women came to be the norm.

Francis Bacon is considered by many to be the father modern science. His goal was to use nature as a means to benefit humans. His definition of humans though, is narrow. Bacon was typical for the class for which he represented — the upper class or the powerful. His image might be less favourable among the common people and the powerless, among them women. Bacon was also, among many of his contemporaries, a firm believer in the persecution of witches. Though the belief in witches is much older than modernity or Bacon himself and had existed even in the Christian Western Middle Ages, witches were then seldom persecuted but instead accepted. Even though both women and witches were traditionally seen as something erratic and frightening, people had accepted them as nature itself. It was only in the beginning of the modern age that the persecution of witches really reached its peak. With the new era, man (men) now strived to take control over the previously uncontrolled. This new knowledge, held by the powerful men like Bacon, rejected the old knowledge often held by common people. The witcheries can be seen as an example

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104 Merchant 1980, preface book  
109 This can be seen in Merchant 1980, in the chapter entitled Domination over Nature, pp.164-190.  
of how this new knowledge of modern science was used to control the unruly and “uneducated” subjects.\textsuperscript{113}

The educated men of the new times were also very keen of using science to control, measure, weigh, dissect nature in order to expose her secrets. Bacon described this as man regaining control over the creation—a control that was lost in the exodus. But to gain control over nature, nature’s secrets had to be extracted from her. Bacon here uses the metaphor of the interrogation of witches.\textsuperscript{114} According to Merchant, a lot of today’s scientific language and imagery comes from this view that nature had to be put on the rack and forced off her secrets. This can be compared to how Warren described how women and nature are oppressed in scientific language: “…the penetration of hidden secrets—language still used today in praising a scientist’s ‘hard facts,’ ‘penetrating mind’, or the ‘thrust of his argument.’”\textsuperscript{115} To Merchant this is a rape of nature for the good of humans, which in this case is an exclusive concept referring to the rising white middle-class men and entrepreneurs.\textsuperscript{116}

The view of nature is thus changed from being the companion, teacher, and nurturing mother to “a mindless submissive body”.\textsuperscript{117} The new sciences with its new conceptual framework brought other norms and values concerning the view of knowledge, women and nature. According to Merchant, this leads to what she calls “the death of nature”.\textsuperscript{118} The modern sciences instead adopted a mechanistic view of nature radically different from the old organic one. The parts and the principles have here become more important than the whole or the context. These norms of modern science are also to be found in modern ethics, where the focus has been on the rational and formal principles, and could not care less about contexts such as history and power structures.

\subsection*{3.3 Warren’s Ecofeminism}

\textsuperscript{114} Merchant 2001, p. 280.
\textsuperscript{115} Merchant 2001, p. 279.
\textsuperscript{116} Merchant 2001, p. 279.
\textsuperscript{117} Merchant 2001, p. 280.
\textsuperscript{118} Merchant 2001, p. 281.
Warren’s theory on ecofeminism rests on three pillars: conceptual framework, the logic of domination, and the first person narrative. This section will further explain what these terms mean.

**Conceptual frameworks**

Conceptual frameworks are the “glasses” we all use to interpret our surroundings. They are influenced on factors such as sex, race, class, age, nationality, religion, and culture, among other things.¹¹⁹ The assumption that our understanding is based on our conceptual frameworks makes Warren’s theory on ecofeminism highly contextual. Interesting for ecofeminism is the conceptual frameworks that are oppressive. These are defined by Warren as systems that justify and maintain dominance and submission. Distinctive for oppressive conceptual framework are what she calls value hierarchical thinking, value dualism and the logic of domination.

Value hierarchical thinking is the notion about hierarchies where the things high up in the hierarchies are considered to be better or having a greater value than the things below it. Value dualism can be described as the law of the excluding third; that is, it is a thinking that contrasts two opposing aspects where there is nothing to choose from in between. It is a thinking that says if you’re not with us, you’re against us. To give an example of value hierarchical thinking and value dualism, it should theoretically be possible to grade which one of your children is the best or has the greatest value. Warren, however, sees no special problem with either value hierarchical thinking or value dualism in themselves. There are for instance to her some contexts in which some people are actually better than others at doing certain well-defined things. What is problematic for her is to say that some people have a higher or lower moral value based on an arbitrary criteria. The big problem for Warren is how this actually is at work in today’s society. Deciding for that is what she calls the logic of domination.¹²⁰

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The logic of domination is the use of logic or reasoning to justify oppression. It is possible for example to reason that women and nature are inferior to men, but reasoning like that rests on certain assumptions. Warren uses one example of how the logic of domination works. One can say, for example: humans are autonomous and plants and rocks are not; humans are therefore morally superior. While may be logically unproblematic, it still rests on assumptions about the criteria for autonomy and moral status, and the relation between the two. The assumptions that dictate what conclusions logic gives arises from our historical and social background, they are formed by our contexts. According to Warren however, the oppressive assumptions in the logic of domination has its foundations in the twin domination thesis described earlier: for instance, that women are “weak”, “soft”, “irrational”; that nature, like women, is “wild”, “untamed”; and that men are “hard” and “rational,” thereby making men morally superior and giving them the licence to control women and nature according to their causes. This, on the other hand, is only true if one applies the value hierarchical thinking and value dualism that the “male” values are better than the “feminine” ones and there is no third alternative.

So the twin domination defines the premises for the logic of domination, which in turn lays the foundation for the conceptual framework. Our knowledge and even our reasoning when it comes to social matters are as a consequence not objective and unbiased principles after all but shaped by our surroundings. This is a view that is quite opposite to the one of modern science and modern ethics.

First person narrative

Another important part of Warren’s theory is the first person narrative. This perspective follows from a view contrary to modern rights-based and universal ethics. Since for ecofeminists, ethics depends not on universal principles but rather of the relations between people, the first person narrative is seen as an important tool of ethical decision-making. Warren states four reasons why the first person narrative is a fruitful tool for feminism and ecofeminism. Firstly, the first person narrative shows the personal relationships that are usually neglected in modern formal ethics. It is in other words not reduced or constricted to

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121 Warren 2001, p. 325.
the consideration of moral agents, right holders, or interest carriers. For example, one could ask the question: why do you love your children? For me it is hard to answer this by explaining that they are moral agents, they are autonomous, etc. Secondly, the first person narrative can show a lot of different ethical problems in their actual contexts instead of in universal abstract examples. Thirdly, the first person narrative shows how ethics arises in particular situations instead of being something that is imposed from above. And lastly, as the first person narrative is so closely connected with the context, it has an argumentative force that is more convincing than the abstract principles of modern ethics.  

3.4 Conclusions regarding ecofeminist thought

Ecofeminism is highly contextual. It therefore questions ethics as a discipline regarding universal rights, rules and principles. Ethics is something that arises out of situations in everyday life and not something ahistorical or acultural. Experiences personally felt or lived, combined with reflection is more important than rational principles from without. Following from this, nature cannot be graded by in terms of its rationality, sentience or autonomy, whose superiority over other qualities is a construction. Rather, the important thing is our relationship with nature.

This contextual view goes against ethics being something seemingly scientific. In some modern ethics as in modern science, everything is commensurable to each other, that is, everything can be measured with and against each other. But then there can be moral dilemmas that cannot be answered merely by balancing principles and concepts. How do you grade which one of your children you love the most, for instance? Or can one say that two deaths are exactly twice as tragic as a single one? These show that for most people, I would guess, everything isn’t directly commensurable with each other after all, because social values seldom are parametrical. I would further guess that ecofeminism would be against capitalism in this sense since every commodity in capitalism can be exchanged for another. But how do you price feelings? According to ecofeminism, there are no objective social truths since social truths depend a lot on how they are interpreted—in this case, through conceptual frameworks. So what ultimately matters in Ecofeminism are not “hard” facts but “soft” unparametrical

values such as care, love, and friendship—values that put our relationship with others in focus. This also implies that we aren’t uniform atomistic individuals that could be exchanged, measured or balanced with others or in terms of abstract principles. Our relations create our understanding and not the other way around.

However, the prevailing perspective today is the scientific and rationalistic perspective. With this is a paradigm, it is not strange that modern ethics also tends to work similar to modern science. In this thought tradition, not only is there an inherent oppressive structure towards “irrational beings” such as women for instance, or perhaps those that cannot structure their arguments in the pre-fabricated, pre-accepted rationality. In modern science too, there are also clearly “good” and “bad” ways of thinking, and if the thinking isn’t good, then it is definitely bad. There is no in-between. What then decides what is right or wrong, when the framework of reasoning itself is often based on our assumptions and preconceptions that in itself may not be “reasonable”? To ecofeminists and feminists in general, power is the deciding factor for what reasoning prevails. They thus both advocate that the voice of the powerless should be listened to, and that local knowledge by people who actually do things should be considered to be just as good as “expert” and often abstract knowledge from the outside. In fact, they see that the local perspective within the contexts is the important thing to consider in ethical decision-making. I agree, and I’m therefore critical to so-called objective social truths, instead I see ethics as something to do with reflection, experience, and the result of interaction between people.

With a view like this, how then can one ethically decide what’s good or bad? You can’t, at least not without bias. Bias in ecofeminism, however, is not something negative that should be avoided but just a part of what we are and something that should be recognized. Most people in fact have knowledge about what is good or bad in their culture, even if it is not formalized. It is hard to disconnect ethics from these without making it abstract and alien. However, I do agree that modern ethical theories have a use in that they can make you consider other perspectives besides the one you are already carrying. The most important factor of decision making is not better or worse “facts” derived from rational thought, but feeling, and affection, constructed by our experiences. Of course, this kind of ethics does not exclude reasoning, though reasoning here is not seen as superior to intuition, but often merely a way of justifying the morals that we already hold dear. This seems to be in tune with ethics before the medieval and modern ages. Aristotle’s ethics, for example, described moral sense as like hitting a moving target, and that knowing what was good was a matter of balance and being attuned to the good that may be different at different contexts. What may be good to eat
for Milo the wrestler may not be good for a sedentary person to eat. Something similar can be said of moral good. This kind of ethical reasoning makes more sense for me, and probably also according to the post-modern ecofeminism.

Finally, to summarize ecofeminism as I see it, the striking points that I found in ecofeminism are: the use of a power perspective; the importance of looking into the context; and the focus on “soft” values such as love, care and relationships instead of “hard” principles in ethics. These points will be seen throughout my discussion in the next chapters.
Chapter 4

Tourism and nature associated tourism, such as nature based tourism, ecologically sustainable tourism and ecotourism, will in this chapter be analysed from a ecofeminist\textsuperscript{123} standpoint. The analysis will be carried out on a more general theoretical level with a focus on ecotourism.

Ecofeminism, tourism, and ecotourism

The tourist industry today is a giant business, and it is also a expanding one.\textsuperscript{124} At the same time, this means that tourism demands more and more resources, often resources that are extracted on the behalf of the environment and poor people. A lot of this has to do with the fact that tourism is an industry in the first place, where economical interests such as profit can precede the interests of the environment and the people in the third world, where incidentally a lot of the tourists go because it is cheap. On the one hand, it is cheap for the tourists, translating to more profits for the giants of the tourist business who want to lure more tourists to the cheap destinations. On the other hand, it is very seldom cheap for the local population in these countries, who often get a very small share of the profits or other benefits. Instead, the locals absorb more of the negative effects that mass tourism brings, for instance the effects on the environment such as pollution, and the effect on humans such as prostitution, which on the one hand brings cash but on the other hand does so at a high human cost.\textsuperscript{125}

I therefore do not consider the tourism industry to be compatible with regards to cultural or environmental concerns. Arguing from an ecofeminist standpoint, the way tourism works today reflects exactly their critique of western modernity that nature and women—which in the social sense includes other powerless groups—become exploited for profit by those who are already rich. Mass tourism usually creates pollution and waste problems that have to be

\textsuperscript{123} The term "ecofeminist" will from now on mean ecofeminism as I have described it at the conclusion of Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{124} See Chapter 2
\textsuperscript{125} Dielemans 2004 October 24.
borne mostly by the locals in the area. There is also an inherent power structure in the roles of “the tourist” who has the money and power and usually comes from the “enlightened west,” and the role of the simple “exotic” local whose source of income is in pleasing the tourist by giving him an experience he expects from his money. In places with heavy tourism for example, it may not be surprising to find that the prostitution business also thrives. That the environment and humans—often women and other oppressed groups—are used in this fashion in the tourist industry can be seen as an example of the twin domination over women and nature which I have elaborated in the previous chapter.

These environmental and human repercussions may arise because as an industry the tourism business values profit, and in a system where the market rules, money and profit will always be put first. A value such as money that is quantifiable may be hard to combine with the other soft and traditionally feminine values of ecofeminism such as care, love, and friendship, and though one could agree that these human values are more important than sheer profit, this may not always be the case in practice especially in an anonymous industry where the industry giants are physically and hierarchically distanced from the places and the locals. They are also pressured by the competitive market to give what tourists want for their money, which, according to a study by Ving,¹²⁶ are cheap and comfortable trips. In a transaction setting, tourists act as economically sound individuals who their investment to give fruit. Other values, such as environmental concern and human rights are comparably not especially important for the tourism industry in general, who specialize on just that: the creation of more cheap and comfortable trips.

Of course there are alternatives to “regular” tourism. When it comes to highlighting nature and the environment, these types of tourism are of different kinds, called nature-based tourism, environmentally sustainable tourism, and ecotourism.¹²⁷ I will here discuss what each of these are, and try to show that the values of ecofeminism seem most compatible with the last type of nature-based tourism, which is ecotourism.

### 4.1 Nature-based tourism

¹²⁶ Ving is one of the biggest travel companies in Sweden. This is according to Dielmans 2004.
¹²⁷ Those are described more in detail in Chapter 2.
Compatible with ecofeminist thought, from my perspective is\textsuperscript{128} nature-based tourism—which by the way also originated as a reaction to modern society—aims to conserve nature made vulnerable within the tourist destinations. One difference however, is that while nature-based tourism has its foundation in conservatism (both that of nature, and social conservatism), ecofeminism is more radical than conservative, at least in the social sense. Also, nature-based tourism is strictly anthropocentric\textsuperscript{129}, not biocentric\textsuperscript{130} nor ecocentric\textsuperscript{131}. Nature-based tourism for example can include hunting, where it is acceptable to kill animals for pleasure as long as one doesn’t deplete all the animals. This is so because nature-based tourism, being anthropocentric, sees man as having the capability to freely use nature according to his wishes, as long as he does this so that there is enough nature—or in the more modern term, natural resources—for the coming generations for whom he preserves the environment for. In this regard, nature-based tourism resembles the concept of sustainable development more than a true caring gaze upon nature, which would have been more reflective of ecofeminist values.

In short though, I can say that ecofeminism shares the perspective of nature-based tourism when it comes to preserving nature, but they differ greatly in why and how this is to be done. Though environmental preservation is not bad, it may not be good throughout either, since preserving, even in a caring sense, can become patriarchal when you do it from an oppressive contextual framework and within the framework of logical domination which I see is reflected in nature-based tourism’s anthropocentric stance in the use of nature. Nature-based tourism has a power, ruling and management perspective on preservation rather then a spirit of love and partnership with nature.

4.2 Environmentally sustainable tourism

Environmentally sustainable tourism is another kind of tourism related to the environment. Here, one adapts the prevailing social system to include more environmentally friendly aspects. It is also a kind of tourism that rests on the concept of sustainable development, which I will elaborate here in order to later compare it with values I see

\textsuperscript{128} Described more thoroughly at the end of Chapter 3.
\textsuperscript{129} Anthropocentric: the thought that man has the highest moral status.
\textsuperscript{130} Biocentric: the thought that life has an inherent and unbreakable value.
\textsuperscript{131} Ecocentric: the thought that the ecosystem has the highest moral status.
important in ecofeminism. According to the Bruntland report, sustainable development is the development that fulfils today’s needs without compromising the coming generation’s possibilities for fulfilling theirs.\textsuperscript{132} Central in this definition and seemingly one that cannot be compromised, is the concept of development which, in today’s world that rests on a modern economical system, is usually interpreted to be economical development—one that can be measured in terms of the universal and uncontextual GDP. For example, if tourism around natural resources brings in the cash that increases a nation’s GDP, it is to their interest to preserve the environment to keep this economic input running.

That development has to have an “objective” measurement reflects the rational scientific thinking prevalent in modern societies, where anything has to be measured, weighed, and calculated in order to be true. In this framework, though, how can there be room for “soft” values such as love and care, and for that matter, love and care the environment, unless these too can be measured by objective, quantifiable way? True enough, within the framework of sustainable development as it looks today, many attempts have been made to put an economical price on the environment. The discipline of doing so is called environmental economy, whereby putting a market value on the environment and especially scare resources is believed to make people take better care of nature.

For me, this calculating perspective means that values such as love, friendship and care has to step aside in pursuit of rational growth, efficiency and profit. The adaptation of environmental sustainability into the society of today built on money, rationality and other “hard” values, is also to me in line with Martin Hajer’s critique of the concept of sustainable development which says that sustainable development equals ecological modernization.\textsuperscript{133} Lastly, I think that putting a price on the environment at all so that it can be measured with one universal set of “measurements” is incompatible with values I find highlighted in ecofeminism. For one thing, whose set of measurements will be used? As it looks today, it would probably be power founded and maintained by western masculine rationality that will make the decision of what set of measurements should prevail. With these in regard, ecologically sustainable tourism is quite far from ecofeminist-gear tourism. Though it can give positive effects to the environment too, at least on a small scale and during a small period of time, in general and for a longer period of time, ecologically sustainable tourism is to me only the end-of-the-pipe solution. Instead of solving the root of the environmental problems,

\textsuperscript{132} See Bruntland GH 1939.
\textsuperscript{133} Ecological modernization is the view that sustainable development is the adaptation of environmental thought into the framework of today’s modern society, or that you can solve a problem that has arisen by modernity with more and better adapted modernity. See Martin Hajer 1995.
it only helps to reinforce and to legitimize the modern society of today that may itself be the cause of most environmental problems.

4.3 Ecotourism

We have seen that nature-based tourism and environmentally sustainable ecotourism, though both having a concern to preserve nature, are still incompatible with ecofeminist values. Nature-based tourism still holds a dominating eye over nature and subsumes it under a logic of domination. Environmentally sustainable tourism on the other hand, by turning environmental issues into issues of economic development, sees nature merely as a resource that can be measured against other goods and therefore excludes “soft” unparametrical values such as love and care in the discussion. Having said all this, I therefore think that ecotourism is the kind of nature-associated tourism that is easiest to fit with ecofeminism, at least in theory. I will discuss the reasons for this below.

In terms of origin, both ecofeminism and ecotourism both arose during the later half of the 70’s and therefore, as I see it, both situated within a predominantly postmodern tradition. One indication of this in ecotourism is that both of its founders highlighted the need for a holistic and contextual approach—that is, an approach where several different perspectives and contexts are considered and the welfare not only of tourists, but all the stakeholders in the tourism business are considered, including nature and the locals involved in the tourism. The same contextual approach can be said for ecofeminism, which holds that not only the prevailing perspective, but also the perspective of the oppressed, should be considered. In order to account further for differences and similarities between the theory of ecotourism and the theory of ecofeminism, I will here analyse the points which according to me, represent the core of ecotourism. I have translated the first four points directly from Hanneberg’s book “Ekoturism eller Ekoterrorism” as what he says ecotourism is said to be.

1. Ecotourism is gentle and caring towards the nature and culture it uses for tourism.

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134 See Chapter 2.
135 “Ecotourism or Eco-terrorism”, freely translated
2. Ecotourism is contributing to both economic development to the local population, as well as to the conservation of nature at the destination in question.

3. Ecotourism emphasizes knowledge about nature and culture for the ones involved in it.

4. Ecotourism is supposed to increase the public understanding of nature, culture, development, and so on, issues.

5. Ecotourism is based on stakeholders rather than shareholders.

I agree with these points, and they seem to go together with other definitions of ecotourism I’ve found from other sources. There isn’t so much to say about the first point. “Gentle” and “caring” are pretty vague concepts though, and as a whole, this point is very general and more of like a policy in nature. However, that the concepts such as gentleness and care are placed at all in within these points shows that they are given some importance. This, I think is compatible with ecofeminism.

According to the second point, ecotourism is supposed to contribute to two things: (1) economical development for the local populations, and (2) the preservation of nature. Or, as expressed by the Ecotourism Society in another way, ecotourism aims “to provide positive experiences for both visitors and hosts, to provide direct financial benefits for conservation, and to provide financial benefits and empowerment for local people” The focus on economical development can be seen as a flirt with sustainable development as ecological modernization. But when this economical development, as in this case, is primarily seen for the benefit of the local population, I rather see it as an expression that the local population, actual human beings, are to be shown consideration and will be given the opportunity to develop within the frame of the prevailing economic system. No matter what one thinks about this system, it is the system we live in and therefore a context that we can’t disregard. Also, although this consideration would be measured in monetary terms, I find it good that it is not only the conservation of the “natural” environment for rich westerners that ecotourism aims for.

To the third and fourth points: ecotourism is said to be knowledge tourism, where public understanding is supposed to increase with regards to nature and the culture of those living in it. Knowledge, however, seems to be described as something neutral. As I see it, this points to

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137 Hanneberg 1996; The International Ecotourism Society website.
138 The International Ecotourism Society website.
that ecotourism lacks the power-, class-, and gender perspectives ecofeminism has, and that knowledge for ecotourism is knowledge in the “unbiased” sense following the enlightenment tradition. On the other hand, it might help to ask whose understanding and whose knowledge we are talking about. Something else that points to the lack of power-, class-, and gender perspectives in ecotourism is that culture and nature are mentioned, but not women or the oppressed. As I see it, where all humans today aren’t liberally equal, women and the oppressed should be granted a bigger place because they are groups that are already marginalized and therefore should be shown greater consideration to create a truly equal society.

Fifth: the focus on stakeholders instead of shareholders in ecotourism shows that there might be some power perspective at play, although an indirect one. Problematic here is, who are the stakeholders? The local population? The tourists? With the stakeholders perspective, it is at least not only the investors. I think that if one were to adopt an ecofeminist stance though, the main stakeholders would probably be the locals who are there and experience ecotourism first hand and in first person. It is not only the people with the power (that is, money) that are going to have their way here, but rather the people who are actually involved in the tourism, living in the nature, and have experience and not only abstract knowledge about what ecotourism should be based on. This stakeholder perspective can probably lead to other, more “soft” ecofeminist values getting room, and not only “hard” values such as money.

Still, more important than who the stakeholders are, is what perspective these people have. Do they have the conquering gaze, or the caring eye? Is nature to be dominated and tamed to the subject of man, or is nature a partner? In short, is the logical domination to prevail in the stakeholders’ conceptual framework? Or will the stakeholders have ecofeminist perspective of love, care and friendship?

To sum this up, one can say the following about the similarities and differences between ecotourism and ecofeminism.

**Similarities between ecotourism and ecofeminism**

1. Ecotourism and ecofeminism both have room for different perspectives and contexts. In ecotourism, it is not only the experts that make universal guidelines that makes all the decisions, instead, a lot of decision making is up to the people that actually work with the issues first hand, in the different cases. The solution in both
Ecotourism and ecofeminism is not universal, abstract and expert, but rather something that is created socially at a grass root level, in the different situations or contexts where they appear.

2. None of them are especially biocentric, ecocentric or –centric in any direction, but seems to consider most things to be about weighing and balancing things against each other in the situations at hand, rather then assuming a abstract and principle based position from start. As ecofeminism, ecotourism doses not put focus on abstract and universal principles but rather sees knowledge as something that arises as a process between people in different situations. Different situations create different kinds of knowledge.

3. The definitions in ecotourism are not strict or universal, which make room for “soft” values such as love and care, etc. Instead of formal and abstract principles, ecotourism and ecofeminism, takes love, care etc. into account. Not only that, they are also given a role just as central as rational thought. It’s hard as humans to disregard from human emotions and feelings. I would say that these precede rationality, and that rationality often merely is rationalisations of one’s own convictions. For me, this is also true for ecofeminism, where bias is acknowledged as a part we can’t disregard or hide behind a screen of rationality.

**Differences between ecotourism and ecofeminism**

1. Ecofeminism has a clear class- and gender perspective, where societies in the world is built upon oppressive structures, oppressive conceptual frameworks is one example of those. In an ecofeminist ecotourism, these structures should be seen as the problem. Ecotourism lacks this, even if potentially less influential groups such as the local population are given special recognition.

2. Ecotourism also seems to have a liberal view of equality. That is, they assume that people today are more or less equal and no special measures are required to help oppressed groups in order to make society more equal. On the other hand, ecofeminists, and feminists in general, see the world as patriarchal and imbalanced, for them equal measures only reinforce inequality.
As an interesting side note when it comes to the history of ecotourism is firstly, that its founding fathers is just that: men. Secondly, between the two founders of ecotourism, there is today different opinions in who was first with the concept of ecotourism. This can seem to be a bit ridiculous one carrying a postmodern perspective on knowledge such as ecofeminism. With a most post-modern view, it is uninteresting who the originator or the “father” of the idea is, since knowledge for is not primarily produced by single atomistic individuals but created in the society and the context in which they lived. Ecotourism was probably a product of the milieu.

So far, ecotourism seems to be more compatible with ecofeminist thought than any of the other forms of tourism associated with nature. They seem to be compatible in theory at least, but how is it in practice? This question will be answered more thoroughly in the following chapters, in which I will illustrate how it can look when ecotourism is implemented on a national and local level. But already here at this general level, I think that it is worth mentioning a few of those problems ecotourism stand before. As mentioned earlier, in a society where the market dictates the terms, the tourists decide how tourism will look. According to Niklas Zhovnartsuk at Ving, there are a lot of criteria that has to be fulfilled for the tourists: good roads, safety, nice beaches, etc. But the most important thing of them all is that it has to be cheap. That is, cheap for the tourists; if it is expensive for the local population, or the environment is of less importance. The consequence for the tourist destination in question and its local population always comes second. This seems ominous for ecotourism, and can be a part in explaining why ecotourism is such a small part of tourism in general. The big travel companies on the other hand, have understood the value of being able to sell tourism with “a good conscience”. Unfortunately, this leads to that these companies often and wrongly call all their nature-associated tourism as ecotourism. This kind of green labelling leads to a watered-down concept of ecotourism.

4.4 Conclusion

139 Dielemans 2004 October 24.
140 Dielemans 2004 October 24.
Traditional mass tourism, while profitable for the tourism companies, gives adverse effects on nature, as well as on people, predominantly people with small means in development countries. From an ecofeminist perspective, this can be seen an example of the twin domination thesis at work, where the exploitation of nature and women occur simultaneously. In the case of tourism, not only does the flood of tourists leave locals with the problems of pollution and waste management; it can also lead to other problems associated with tourism such as prostitution, which victimizes the women of poor local populations.

In traditional tourism, the market and the pursuit of profit, dictates the terms. The factor that rules the travel market is the price. Tourists, as any other economically prudent individuals in the modern western world, want as much from their invested money as possible. This can be seen as an expression of modernity, where cold hard rationality, measured in well-defined parameters such as money dictates the terms. Within this focus on rationality lie structures that oppress nature as well as humans. That is, in a system where profit comes first, environmental concerns, human rights, and other soft values that have no conversion into the marker system, have to step aside. In this example of tourism, humans and nature can be exploited so that rich westerners can travel cheap and get the experience they paid for at the same time, so that travel companies can make a bigger profit.

What about the alternatives to this kind of tourism then? Nature-based tourism, like ecofeminism, has as a goal to conserve nature, though this conservatism is highly anthropocentric, where man are the masters of nature. This represents a patriarchal perspective and one of domination which is not condoned in ecofeminism. Values such as partnership, relationships and love, is more important to ecofeminism than dominance, hierarchy, and control. Ecologically sustainable tourism on the other hand rests on the concept of sustainable development which is thought to change the society from within to incorporate more environmentally sustainable thought. Since ecofeminim sees the prevailing social system as the cause of the domination over nature and women, I would guess that they would have wanted a more revolutionary change of the foundations, of conceptual frameworks of this modern social system, instead of adapting it. I also think that they would see sustainable development in our society as ecological modernization.

About ecotourism and ecofeminism, some similarities they share is that they are both contextually orientated, and inclusive for many different perspectives. Neither are they centric in any way, and instead of ranking anything by which one has the highest value, they instead weigh and balance pros and cons depending on contexts. Without strict universal and overarching principles, they both have room for “soft” values such as love and care.
Ecofeminism differs from ecotourism though, in the sense that ecofeminism carries a power perspective based on class and gender that ecotourism lacks. Still ecotourism is the form of nature-associated tourism that is, at least in theory, closest to ecofeminism.

A problem arises, however, when ecotourism goes from theory to practice. In a market system where tourists favor cheap trips, it’s not strange that ecotourism constitute such a small part of the tourist market. On top of this, many travel companies misuse the concept of ecotourism, and call all their nature associated tourism as ecotourism to be able to offer trips to customers with sensitive consciences.
Chapter 5

Ecofeminism will in this chapter be applied to ecotourism, as it is presented in policies and guidelines on a more national governmental level in the Philippines. The analysis will focus on key terms and discourses found in these.

Ecofeminism and ecotourism in the Philippines

The previous chapter dealt with how tourism in general is not compatible with the values found in ecofeminism, but that alternative forms of tourism centered around nature may have some of these values. Among them, ecotourism seemed the most compatible with the value of care, at least in theory. In this chapter I will discuss how ecotourism could be in practice, using the Philippines as an example. In the next chapter I will narrow it down further whale shark ecotourism in Donsol, Philippines.

The Philippines is economically a poor country, but on the other hand it is a country rich in nature. Partly because of this, tourism has become a promising source of money for the Philippines, and stands for a significant part of the national income. Understandably, this has translated to a big interest from the government to further develop tourism and make the Philippines a big tourist destination in the stiff Southeast Asian competition. The Philippines is indeed being marketed as a tourist destination that features predominantly wild and untouched nature of high mountains and white beaches. That a country such as this so rich in nature would see ecotourism as a good economic alternative is in this sense not strange. However, it would be interesting to see how such an ecotourism would look like. Especially since the spirit of ecotourism rests on values that are different from those prioritized by the modern state and government, it will be interesting to see how the government in this case chooses to use ecotourism nationally.

In order to have a closer look on how the concept of ecotourism is seen at the national governmental level, it can be worthwhile to see this concept’s historical origins in the Philippines. When it comes to national environmental projects, sustainable development

141 CIA World Factbook.
142 See Chapter 2
seems to have been the core since 1992.\textsuperscript{143} The concept of sustainable development also came to be the core of the Filipino Tourism Masterplan (TMP) which was created by the Department of Tourism (DOT) with the help of the United Nations Development Program (UNDP). This TMP, launched also in 1992, was one of the earliest attempts of implementing environmental or sustainable thinking in Filipino governmental planning.\textsuperscript{144} This shows that in the beginning, ecotourism was seen in the Philippines as a means to carry out sustainable development within tourism.

**5.1 From local independent initiatives to a national affair**

The first definition of ecotourism itself came to the Philippines in 1994, during a workshop on that subject. Here, ecotourism came to be outrightly defined again in terms of sustainable development.\textsuperscript{145} Though the definition also had in addition to this social and economical advantages for culture and nature, sustainable development seemed the priority—something that I would call sustainable tourism with a touch of ecotourism. At any case, this definition came to be the foundation and the inspiration of the succeeding ecotourism initiatives by the local government units (LGUs), NGOs and local communities in the Philippines. Ecotourism became a buzzword when ecotourism was under its way in the small local level. Eventually, the issue of ecotourism also became more and more popular as well as more mainstream. Feeling the popular winds of the time, then president Joseph Estrada decreed Executive Order 111,\textsuperscript{146} which echoes the result of the 1994 workshop on ecotourism. The order led to the creation of the National Ecotourism Development Council (NEDC), whose role was to structure the previously small, low-budget and unstructured local ecotourism projects in the country.\textsuperscript{147}

Before the Executive Order 111, the work with ecotourism was already being implemented in the Philippines, though these were in the form of local independent initiatives with less strict and more improvised guidelines from the 1994 workshop. This is to me in line with how ecofeminists would have wanted it. Later on, however, those with power—in this case the national government—decided to start structuring and controlling ecotourism in

\textsuperscript{143} Cruz 2003, pp. 11-12.
\textsuperscript{144} Andrada 2002, p 168.
\textsuperscript{145} More of this on Chapter 2. See also Alejandrino 2002, p. 176.
\textsuperscript{146} An Executive Order is not a law but works as a recommendation from the President.
\textsuperscript{147} Andrada 2002, p. 169.
order for it to become something formal and something which could be worked on with the available theoretical tools of the prevailing modern thought. In other words, this led to the involvement of the universities in the ecotourism planning. The University of the Philippines, a public-owned university with campuses around the Philippines, became formally involved in finding out how to implement ecotourism projects in the Philippines. For me, this formalization is an important step. The chance for ecotourism in the Philippines to be compatible with ecofeminist thought—or for that matter, the spirit of ecotourism itself—now disappeared. I will explain how this is so below.

First of all, the formalization process bureaucratized ecotourism and slanted it away from a would-be perspective of care. This can be seen reflected in the aims of ecotourism that were eventually formulated. The systematic scientific work with ecotourism in the Philippines, overseen by leaders the government and undergone by university academicians, eventually led to the first National Ecotourism Congress in November of 1999, where the agenda was to discuss two main issues: (1) the development of a national ecotourism policy and (2) how to get more foreign tourists to the country. The second goal of luring more foreign tourists into the country seems to me motivated by the money these tourists would bring and spend within the country. As stated earlier, money does not have to be something inherently bad when it comes to ecotourism, when there is room to balance economy and ecology and if it benefits the local population. However, even if that were to be the case, the statement of goals of the congress as such shows what central meaning money had for them. Simply looking at the two central goals “development of a national ecotourism policy and how to get more foreign tourists to the country,” can give one a sense that getting more tourists, and therefore profit, is given as much priority as the whole task of developing a national ecotourism policy.

I think that it is a bit off-balance that economic profit is given such a big and special role. Within the contextual tradition of ecotourism, economic profit should only be but one among many considerations but not the most important one. Also, adopting an ecofeminist view that shares the contextual perspective of ecotourism, this to me gives a less favourable image of what ecotourism came to be at a national level in the Philippines. The focus of balancing ecotourism and the maximization of profit can be seen as an expression of ecological modernization where the relation between environment and economical development is considered to be unproblematic. For example, packing more foreign tourists

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and tourist infrastructure to fragile natural environments is not seen as problematic at all, but perhaps even a financial solution to the social and environmental problems in the area. Within a market system as this, modernity and economical development is hailed as the solution instead of also being the cause of environmental problems. This is a perspective which totally differs from the ecofeminist one, where modernity is the problem and a revolutionary change of its structures is the solution.

The definition adopted by the same ecotourism congress also thinly masks the fact that what the bureaucrats are interested at is sustainable development rather than caring. What ecotourism was supposed to be was defined as:

A form of sustainable tourism within given natural and/or cultural area where community participation, conservation and management of biodiversity, respect for culture and indigenous knowledge systems and practises, environmental education and ethics as well as economic benefits are fostered and pursued for the enrichment of host communities and satisfaction of visitors.150

According to me, it seems that the congress’ understanding of ecotourism is merely one of sustainable tourism, probably with regards to sustainable development. It is favourable that they also want to respect the local culture and biodiversity, which would be unproblematic from an ecofeminist point of view. However, the primary idea is still sustainability, through which the end goal of profit can be had over a longer period of time. It is, as I would say it once again, merely sustainable development with a touch of ecotourism. As I said, the other conditions of the definition—that of community participation, respect for indigenous knowledge and environmental ethics—seem commendable and even compatible with ecofeminism. Even so, when we come to the spirit of the definition—that of sustainable development as ecological modernization—it is the very opposite of what ecofeminists would like ecotourism to be. Whereas ecofeminists are postmodern and radical in that they see modernity as the root of environmental concerns, sustainable development as ecological modernization perpetuates modernity as the solution. In this case, standardized rules for ecotourism which they see to be the “correct” way of dealing with the problems arising in tourism, is seen as the way out of economic slump.

5.2 Reinforcement that ecotourism means sustainable development

This understanding of ecotourism, however, was further reinforced. Soon after the first Ecotourism Congress in the Philippines, the National Filipino Congress voted for a proposal which meant that the government would have an even more influential role in the work with controlling, developing, and marketing ecotourism anchored in the values of sustainable development.\(^{151}\) This eventually meant a reinforcement of the thought that ecotourism actually means sustainable development. This decision also came to play an important role when the concept of ecotourism were to be defined once again at the second National Ecotourism Congress. The old definition of ecotourism from the first congress was maintained, but was changed to include the following:

- An ecosystem approach to development, to sustain and improve sustainability of biodiversity and other natural resources.
- A people centred approach to development, based on access to resources and community based management.
- A capacity development approach to enhancing the capacity of society and public systems in particular to balance the short and long term, the market and society.\(^{152}\)

The first point focuses on an “ecosystem approach to development,” which may sound favourable but is nevertheless vague. Something I reacted on, however, was the insertion of the word “natural resources” to this new definition. In my experience, the word natural resources is usually found in texts that are written from the perspective of ecological modernization where nature is seen strictly as a resource. Seeing nature as a resource to be used up is not especially compatible with the ecofeminist perspective of nature as friend and partner. On the contrary, to be a resource is to be controlled and dominated by others in order to achieve the user’s ends. Even if this can happen in a beneficial way, I think that this is an expression of a dominating and patriarchal view of nature, one where nature is subjugated by

\(^{151}\) The Congress stated that “...the State shall pursue, promote, manage, and develop ecotourism anchored on sustainable development through environmental management and education, community empowerment, cultural enrichment and entrepreneurship to improve the quality of life for the present and future generations” See Alejandrino 2002, p. 177.

\(^{152}\) Terence 2002 April 25, in the United Nations Development Program website.
man for his sake, for whatever purpose he chooses. This becomes even clearer on the second point of the definition, where it is made explicit that the development is to be managed through a human-centred approach. Once again, the definition centers on resources and their management, even if management in this case can be community based. I still think that this is questionable though, from an ecofeminist standpoint. I also think that this is considerably closer to ecologically sustainable tourism than it is to ecotourism.

In the third point of the new definition, development is mentioned once again, this time in the sense that it will improve the capacity for society and the public systems to balance between “short and long term, the market and society”. The act of weighing and balancing different values against each other sounds compatible with a contextual ecofeminist point of view. However, are these abilities of weighing and balancing something that can be improved in society or through public systems? If we take a look, it is not so the society in general improves this ability. Rather, in a modern tradition and in a modern hierarchical state as the one this policy is created in, it is probably not hard to imagine that it is the government and its systems that are supposed to do the weighing and the later decision-making. In this light, improving their ability to weigh falls pretty naturally. The top-down and vertical hierarchal perspective this implies, though, is to me not compatible with ecofeminism, which criticizes such modern hierarchical structures and favors intiative coming from the grassroots and people who actually work with the problem, instead of from anonymous people from above. For ecofeminists, what is important are not the decisions from higher authority, but rather personal experience and reflection from those who are involved in the context in question. The thought that the act of balancing in order to make decisions should lie in the “public system” or the anonymous “society” is seldom the case anyway. Are there institutions then going to decide how the weighing or balancing is to go about, instead of the ones who work with the issue on the spot?

As I’ve discussed above, historically and when it comes to policy, ecotourism has tended to be sustainable development when it is implemented on a national level in the Philippines. When the principles of ecotourism are be used in order to mesh and work together with the other prevailing principles in the society, it is probably easiest and most plausible to interpret ecotourism as sustainable development, as it happened here. That ecofeminist or “soft” values as love and care have to step aside, or are not considered at all in contrast to the more “rational” and mainstream structures of modern society such as hierarchy and resource management, is then not so strange.
The fitting of ecotourism into modern structures can finally be seen in a report by the Philippine APEC Study Center Network at the Diliman campus of University of the Philippines. In the report, “Towards Sustainable Tourism Development: In the Philippines and other Asean Countries: An Examination of Programs and Practices of National Tourism Organizations,” they have written a list of the common elements that can be found in the work of implementing ecotourism in the Philippines, Malaysia, and Singapore. Out of the 15 points which to me point to the same direction, I will here show five of special interest to me:

- standardized systems and procedures
- establishment of institutional mechanists for implementation
- establishment of policies, guidelines and standards for human resource development, networking and resource mobilization
- identification and development of sites for ecotourism

Just look at the words: standardized, systems, procedures, institutional mechanists, policies, guidelines, human resource development, resource mobilization, development of sites, and ecotourism products. These words to me strongly reflect a modern mechanical, hierarchical and capitalistic rationality rather than a perspective of caring and gentle partnership with nature, which would have been more compatible with ecofeminist thought and also what ecotourism is supposed to be. To even say that the five points above are elements of ecotourism takes a lot of favourable interpretation for me, for they seem now so removed from the definition of ecotourism from the earlier chapter, that instead used words such as: gentle and caring, conservation of nature, involvement, public understanding of issues, and stakeholders. These concepts have instead now been replaced by points that look as if they fit more into a system of capitalism rather than ecotourism. After reading these points, it became even more evident to me that ecotourism on a national level in the Philippines has come to mean sustainable development (how to lure more tourists over a
longer period of time through the management of the natural resources) and that sustainable development points to a perspective of ecological modernization (that social and environmental problems can be solved through modernization and implementation of structures from above). From an ecofeminist perspective though, I do not find it so strange that the government and the academia—-institutions with power in today’s society—-represent such the modern perspective which according to ecofeminists, eventually lead to the twin domination over nature and women.

Is there anything more that shows that the issue looks like this in the Philippines? The answer to this question is easier to find at a local level in a concrete case. I will in the next chapter use whale shark ecotourism in Donsol to answer this.

5.4 Conclusion

Policies regarding tourism on a national level in the Philippines have historically been developed within the frame of sustainable development. The ecotourism came to be a part of this framework is not strange. I’m sceptical, towards the idea of defining ecotourism as sustainable development.

When the concept of ecotourism in the Philippines was introduced in the 1994 workshop, it led to that a number of local ecotourism projects were launched in the country. The government saw that ecotourism was popular and decided to get some political points from advocating it themselves. In the process of this, they also squeezed ecotourism into the forms of modernity, by organize and structuring the work around it.

Even if the wording of ecotourism definitions and policies introduced some ecofeminist values in Philippine national tourism, one can clearly see that in general, the spirit of the policies and the methods prescribed to implement ecotourism are still those of modern rational thought. Words like “natural resources, procedures, guidelines, standardized” etc. are used and methods like “capacity development of society and public systems” are advocated. Another thing that clashes with ecofeminism, and probably ecotourism as well is the strong focus on economical development, which seems to be just as important to the national government as the formulation of an ecotourism policy itself. This points to the ultimate interest of ecotourism in the Philippines, which is actually sustainable development and ecological modernization. This means: conserving the culture and nature so that it can
continue to be advertised and serve a resource for the tourism business, which will in turn rake in the funds to solve existing and eventual problems. Therefore, even if the definitions of ecotourism as they is used in the Philippines do include some favourable clauses that was not there in conventional tourism, I think that for “real” ecotourism to happen, a more revolutionary change of the conceptual frameworks in society is needed. To try to insert more environmental and cultural concerns into the society without changing its core values is only an “end of the pipe solution” that masks the root of the problem with nice-sounding words and good intentions.
Chapter 6

In this chapter the whale shark ecotourism in Donsol will be analyzed from an ecofeminist perspective. This is a way to bring the issue of ecotourism and ecofeminism “down to earth”.

Ecofeminism & Whale shark Ecotourism in Donsol

A number of small societies in the Philippines have long hunted whale sharks using traditional methods. According to a study from WWF-Philippines and Siliman University, there have been five whale shark-hunting villages that hunted whale sharks for local consumption. In a study from 1996-1997, this number has increased to 15 villages that were catching roughly 26 whale sharks each per year. This was a result of the increasing demand for whale shark meat from countries such as Japan, Hong Kong, Taiwan, and Singapore.156 This increasing demand also brought more industrialized fishing methods. Instead of fishing for local need, one was now fishing for profit, and there were a lot of people who wanted a part of it. Yet, while the new fishing efforts at first led to increased whale shark captures, their numbers soon declined.

It is likely that different ecofeminists will have different perspectives on the traditional, small-scale whale shark hunting. Karen Warren, who sees the relations between humans and nature as a partnership, will probably see the hunting of whale shark for consumption in slightly more negative light than Carolyn Merchant. Although Merchant also sees nature as a partner, she has more focus on nature as an ecosystem. With this latter perspective, I think this form of subsistence hunting which carries a low environmental impact and therefore more adapted to ecosystem, would be more acceptable than the hunting for profit which followed.157 The evolution of whale shark hunting from more traditional to commercial means can be seen as an expression of modernity. Whale sharks went from consumption to commodity—a universal commodity that freely could be exchanged for any other commodity such as money.

156 WWF-Philippines website. Whale Shark Fishing in the Philippines.
This perspective of whale shark as a commodity really is incompatible with the ecofeminist perspective, since the very notion of commodity carries with it a perspective of universal and interchangeable values, which are definitely not the values of love and friendship but rather of dominance and profit.

### 6.1 Whale shark ecotourism as a solution to hunting and tourism

How whale sharks eventually came to be seen as ecotourism attraction began in 1998, when an unusually big plankton boom outside the river of Donsol led to the aggregation of whale sharks in unusual numbers. Within the framework and spirit given by the Philippine government in their TMP, the Sorsogon Provincial Tourism Council soon realized the potential for Donsol (a town in the province of Sorsogon), to become an ecotourism destination. This led to the active marketing of Donsol as an ecotourism destination. Ironically, another result of this was that more commercial hunters began to realize that Donsol was rich in whale sharks, as they were almost out of whale sharks to catch in other places. Thus, besides the fact that whale sharks were now also hunted in Donsol—something that hasn’t happened before the plankton boom—the new tourism also created a host of new problems. Donsol was unprepared for the number of tourists, and the whale shark tours were in the beginning improvised by local fishermen. This led to increased disturbance of the sensitive animals during their main feeding season. There are even reports that whale sharks were accidentally but routinely hit and run over by tourist boats, which explains why one can see some whale sharks with propeller gashes on their bodies even today. In other words, the whale shark tourism in Donsol was not in tune with the ecofeminist attitudes of partnership or friendship, but rather adopted the attitude of a conqueror. The whale sharks were to be viewed as an attraction at any price, without any consideration to the animals’ life or feeding habits. Besides the already negative effect of tourism—which you hardly even can call nature-based tourism—the fishing of whale sharks also continued.

The local government unit (LGU) felt that they had to do something about this resulting mess, and invited WWF-Philippines to Donsol. The LGU also formulated a local ordinance,

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158 Donsol is the name of the river as well as the village situated near it.
though with no legal power, that the hunting of whale sharks should be stopped. With a less favourable interpretation, one can see that this happened because the LGU realized the value of the whale sharks as long-term cash machines, with all the new tourists pouring into the previously quiet community. In other words, it could be viewed as sustainable development or even sustainable exploitation, which in ecological modernization aren’t far from each other. At any case, with no legal power, the local ordinance had no effect and the whale shark hunting continued.

Interestingly, it was only when media explicitly captured the killing of six whale sharks outside the coast of Donsol that people started to react and action was eventually taken by the national government.\(^\text{162}\) The gruesome images of the whale shark killings led to strong reactions throughout the Philippines, which were so strong that the national government was pressured to quickly issue the Fisheries Administrative Order 193 (FAO 193) in the March of 1998, which explicitly forbade all the hunting of whale sharks. With this, the whale shark hunting stopped.\(^\text{163}\) That it was this explicit display of the killing of the six whale sharks that brought a change shows some of the strengths in this kind of message. Even if the images aren’t ecofeminist first-person narratives, the strengths of it lies in the same thing: messages as these speak directly to our feelings and our heart—something that according to ecofeminists should be granted a greater recognition than it gets in today’s society. Abstract and rational considerations alone would probably not have brought a change so abrupt.

However, even when the hunting and killing of whale sharks did stop, the problems which tourism has brought still remained. To counter this, WWF-Philippines launched the Donsol Butanding\(^\text{164}\) Ecotourism Management Plan later that same year.\(^\text{165}\) According to this plan, the LGU had the responsibility to manage ecotourism in the area. They also provided guidelines to tourists since all previous tourism there was improvised and impromptu. With the formulation of the guidelines, all the whale shark tourists from then on had to register to the Donsol Visitors Office, with a fee of 2 USD for Filipinos and 6 USD for foreigners. After registration, the visitors will also be given information about whale sharks, including a film where the rules of whale shark interaction are described. It is only after this that the visitors can be brought out in small boats, with the maximum of nine passengers each including a Butanding Interaction Office (BIO) and a spotter. Below are additional compulsory procedures that have been put together by the WWF-Philippines:

\(^{162}\) Quiros 2005, p. 43.
\(^{163}\) Alava and Yaptinchay 2000.
\(^{164}\) Butanding is the Filipino word for whale shark.
\(^{165}\) Alava and Yaptinchay 2000.
1. Do not touch or ride the whale shark.
2. Do not restrict the movement of the shark or impede its natural path.
3. The recommended distance from the whale shark is three meters from the head or body and four meters from the tail.
4. Do not take flash photography.
5. Do not use scuba, scooters, jet-skis or any other motorized underwater propulsion.
6. A maximum of six swimmers per shark is allowed.
7. There must only one boat per whale shark.  

6.3 New rules, but the same attitude

I am of the opinion that the above guidelines are commendable. They are promising in an ecofeminist perspective as they also fulfil Hanneberg’s criteria for ecotourism, such as that it emphasizes knowledge about the nature and culture, and that it considers stakeholders which in this case, can be interpreted as the animals themselves. The plan seems like a balance of care and also gives the local community a chance for economic growth. Now to the interesting question of how it is in practice. Are the rules followed? According to a study by Angela Quiros published by Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, the answer is no. Take first rule number 3 on the prescribed distance for whale shark viewing. This prescribed distance is seldom respected, one of the main reasons being that at that distance, the tourists would not see any whale shark in the murky plankton-rich water outside Donsol. Quiros reported that she often saw the BIOs take the tourists within a meter from the whale sharks. Rule number 1, which says that whale sharks couldn’t be touched, is also sometimes broken. Out of 776 observations made by Quiros, she observed 99 cases where the BIOs themselves touched or even rode on the whale shark. Rules 6 and 7 are also frequently broken, according to Quiros, especially when whale sharks are scarce. It is then that one can

166 The WWF-Philippines’ guidelines for proper whale shark interaction could be seen at http://crmsd.wwf.org.ph/donsol/main.php?key=guide. This webpage, however, has ceased to exist, but similar guidelines for whale shark interaction (although not specifically for the Donsol) can be found at the Shark Trust Whale Shark Project website, under Code of conduct, http://www.whalesharkproject.org/
often see several boats flocked around a single whale shark, with a lot of tourists in the water eager to get a better view.\textsuperscript{167}

Four out of seven, or over half of the rules stipulated by WWF-Philippines are regularly broken. This shows the weaknesses of formal and sometimes abstract guidelines when they are not backed up by any concrete repercussions, which they aren’t in this case. The weak implementation of guidelines makes the attitude of the tourists as well as the arrangers decisive for how ecotourism will look like. Are the tourists going there as friends or conquerors? Are the arrangers themselves partners of the whale sharks, or are the whale sharks only a means towards another end, such as money? The non-compliance of the rules show that sometimes, direction and control from above do not always work, especially when these rules are not strictly enforced. Most importantly, in order for the rules to be followed, they have to be internalized in the tourists as well as in the arrangers. In other words, people need to feel that the rules are right, and understand the reasons behind them. When that happens, I think that the ecotourism on ecofeminist terms—ecotourism that is more than just a name or a green label—will be possible in Donsol. I also think that one, through the ecofeminist perspective and the first-person narrative, has a greater chance of achieving this kind of ecotourism than with the traditional top-to-bottom system with only formal rules. Unfortunately, I also think that the chance for an ecofeminist perspective in today’s modern society is small. To talk personally and in terms of feelings shouldn’t be underestimated though, as in how whale shark killings were stopped by engaging people’s emotions.

6.3 The economic side of the whale shark tourism

Something that has a big influence in today’s society in comparison, however, is the economy, and this has shaped the face of ecotourism in Donsol more than the WWF-Philippines guidelines of whale shark interaction. In 2005, approximately 7,000 tourists visited Donsol. The whale shark tourism created around 300 jobs in the area, including taxi services, hotels, and other surrounding services. The total income from whale shark ecotourism during the six to eight month season also approximated to 623,000 USD\textsuperscript{168} To put

\textsuperscript{167} Quiros 2005, p. 45.
\textsuperscript{168} Biota Filipina 2006 January, p. 6.
this into perspective, it can be compared to whale shark ecotourism in Nigaloo Reef in Australia, which yearly gives around 18 million AUD.\textsuperscript{169}

It seems to me that WWF-Philippines is implying that the whale shark ecotourism in Donsol should be more profitable than it is, and they have a business plan. The plan takes into account that only 20\% of the tourism-related income in Donsol today stay in hands of the local population.\textsuperscript{170} In response, the business plan will “…will help to prevent economic leaks locally by identifying and supporting more community-based enterprises.”\textsuperscript{171} This is all well, and also reflects Hanneberg’s ideal of ecotourism that the economic development must benefit the local population and help to conserve the nature in the destination in question. However, the development study of this business plan by WWF-Philippines also says that the lower than expected profit in Donsol’s ecotourism can be attributed to the lack of major tourist infrastructure in the area. More expansion is the key to more profit, and more hotels and restaurants are needed in the area. My question is: why can’t the support of existing community-based enterprises be enough? I am hesitant to the infrastructure expansion for a number of reasons:

First, the money in question comes from tourists, and the expansion is in view of bringing more of these tourists to the area. Wouldn’t it be better to redistribute the incomes of today instead, so they benefit to the local population to a higher degree? Already today, there is a big pressure on the whale sharks in Donsol. Increasing the number of tourists and infrastructure will likely only aggravate these pressures, as well as increase pollution and waste. On the other hand, if one has a stance of ecological modernization, all this means little in comparison to economical development and increased profits for a poor community, which may even eventually “solve” the environmental problems it brought upon itself. The exploitation of the whale sharks which here can be seen as sustainable development’s “natural resources” is perhaps not surprising under this point of view. Surprising though is that WWF-Philippines represents such a perspective, and on top of that, calls this ecotourism. Though their intentions are likely to be good, the solution that they suggest to increase infrastructure to increase profit for the locals for me is nothing but ecological modernization, where the project of modernity and economical development comes first and all other things come second, regardless if environmental concern is probably placed higher in such a list.

\textsuperscript{169} Australian Dollars.
\textsuperscript{170} Ordóñez 2005 September 27.
\textsuperscript{171} Ordóñez 2005 September 27.
Secondly, another ironic thing is that the striving for economical development through tourism has in Donsol led to increased pressure on the environment instead of people “caring” for the resource, which was likely the LGU’s aim when they put pressure to ban whale shark hunting, and also the aim of WWF-Philippines when they came up with ecotourism guidelines. Of course, attempts are made to counter the negative effects of the whale shark ecotourism, but what about the sources of these problems? Before ecotourism in Donsol, whale sharks in that area were left alone in peace. So, ecotourism there, even if one tries to enhance it, has definitely brought environmental problems there that didn’t exist before.

I therefore see it that the whale shark ecotourism in Donsol is not an ecofeminist-friendly tourism in practice, although it does adopt perspectives of care, respect and local knowledge in theory. When it comes to trying to insert these perspectives into the existing modern context and hierarchical framework though, they become diluted and what could be a promise ecotourism becomes only an extension of modern economical rationality. The financial part of ecotourism then supersedes caring part, and the environment becomes seen as mainly as a commodity, a “natural resource” that can be continuously exploited for a longer time. A more accurate way of describing these attempts would be sustainable exploitation, where nature can be exploited, up to a certain limit. In this case, the limit is set primarily by hard rational economic considerations, or how much profit can be projected over time. The guiding principles for such a tourism become not friendship or love, but instead dominance over nature that one can freely can use for economic profit. If you apply the twin domination thesis on this, the oppressive perspective on nature is only one side of the coin. The other side is a view that justifies and leads to the oppression of women and other marginalized groups, or people without power in society. These people, as well as nature, have historically been exploited by the modern capitalist society for profit. With this in regard, I wouldn’t be surprised if the expansion of tourist infrastructure in Donsol would lead to inequality between those who own the infrastructure and those who do not, and also lead to extensive expansion of prostitution.

6.4 Conclusion

Whale sharks have traditionally been hunted in small numbers by a few villages in the Philippines. When outside demand for whale shark meat increased, the hunting intensified
and expanded, as a consequence more whale sharks were captured, at least at start, soon though, the number of whale sharks demised. Even if ecofeminist scholars might disagree on the matter of the traditional hunting for local consumption, I from an ecofeminist standpoint disagree strongly against the hunting of whale sharks for export, and money. Instead of the traditional hunting for consumption, whale sharks here turned into a resource, which freely could be used for profit. From being an oddity, whale sharks now became a commodity.

An unusually heavy blooming of algae outside Donsol, led to an aggregation of unusually many whale sharks. The regional government, probably with the national Tourism Master Plan in mind, saw the opportunity to launch Donsol as an ecotourism site. Besides a uncontrolled, wild west gold rush style of tourism, the propaganda also ironically attracted the commercial whale shark hunters to the area. So besides being disturbed, whale sharks in Donsol were now also hunted, something that never happened before. The tourism itself constituted a problem, even when eventually, pressure from the media and citizens resulted in the national government banning whale shark hunting for good. Tourists did everything to watch whale sharks, and the arrangers did everything to accommodate them, as the saying goes, the customer is always right. This led to that whale sharks became greatly disturbed during their critical feeding season. If the tourists and arrangers were to travel with the ecofeminist perspective of love, care and partnership, instead of that of the domineering conqueror and economically prudent individual, this would probably not have happened.

To counter this WWF-Philippines were invited to organize the whale shark tours in order to create a real ecotourism. Today there are a lot of rules and guidelines that all tourists and arrangers have to follow, but unfortunately even these are not strictly enforced because they are little understood. This result is not so surprising so long as the attitude of the arrangers and tourists is the same domineering old one. To change this attitude requires a more revolutionary change of the foundations of our thought. In our conceptual framework we have to move from a logic of domination. Abstract rules and guidelines from authorities won’t change this, as the basic attitude have to be internalized. This is better done not through reasoning and orders from above, but perhaps from a first person narrative with a loving perspective. It was, after all, when the media explicitly captured the killing of six whale sharks the public reacted. They, in turn, put pressure on the national government who banned all hunting of whale sharks. The narrative power of the showing of the killing can be seen as illustrating the strength of the first person narrative, or other messages directed to our feelings.
At the present WWF-Philippines, has a plan to increase the profit of the ecotourism in Donsol through expansion of tourist infrastructure whose income they hope will trickle down to the locals. This shows to me that even WWF themselves stand for a perspective of sustainable development and ecological modernization. Though their intentions for making the guidelines and local business plan are probably for the best, when scrutinized it reflects a perspective where nature can be exploited for profit as long as you don’t exploit it so much that it disappears or go extinct, because then you wouldn’t be able to continue to extract profit from it anymore. The business plan for Donsol also reflects the idea that both environmental conservation on the one hand and infrastructure and modernization on the other hand can be had simultaneously and without any problems. In fact, the business plan and infrastructure building is expected to solve all problems ranging the unequal distribution of income in the area, and the “ignorance” of people that leads to the harassment of whale sharks. To me, however, the source of the problem, which is modernity itself, seems not to be questioned. This, in turn, also shows on a perspective there the twin domination over nature and women is maintained. If whale shark ecotourism in Donsol rests on these oppressive structures of thought, I wouldn’t be surprised if prostitution and increased inequality were to follow the tracks of the growing number of tourist the planned expansion will bring.
In this chapter I will link up to the aim and research question of this study. Following that I will try to say something conclusive about ecotourism from an environmental ethical standpoint, based on ecofeminism.

Epilogue

7.1 Ecotourism in theory

In theory, ecotourism seems to share a lot of the values of ecofeminism. They are both open for different social and historical contexts rather than adhering to one universal truth that will apply to all societies and cases. A consequence of this is that it is hard to place them in traditional and modern environmental ethics perspectives, such as biocentrism, anthropocentrism, etc. In ecotourism and ecofeminism there is also room for more “soft” values such as love and care, in place of rationalistic and mechanistic values that are worded in terms of principles such as autonomy or what has the highest moral standing.

There are some differences though. Ecofeminism, which is based on feminism, has a clear power- and gender-perspective—that people in today’s society aren’t equal, and that equal measures only reinforces inequality—instead of the liberal view seemed to be held by ecotourism. Despite this, ecotourism, in theory, shares defiantly more with ecofeminism than regular mass tourism as well as any other form of nature-associated tourism, such as nature based tourism, or ecologically sustainable tourism.

7.2 Ecotourism nationally in the Philippines
The situation in the Philippines on a national level is a bit different from the international level. Here ecotourism have been closely developed in cooperation with or rather as a part of sustainable development. The perspective of sustainable development in the Philippines on a national level, as mimicked from most industrialized countries in the world today, seem to be that of ecological modernisation. Since tourism is seen mostly as a source of income by the Philippine national government, it is advantageous for them to see ecotourism as a part of sustainable development as ecological modernisation, where economic growth comes first, and environmental concerns second. Economic growth is seen as the solution to solve all problems, including environmental ones. Such a narrow focus on ecotourism as a means to financial and economic growth is to me not compatible with ecofeminist thought. Even if today’s modern and economic system is the context we cannot disregard, it is not the only context.

On a national level, one can also see top-down perspective, which means that ecotourism projects no longer come from the grass-root level by the people working with it first hand. Rather, it has become something that needs to be controlled, or micro-managed by the government using strict and formal guidelines, worked out by academicians at universities living far from the provinces where ecotourism is actually performed. That governments govern from top-down using micro-management strategies and theoretical and rational guidelines is not strange. It is just not compatible in my eyes with ecotourism or ecofeminism who prefer that those working on the spot should be more involved. Rules from above do not always work, while those who work with ecotourism first-hand have the highest chances of creating an ecotourism based on an attitude of care since they are the ones who develop relationships with the animals and tourists.

At a national level in the Philippines, I also see signs of a logic of domination, a rationality used to defend power already held. The bureaucratization and systematization of ecotourism as a part of the national government’s plan to make ecotourism into a viable financial source is only rationalized by the belief that authorities such as the government and academia are always right, for they know the “larger picture”. Authority figures are also usually the ones who hold and impose the perspectives of modern western rational, and economic thought. They define what ecotourism is to be, and how it is to be implemented, according to this perspective. For example, the solution they thought of on how to have successful ecotourism was described in terms such as: natural resources, procedures, guidelines, standardized, capacity development in society and public systems, procedures, guidelines. This language is mainly that of modern rationality and economic efficiency:
business language that seems to imply that success in ecotourism is limited to economic success. For ecotourism to be true to its spirit, and to be compatible with ecofeminism, the definition of success should have a much wider meaning, not only limited to the efficient use of nature for financial gain. It should include, for example, incommensurable aspects such as whether the tourists are given a feeling of care and responsibility for the nature that they see.

7.3 Whale shark ecotourism in Donsol

Whale sharks in Donsol lived in peace until they were discovered by the local government unit and its potential as a long-term cash cow was seen. With the tools of the national Tourism Master Plan, they made Donsol an ecotourism site. This created a massive invasion of tourists, as well as hunters to the area. From never being hunted at all in Donsol—not even with traditional low impact hunting—whale sharks were now being hunted there as well. Only the explicit display of whale shark killings by media created a public opinion which eventually led to the ban of whale shark hunting in all of the Philippines. This shows the strength of the first person narrative, that the immanent and explicit—the things that really connect to us—have a power that abstract and totally rational arguments have not.

Whale sharks were, due to increased pressure by the tourism, still threatened. The reason why this tourism (then still a rather nature-based tourism than ecotourism) had such adverse effects to the whale sharks is most probably because the tourists wanted to see whale sharks as close and much as possible without caring whether the animals were disturbed or not. This shows their perspective was that of a conqueror, not a friend. The arrangers were also to blame, or rather their perspective as well. Instead of having the loving perspective, whale sharks for them seemed to be nothing by a cash machines, and they drove their motorized boats so close to the animals to please the tourists, that even some whale sharks had propeller gashes on their bodies. So, even if there is a plan or attempt for ecotourism it often becomes nothing else than regular tourism when it only carries the form of ecotourism but not the substance, or the right attitude. One’s attitude should be care and friendship rather than the focus on getting the most out of one’s money, or earning more of it at the expense of the animals.

The situation became more and more unsustainable. To try to save it, WWF-Phillipines were called to be involved. They created a lot of rules and guidelines for tourists and
arrangers to follow. Even if this led to some improvements, the rules, formed from a top-down perspective, were still broken. This may be partly because they have not internalised the rules, and partly due to the regular economic considerations. An example of this is the required distance from the whale sharks so as not disturb their sensitive feeding. This is regularly broken, since the tourists wouldn’t see much of the whale sharks in the murky waters outside Donsol if these rules were to be followed. The boat drivers must also have realized that without tourism, they would have no income. Thus, the attitude is still concentrated on pleasing the tourists, and the tourists seeing as much of the whale sharks as possible.

At present, WWF-Philippines is also working on a plan to increase profit by the whale shark ecotourism and distributing more money to the locals through the expansion of tourism infrastructures. This means building new hotels, for instance, which will employ more people and also lure more tourists. How this infrastructure expansion is possible within the frame of ecotourism is hard for me to understand, when, the whale shark ecotourism is already overcrowded as it is, and puts stress on the animals. However, in today’s society where economic growth has to be maintained to ensure our way of living, the plan is perhaps not so surprising and even compatible with the national government’s plan to advertise and make money out of ecotourism. Even if it’s a bit unfortunate, the result is that whale shark tourism in Donsol seem to be closer to sustainable development as ecological modernisation, or ecologically sustainable tourism, than ecotourism. Especially in the frames of the infrastructure expansion, it seems that both the WWF-Philippines and the national government believe that more technology and more modernization is good, and will solve every other problem eventually. In the meantime, both nature and the people can be used as means for the greater goal of profit, which is hoped to trickle down in the future. This perspective in turn, also shows that the twin domination over nature and women is maintained, where nature, women, and supposedly less rational beings are free to be exploited due to their perceived lack of rationality, even when the rationality is nothing more then power disguised by rationalisation. For now, authorities can think of whale sharks as natural “resources” for their business. In the future, if whale shark ecotourism in Donsol rests on the same oppressive structures of thought that turn the creatures into “resources”, I wouldn’t be surprised if prostitution and increased inequality were to follow the tracks of the growing tourism.
7.4 Final notes

In theory, ecotourism share more with ecofeminism than the other forms of nature-associated tourism, especially when it comes to being open to several different social and historical contexts. This makes ecotourism a promising form of tourism from an ecofeminist perspective, at least in theory. How about at the implementation level?

When the concept of ecotourism is transformed from concept into national policies and action plans, one can see how ecotourism is moulded into the already established modern, hierarchical form. Here, the predominantly post-modern ecotourism is transformed to serve the ideals of modernity, using strict guidelines with a clear top-to-bottom perspective that reveals hierarchical and formal thinking. On a national level in the Philippines, I see signs of a logic of domination at work, where rationality is used to enforce and justify the established power relations where the institutions of government represents the power, and are the ones with the “right” knowledge. From a post modern perspective, they are the ones that define what knowledge is in society, and have the means to implement it. In terms of ecotourism, the national government in the Philippines have defined it to mean sustainable tourism, as part of their plan to make tourism a viable source of foreign money. This had reduced ecotourism in the Philippines (as in the case of Donsol), to become a part of ecologically sustainable tourism, in a thinking of sustainable development as ecological modernisation. Since power decides which interpretation is to be the guiding one, it’s not especially strange that ecotourism turned into ecological modernisation when implemented into a modern society.

The perspective of the government is also transferred down to the local government level, at least in the case of whale shark ecotourism in Donsol. In Donsol, economic considerations is put first and ecotourism is still regarded as any kind of tourism that rakes in money and jobs. The focus on financial gain through the whale shark tourism shows a perspective of dominance over the creatures, instead of seeing them in a loving way as a partner or friend. As a result of this perspective, the rules established by WWF-Philippines to make whale shark ecotourism in Donsol more environmentally friendly are seldom followed, since the people at the place—both arrangers and tourists also for that matter—have not internalised the rules. Conceptual frameworks of oppression and conquering still dominate in whale shark tourism, instead of fostering feelings of respect and friendship. After all, the tourists have paid to see the sight, and the boat drivers earn their daily wage from it. The tourism is still in the context of a modern, economic context. Although this context cannot be
disregarded, the solution doesn’t have to come from this context too, in the form of more abstract rules and formal guidelines. In order to make people more sensitive to the environment, they need more than abstract rules, but messages that goes to the heart rather then the intellect. This was shown in Donsol when the media explicitly capture the killing of six whale sharks outside Donsol. This struck right at the heart of many Filipinos, and led to a national outcry which in turn led to stop of whale shark hunting. Perhaps something to this effect can foster people to have a more caring eye towards whale sharks, in their interaction with them within ecotourism. Besides this, on a practical level, many decisions are up to individual persons, and these persons have a choice to interpret or follow the guidelines given to them. If their attitude is that of domination, this will also affect the decisions they take, with little regard to any rules and regulations. Again, ecotourism goes well together with ecofeminist thought at least in theory, but as ecotourism is implemented into a society based on a thought vastly different from the ones of ecofeminism, ecotourism loses the connection with the soft, unparametrical values. As long as this perspective is not changed, ecotourism in practice will be nothing but a green label on a tourism that is really sustainable tourism.

I do acknowledge though, that modern thought and modernity has given humans a lot of good, but these good things are mainly in the sciences and the new technologies that made our life easier. On the other hand these have also given us a lot of problems, but on the whole I think that the scientific and technological development have been of mostly benefit for us. The problem for me is when the structures of thought in modern science and technologies are transformed to the humanities, because this strips away and disregards our emotions, feelings, and intuitions and transforms it and us into abstract and alien principles. How do you describe love to the ones closest to you, in terms of the principle of autonomy or utility? I think that rationality, when it comes to the right way of living and thinking, may be mostly used as a means by people of power to defend their already held inner convictions. I’m not so sure that modern rationality, and scientific language have so much to contribute with when it comes to how we see things ethically, and on what foundations we act. I think that this study shows this.

Finally, on the fourth research question “can there be an ecotourism based on ecofeminism?” The answer to this is yes, and no. Yes, in theory, but not when it is to be implemented within a society where economic rationality, as an offspring of modernity, dominates and defines thinking. Not when rationality and a logic of domination is used instead of emotions of love an care. Not in a society where taking care of machines and
abstract theory is valued more than taking care of persons not to mention animals. Not when people in traditionally masculine fields of work, such as engineers, economists, and others get higher wages than as people who work with traditionally feminine, and female-dominated jobs in care, such as day-care workers, personal assistants, or those working with nature for that matter.
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