

# **THE MORALITY AND ETHICS OF HUNTING: TOWARDS COMMON GROUND**

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Assignment presented in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of  
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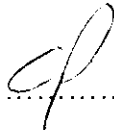


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**DECLARATION**

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously in its entirety or in part submitted it at any university for a degree.

Signature:  .....

Date: 21 November 1999 .....

## ABSTRACT

The hunters and anti-hunting have been arguing for years over whether or not trophy hunting should be allowed. While attempts have been made to resolve the issue, no widely acceptable solution has yet been found. Hunters have put forward various arguments including: religion, instinct, sustainable utilization, money, excessive populations and the wildlife management support argument. These have usually been criticized for being management orientate and not addressing the focal question of the anti-hunters: 'What gives man the right to hunt'. Anti-hunters have countered these arguments and presented new ones. These include: cruelty, animal rights, animal liberation, special and rare species as well as religion and wildlife management support arguments. The anti-hunters have used sympathy and emotion to gain support for their movement while making effective use of the media. Hunters on the other hand have been slow to make use of this communication tool. In presenting their arguments, a fundamental difference has been identified between the use of the various terms. The seemingly simple word 'ethics' has been used by the hunters to mean a code of conduct while the anti-hunters have used this word to indicate the morality of man's actions. The inherent value of an animal has also been debated. Does an animal have value in and of itself or does it only have value in that it is useful to man? Furthermore, is it the individual animal, the species or the population which has value? The value of wildlife as a natural resource and the right to use this resource is also discussed. Do developed countries have the right to determine the use that a developing country may make of its resources? Leopold's land ethics is discussed and it is shown how hunting preserves the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. In order to address the issues raised by the debate, it is necessary for the hunters and the anti-hunters to be willing to work towards common goals. It is unlikely that either side would ever be willing to give up their position but if they can agree to work towards some common goals, the long on-going debate would have achieved something. For this reason, four solutions to this debate are looked at and analyzed. Their weakness and failures are discussed as well as their strong points. Taylor's Priority Principles are then analyzed to identify the first steps that need to be taken in drawing up guidelines for hunting. While this assignment does not attempt to identify these guidelines it does point out the need to have such guidelines and establishes that there can be common ground. Also, that it is desirable to achieve this aim. The assignment highlights the need for

groups to work towards common goals without having to give up their beliefs and standpoints. There will be time later to determine whether or not man should hunt. In the meantime, man should be focussing on hunting ethically – both in the moral sense and within the framework of a good code of conduct.

## OPSOMMING

Jagters en nie-jagters argumenteer al vir jare of trofeejag toegelaat moet word al dan nie. Alhoewel daar deurgaans pogings aangewend word om die twispunt op te klaar, is daar nog geen aanvaarbare oplossing gevind nie. Jagters hou verskeie argumente voor wat godsdiens, instink, ondersteunende benutting, geld, oormatige bevolking en die pleidooi om bestuur van die natuurlewe, insluit. Daar word gekritiseer dat hierdie argumente bestuursgeoriënteerd is, en die vraag van die nie-jagter: 'Wat gee die mens die reg om te jag?' word nie aangespreek nie. Nie-jagters het hierdie argumente weerlê en nuwes voorgelê. Dit sluit in: Wreedheid, diere-regte, bevryding van diere, spesiale en seldsame spesies asook godsdiens en argumente rakende natuurlewebestuur. Die nie-jagters maak gebruik van simpatie en emosie om ondersteuning vir hul vereniging te verkry, terwyl hulle ook die media effektief gebruik. Hierteenoor het die jagter in die verlede nie regting van hierdie kommunikasiemetode gebruik gemaak nie. Die jagter se argumente toon 'n basiese verskil in die gebruik van verskeie vasgestelde terme. Die skynbaar eenvoudige woord 'eties' word deur die jagter gebruik as 'n gedragskode terwyl die nie-jagter die woord gebruik om moraliteit en die mens se aksies aan te dui. Het die dier inherente waarde of het dit net waarde vir die mens? Bowendien, is dit die individuele dier, die spesie of die dierebevolking wat waarde het? Die waarde van die natuurlewe as 'n natuurlike bron en die reg om dit te gebruik, word ook bespreek. Het ontwikkelde lande die reg om te besluit op watter wyse gebruik die ontwikkelende lande van hul bronne gebruik mag maak? Leopold's omgewingsetiek word bespreek en daar word gewys op hoe jag die integriteit, stabiliteit en natuurskoon van die gemeenskap bewaar. Ten einde die vraagstukke wat by die debat opgehaal is aan te spreek, moet jagters en nie-jagters bereid wees om saam te werk ten einde gemeenskaplike doelstellings te bereik. Dit is onwaarskynlik dat beide kante gewillig sal wees om elkeen sy eie posisie prys te gee, maar as ooreengekom kan word om te strew na 'n gemeenskaplike doelwit, sou hierdie sleurende kwessie reeds resultate getoon het. Om hierdie rede word daar na vier oplossings gekyk en word dit geanaliseer. Hul leemtes en mislukkings word bespreek asook hul sterk punte. Taylor's Priority Principles word dan geanaliseer word om die eerste stappe te identifiseer wat riglyne vir die jagter sal aantoon. Hoewel daar nie gepoog word om sodanige riglyne vas te stel nie, lig dit die behoefte vir riglyne uit en beklemtoon die noodigheid vir samewerking en gesamentlike strew. Hierdie opdrag beklemtoon die behoefte vir groepssamewerking na 'n

gemeenskaplike doelwit toe, sonder om elkeen sy hul eie standpunte of beginsels prys to gee. Daar sal by 'n later geleentheid tyd wees om vas te stel of die mens mag jag of nie. Intussen moet die mens fokus op jag – binne die raamwerk van etiese korrektheid – in beide morele konteks en binne die raamwerk van 'n goeie gedragskode.

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# CHAPTER 1

## INTRODUCTION

### 1 BACKGROUND

Whether or not man has the right to hunt, to take the life of another living, sentient being, has been an ongoing debate for decades. Some, the hunters, feel that it is acceptable to do so while others, the anti-hunters, do not. How did this argument begin and is there a way to solve it? Let us begin by looking at some historical aspects of hunting.

Throughout the ages, laws have been enacted to control and regulate hunting. As a result of this process, many rural people and indigenous cultures have been denied the right to continue hunting the game which they have historically relied upon for their subsistence. Communal hunters were soon considered to be 'poachers' in the eye's of the law and were prosecuted as such.

The hunters or sportsmen saw these communal subsistence hunters as a threat to their sport and recreation. The laws that were introduced by these hunters were designed not only to secure the hunting grounds for themselves, but also the privilege to hunt, something which they considered to be their right. The game was usually fenced into an area which was often acquired by (forcefully) removing the people that had been living on the land. The enactment of such laws, which has been done for centuries throughout the world, has denied the 'commoner' the right to secure an income or, even more fundamentally, a meal, for their families. Laws have, as such, forbidden the provider to provide. The communities that were denied the right to continue hunting saw these laws as being forcefully imposed upon them and neither understood nor respected them. They were unable to understand why they were no longer allowed to feed their families or why they could not secure an ingredient vital to the muti necessary to heal their sick child.

It is only in recent years that an attempt is being made to address this loss of opportunity. In fact, it is now seen as essential to the continuation of conservation. Attempts are now being

made to compensate the communities by allowing them a limited usage of natural resources through a process known as 'sustainable use'. This policy has however come under attack from all groups. It has been criticized by both the hunters and anti-hunters alike for not having been adequately defined. It has further been criticized for not having a sound scientific base. Questions such as 'What is sustainable?' and 'How do we know that what is thought to be sustainable actually is sustainable?', have been raised. Sustainability also implies that the resource which is being utilized has limited value. Often this value is merely instrumental to the people making use of it.

The ethics surrounding this issue have also been called into question. Who gave the rich upper classes the right to deny the lower classes and communities the right to hunt? Indeed, why is there a class distinction? How were the ethics of these so-called upper classes formulated and on what grounds? The term ethics soon developed two meanings. It was used by some with regard to a code of conduct, i.e. how a hunter conducted himself while hunting, it was used by others in a moral sense, i.e. what gave people the right to impose laws on others and to take the life of an animal, and thirdly, it was used by some in both terms. This situation has not changed today although the distinction between the two meanings has become more apparent and the confusion that it causes more evident.

The communities that have been denied the right to make use of the resources at hand are not concerned with the type of value that a resource has, but rather the welfare of their immediate family. These communities see only the loss of opportunity, both from a subsistence level as well as from a development level. They fail to understand how the so-called First World countries who have achieved a comparatively high degree of development based on the utilization of natural resources can deny the so-called Third World, or developing countries, the same opportunity. The First World countries are however willing to admit that they have made mistakes in their desire to achieve development and do not wish to stand idly by while the Third World countries repeat these mistakes. However, this attitude is not only patronizing, but extends the concept of colonialism in that it dictates how an apparently independent and (usually) democratic country should manage its affairs.

One of the most common forms of sustainable use is sport hunting. Sport hunting is a high revenue, low impact form of tourism which is best operated in undeveloped areas. For this

reason, Africa appeals to many European and American hunters and is best carried out in such undeveloped countries (Winter, 1991: 17) where the hunter can feel as though he is genuinely 'getting back to nature'. But, because hunting involves the death of an animal, it is also one of the most controversial forms of wildlife utilization.

The contribution made by hunting to conservation has been criticized and heatedly debated over the years. Typically there is a polarization of views with some feeling that hunting contributes significantly and others feeling that it does not contribute to conservation and further exploits species and rural communities (Edwards & Allen, 1992: 1).

This controversy has led to the formulation of two broad groups, the hunters and the anti-hunters. Within each group there are various beliefs and degrees to which individuals stand by their view points. Some hunters may for example, consider it acceptable to hunt for commercial gain while others do not consider this to be acceptable. They only consider it acceptable to hunt in order to secure a meal. Others still, may consider it acceptable to hunt for pleasure and to keep a memento of their hunt, a trophy. Similarly, the group of anti-hunters hold different beliefs. This group is however often divided into two subgroups. The one group being those who feel that it is wrong to take the life of an animal under any circumstances while the other group considers hunting to be acceptable under certain circumstances only, i.e. self-defense, subsistence and for cultural purposes.

This debate has been raging, often violently, for several decades. While attempts have been made by both sides to solve the problem and prove that their viewpoint is correct, no agreement has yet been reached. Many questions are conjured up by the debate and despite the attention that the subject has reached, few concise and acceptable answers have been given. The fact that preliminary attempts have been made to reach a solution to the problem is an indication that both the hunters and the anti-hunters would like to see the problem resolved. The question that now needs to be addressed is how the problem can be resolved, in what stages and by which methods.

Why has this debate continued for so many years without a solution being found? Why has an attempt not been made earlier to reach a situation where the two groups are able to identify and work towards satisfying common goals? Should we not then look at a way to

reach a form of common ground between the two groups as a first step in resolving this problem?

## **2 FORMULATING THE PROBLEM**

Indigenous cultures and communities dependent on natural resources for their survival have historically been denied the right to hunt by the rich upper classes who have considered hunting to be their right and who have enacted laws to secure this right. Over time, this approach to hunting and the use of resources has come under attack both by the communities who have been denied the right to hunt and by those people who feel that hunting is not acceptable from a moral standpoint. The question of what gives man the right to take a life has been raised but as yet, no widely accepted answer has been proposed.

However, hunters wish to continue hunting, indigenous cultures wish to maintain their identity and way of life and anti-hunters wish to see killing, in any and all forms, halted. As there is no apparent solution to this problem, is there not a way to achieve common ground between these groups as the first step towards a solution? It seems senseless to continue arguing from polarized positions when more constructive work could be conducted to ensure, for example, that 'unethical' hunting, i.e. canned hunts, are stopped. Instead of debating whether hunting should or should not be allowed, surely it is better to discuss under what circumstances and in what manner hunting should be allowed? In the process, many of the anti-hunters main criticisms of hunting (the unnecessary cause of pain and suffering and bad marksmanship) would be addressed. This does not imply that work towards a solution should be abandoned, merely that it should receive less attention at this stage in the debate.

It is surprising that man, who has been utilizing wildlife and its products for many years has yet to solve the moral dilemma of taking a life, particularly through hunting. An academic and occasionally physical debate has been raging since at least the 1980's (Moriarty and Woods, 1997: 393-394) between the so-called hunters and anti-hunters over whether or not man has the moral right to take a life, be it through hunting or euthanasia. Work has been done on this issue by great philosophers such as J. Baird Callicott (1980) in his 'Animal Liberation: A Triangular Affair'. Here the conceptual groundwork for this debate was laid and Callicott showed the conflicting goals of the two groups (Callicott, 1980: 336) and explained that while

one could belong to either camp without the exclusion of the other, one could only be an ethicist of one group, not both (Moriarty and Woods, 1997: 393).

Causey (1989: 338) feels that unless the two sides involved in the debate begin to understand the questions that they are trying to address, a solution will not be achieved. She is surprised by the vastly different understandings of the seemingly simple question 'Is hunting a morally acceptable activity?' Causey further states that numerous attempts to settle the issue have failed in part because the participants have often not distinguished and treated separately the various activities labeled 'hunting'. Those who participate in hunting fall into one of two categories: shooters or sport hunters. Shooters are those whose ultimate goals do not depend on hunting but can be met in other ways; sport hunters are those who take (immense) pleasure in the hunt itself and who kill in order to have had an authentic hunting experience (Causey, 1989: 327, 332). This assignment will deal only with the group that can be classed as sport hunters. Shooters have an uncertain moral background and are outside the scope of this assignment.

Spanish philosopher José Ortega y Gasset believes that in order to address the question at hand, one needs to focus on the one factor essential to hunting – the kill (Causey, 1989: 332; Whisker, 1999: 12). To Ortega, hunting is culminated by the kill. This he feels is an essential part of the hunt and without the kill, one has not hunted. Whether it is or is not acceptable to kill has been argued extensively but as yet, no answer has been reached which is acceptable to both the hunters and the anti-hunters.

But who are the hunters and the anti-hunters? What sort of people make up these groups and why these two groups? For the purposes of this assignment and for the sake of clarity, the people involved in the arguments have been divided into two broad groups: the hunters and the anti-hunters.

- Hunters: These are the organizations or individuals who in principle agree with the management of animals in one form or another and recognize that this management sometimes entails the killing of an animal. It is recognized that there are varying degrees of beliefs within this group. Morally, they place a limit on the value of an animal's life and also consider man to have the moral right to control the numbers and populations of

animals. This moral right stems from a variety of sources. The degree and source of this right may vary within the group.

- Anti-hunters: This group comprises of those individuals and organizations which, in principle, disagree with the taking of an animal's life. A plethora of views which includes those who disagree with the taking of any life and those who disagree with sport hunting *per se*, but feel that hunting for subsistence purposes is acceptable. According to a study conducted by Kellert in the United States of America, only 4.5% of the people surveyed opposed hunting in all its forms. This group was characterized by a higher proportion of females; most lived in large urban areas and had little experience with animals beyond domestic pets. They also had one of the lowest knowledge levels of animals of all the groups (Wood, 1997: 57).

The term 'non-hunter' is occasionally used in the assignment when reference is made to those people not opposed to all forms of hunting, i.e. they accept subsistence hunting and hunting for cultural reasons. While non-hunters are not opposed to all forms of hunting, they are still opposed to some forms and are unlikely to take part in a hunt themselves.

Both the anti-hunters and the hunters have a series of arguments that they use against or for hunting respectively. Many of these charges are however easily countered and counter-counter (Causey, 1989: 334). The arguments are often fatally flawed in that they are irrelevant to the debate at hand. Even if the anti-hunters could prove that hunting is immoral, hunters would still wish to hunt. Likewise, if the hunters proved that hunting was morally permissible, the anti-hunters would still oppose it (Causey, 1989: 336). These arguments have often extended beyond academic debate and violence and physical deterrents have been employed to prevent hunts taking place.

The definitions of hunting and the components of hunting have not yet been clarified. Those pro hunting regard hunting as a sport which makes money that can be ploughed back into conservation, which leads to the protection of natural areas, which can be used to weed out the old animals and those that are no longer of value to the population as a whole. In short, hunting is considered a valuable management tool. Those against or opposed to hunting condemn hunting on the moral ethics of the act or sport. They consider that there are other ways of achieving protection for animals and other ways of fund raising. They do not consider

it necessary to kill an animal in order to advance these aims. They are essentially arguing morals while hunters are arguing management techniques.

Hunters normally provide long lists of what hunting has done for wildlife, i.e. the land conserved, the animals saved from starving to death, the money it has brought in, the animals brought back from the brink of extinction, etc. While these issues do help decide whether or not hunting is an effective management tool or economically advisable, they do not address the morality inherent in the above question (Causey, 1989: 336). Hunters often fail to clearly identify the real reason why they hunt. They often try and give the anti-hunter the answer he is looking for instead of admitting that they derive enjoyment from hunting and are responding to a basic instinct (Causey, 1989: 334).

Anti-hunters are often very vocal and active in their campaign against hunting. They are often supported by vast sums of money which can be used to influence the decisions made by wildlife management bodies and governments. Safaris have also been romanticized and often suggest that it is a pastime only for the wealthy. Anti-hunting arguments seldom address the needs of the people dependent on this resource (Edwards & Allen, 1992: 1-2). The anti-hunters however are usually the more media-conscious and active of the two groups.

Hunting is often considered morally acceptable when for self protection (Gunn, 1997: 1), for food and occasionally when necessary for cultural traditions or the psychological well-being of the hunter which can be extended to include trophy hunting. Hunting is indeed essential to the economic development of many African countries.

Throughout the world, man has not developed at the same pace. The Western world has generally developed faster and is not as dependent on the natural world for its survival. While this natural world is essential to man's survival, many men have learnt how to control and manage it specifically for their needs, e.g. horticulture, hydroponics and battery farming. With this change in land use, the way in which the land and its wildlife are viewed has also changed. Wildlife is often seen by the people of the Western world as necessary for its spiritual value, recreational value and as a benchmark against which they can measure progress and the impact of this progress upon the natural world (Winter, 1991: 6; Causey, 1989: 327).

Those countries left behind, the so called Third World countries, view wildlife differently. They are still directly dependent on it for their survival and to satisfy their daily needs. They are not convinced that large areas of land should be set aside for the amusement of foreign tourists. They need that land for their very survival. Third World countries have thus placed an economic value upon wildlife while many Westerners argue that wildlife has inherent value.

Our conception of morality is often affected and influenced by our upbringing (Causey, 1989: 333-334). A child growing up in an extremely poor, rural community will have a different concept of morality than a child growing up in an affluent, urban environment. The value that they place on various concepts differs, usually according to their necessity for daily survival.

The argument is of course not as simple as First World versus Third World. While some members of the Third World seek development and 'civilization' many others seek to maintain their cultural backgrounds and rights. Similarly, there are people in First World countries who seek development while others feel that wildlife has a right to exist alongside mankind and should not be interfered with or managed in any way.

Gunn (1997: 3) suggests that humans need to decide whether or not the interest an animal has in its life may be justly overridden by man's desire to hunt. This presumes that animals have a right to life. Throughout this assignment, I will assume that animals have interests, and that man has an obligation to take account of those interests: roughly, that man is entitled to kill animals only in order to promote or protect 'some non-trivial human interest and where no reasonable alternative strategy is available' (Gunn, 1997: 1).

It is argued that while other beings 'simply live' to man there is nothing more important than recreation. This includes hunting. As hunting became recognized as a sport, so a code of ethics and conduct developed in order to ensure that it remained 'moral'. Henry William Herbert, writing under the pseudonym of Frank Forester, wrote a number of books on this topic. His books, which include *Frank Forester's Field Sports* (1849), *American Game in Its Seasons* (1853) and *The Complete Manual for Young Sportsmen* (1856), created the benchmark for the actions of American hunters. Other methods were considered 'common', or even immoral. His books stipulated that game must have a reasonable and fair chance of



escaping and the hunter a reasonable chance of failure. The hunter must further have aesthetic reasons as his motive, not food or economic gain. These rules, however, place ethics in the sphere of a code of conduct and do not take it into the moral sphere (Reiger, J.F., 1980a: 128).

Leopold (1966: 227) argues that man has become 'supercivilized' when he fails to be moved by an interaction with nature. Man is deeply associated with nature and experiences value in relationships which remind him of his dependency on the soil-plant-animal-man food chain, his origin and evolution, the fundamental organization of the biota and those ethical restraints known as 'sportsmanship'.

Kellert (Wood, 1997: 10-12) distinguishes between three different types of hunters as identified in a study carried out in the United States of America. He points out that the motivations found behind hunting may stem from one or more sources. These groups are as follows:

- Utilitarian/meat hunters: animals have practical and material value (instrumental value). This type of hunter hunts mainly to obtain food and usually lives in rural areas. They have however commonly raised an animal and are generally of the age group 65 years and above. Earnings are usually less than US\$6,000 per annum.
- Naturalistic/nature hunters: these hunters enjoy being in natural surroundings and outdoors. Through hunting they attempt to get in touch with nature and recognize that man forms an integral part of the natural environment. They also pursue activities such as hiking, backpacking and birdwatching. This group is generally comprised of people younger than 30 years of age and who have a relatively high socio-economic status.
- Dominionistic/sport hunters: these hunters attempt to master and control nature. Hunting is an expression of skill and prowess and usually follows traditional hunting methods, i.e. fox hunting. These people are most likely to reside in cities and generally have a low knowledge of animals. This is the group most disliked by the anti-hunters and will be the focus group of this assignment.

The two groups involved in the debate have fundamentally different conceptions and usage of the term 'ethics'. Why have these groups failed to identify a clear, widely accepted definition

of ethics? The lack of suitable definition has become one of the most important points leading to a lack of agreement and identification of common ground. To hunters, ethics generally refers to the hunter's code of conduct, how he hunts in the field. To the anti-hunters, ethics refers to one's morality and what gives man the right to hunt or to take the life of another living, sentient being.

Hunting ethics have historically been learned by young hunters from older hunters, usually transferring from father to son in our male-dominated hunting society. Unfortunately for hunters, there has been no widely established method of teaching hunting ethics or hunting's code of conduct. Most hunters learn their code of conduct from watching other hunters in the field or from their parents when they are introduced to hunting as children (Larson, 1996: 8). This could explain why hunters have never questioned the act of hunting and the morality of such an act. They are doing it because they were taught as young children that it is acceptable to hunt and continue to hunt because it has become tradition in their family. They have not questioned the morality of their actions and are therefore unable to defend their actions adequately.

So, what are ethics? Where do ethics come from? Similarly, what are and from where do rights come? Philosophers have been attempting to answer these questions for millennia but still there is no generally accepted answer. History tells us that the word 'ethic' originates from the Greek work 'ethos' which is defined as 'the prevalent tone of sentiment of a people or community'. Various authors have defined ethics as (Halse, 1997: 30):

- the moral system of a particular thought;
- the rules of conduct recognized in certain limited departments of human life; and,
- the science of human duty in its widest extent, including the sense of law whether civil, political or international.

Halse (1997: 30) suggests a new, more comprehensive definition: 'Ethics are a standard of behaviour in any profession or group activity. Normally they are not written down, rather handed down from one generation to the next. They do not comprise the rule of law, rather custom, thought they may cover topics subject to the law. They may even be in conflict with the law though it is more common that they are supported in part by laws'.

Although ethics are handed down from one generation to the next, they should not be subject to the political requirements of the day. Ethics refer specifically to morals, manners, duty and conduct, not current needs. Ethics should be such that they will be valuable to future generations, not just the current one. Ethics are handed down from one generation to the next and our actions today should reflect the values which we would like to pass on to future generations (Halse, 1997: 30).

Many of the ethics displayed by hunters are self-imposed. Wood (1997: 128) suggested that the answer to what a person's ethics are can be found in the question 'What would you do if you knew you would not be caught?' The authority that the hunter is answerable to varies from an anti-hunter to a nature conservation official to God. Leopold argued that hunting developed a man's moral character. Meine, Leopold's biographer, comments that for Leopold, "Hunting was an expression of love for the natural world" (Wood, 1997: 128).

The two groups involved in the debate have fundamentally different conceptions and usage of the term 'ethics'. Why have these groups failed to identify a clear, widely accepted definition of ethics? The lack of suitable definition has become one of the most important points leading to a lack of agreement and identification of common ground. To hunters, ethics generally refers to the hunter's code of conduct, how he hunts in the field. To the anti-hunters, ethics refers to one's morality and what gives man the right to hunt or to take the life of another living, sentient being.

The term 'ethics' is often used interchangeably with 'fair chase' and 'morality' by the authors of hunting and anti-hunting literature respectively. For the purposes of this assignment, these terms will be used separately. 'Ethics' will be used in the moral sense, i.e. does man have the moral right to take a life?, and will be considered to be applicable to humans and non-humans alike. 'Fair chase', however, will refer to those conditions usually laid out by the hunting groups and will comprise factors such as following a wounded animal, hunting from foot, shooting at a carefully predetermined spot on an animal's body to ensure a clean kill; using the correct calibre and not too low a calibre; etc.

It is not only the term 'ethics' which is used in more than one sense. The word 'hunting' is used in two ways by many authors, i) in the general sense of pursuing animals; and, ii) the narrower sense of sport hunting (Wood, 1997: 7). Many authors use these different understandings interchangeably within the same document thereby adding to the confusion and often weakening their argument in the process (Wood, 1997:10).

It is necessary to clarify exactly what is meant by hunting and what it entails before moving forward from this point. It is impossible to agree with something or disagree with it if one does not clearly understand what is meant by the concept. A description is provided below of all the general forms of hunting which entail a kill as well as what constitutes an animal suitable for hunting. Some of these definitions are somewhat brief because, as it will become clear, they do not relate directly to the topic of the assignment. They are intended merely to orientate the reader within the discussion.

- Hunting: this can be considered as the 'pursuit of, and the capture or kill of, prey' (Wood, 1997: 1) and is based on an ecological approach whereby each organism partakes in a system of nutrient cycling with death being a natural occurrence (Wood, 1997: 2). The intention is usually to possess the animal (Anonymous, 1992: 2). Ortega defined hunting as 'what an animal does to take possession, dead or alive, of some other being that belongs to a species basically inferior to its own' (Wood, 1997: 4). The generally accepted definitions of hunting usually encompass the conditions of the animal having a fair chance of escape as well as the hunter having a reasonable chance of success although these conditions are not always explicitly stated. Hunting is characterized by the action of actually killing the animal. The kill is however not a requirement of a hunt, it is merely the culmination of a successful hunt, an event marker. Where the act of killing becomes more important than the whole process of finding a suitable quarry, stalking it, and finally capturing a trophy, one is merely shooting and no longer hunting (Anonymous, 1992: 4). To many it is a 'way of life' (Ortega in Wood, 1997: 4), an 'act of worship', and/or a 'sacred ritual' which reunites man with nature (Loftin in Wood, 1997: 9).
- Trophy hunting (sport hunting): this may be defined as 'the pursuit of wildlife in which the hunter, following the ethics of hunting, kills wildlife for food and trophy' (Wood, 1997: 10). It is generally highly regulated by a permit system, bag limits and specific seasons (Wood, 1997: 5, 6; Anonymous, 1992: 4). Individual hunters place their own limits on their hunting

methods (Wood, 1997: 6) but the minimum fair and 'ethical' standards are usually determined by the departments of nature conservation (often) in conjunction with hunting organizations. Diet is not usually a factor and recent studies indicate that the need to trophy hunt stems from various psychological needs and desires i.e. a rite of passage, challenge, being a part of nature by 'getting back to the wild', etc. (Wood, 1997: 6).

- Trophy animal: a trophy animal is usually an outstanding example of an animal that has survived nature's hardships (Posewitz, 1994: 96), has contributed to the gene pool of the species and will serve as a suitable memento of the hunter's hunting experience. They are usually limited in number and require skill to obtain (Posewitz, 1994: 97). The animal should be wild and free-ranging in its natural habitat, i.e. a product of the land (Posewitz, 1994: 97).
- Subsistence hunting: for hunting to be considered part of one's subsistence, the meat must form a portion of one's regular diet (Wood, 1997: 6) whereby the protein cannot be obtained otherwise or not in sufficient quantities. An animal is taken for survival (food) (Wood, 1997: 5; Anonymous, 1992: 2) or to maintain one's cultural identity and traditions (Anonymous, 1992: 2). It differs from sport hunting in that the meat is necessary for survival (Wood, 1997: 6) and a memento of the hunt is seldom, if ever, kept.
- Commercial/Market hunting: here animals are killed not for food or to fulfill a psychological need, but in order to make a commercial profit. It is commonly found in pioneering communities and poor communities which have little other means to secure an income. It is seldom subject to regulations and wildlife populations are soon exploited through this type of hunting (Anonymous, 1992: 3; Wood, 1997: 5). This form of hunting can still be seen in commercial fishing where trawlers harvest wild stocks, of unknown populations levels, by net or by long-line.
- Animal damage management/problem animal control: in this situation animals may either be caught and relocated into a suitable area or they may be killed by a number of methods. Unlike hunting, where the intent is to possess animals, here the intention is to remove the animal from the area in which it is causing a problem (Anonymous, 1992: 4) and not to kill it.

Subsistence hunting and hunting to maintain a traditional identity are the two most commonly accepted forms of hunting. Kellert found that in the United States, 64% of the people

surveyed approved of hunting which was for purely recreational purposes as long as the meat was utilized. However, 80% of the people objected to hunting purely for trophies and 60% opposed hunting for recreational or sporting purposes (Wood, 1997: 12-13).

Hunters have traditionally been regarded as people who derive some form of pleasure in the killing of an animal. Recent studies have however indicated that the satisfaction gained from a hunt is more complex and not proportional to the size and/or number of animals shot. These studies indicated that solitude, exercise, suspense, excitement, challenge and skill are important factors making up the amount of satisfactions derived from the actual hunt (Cheatum in Wood, 1997: 15; Hammitt, McDonald and Patterson in Wood, 1997: 15; Wood, 1997: 14, 15). The best predictor of hunter satisfaction is an appreciation of the outdoors (Wood, 1997: 15). To Leopold, hunting was as natural as any of the ecological processes that occur in nature and enriched his life and expressed his moral ethics (Wood, 1997: 130).

These socio-psychological studies have indicated that hunters are not the blood-thirsty barbarians that they have traditionally been perceived to be. While one may not necessarily agree with a hunter's choice of sport, one can at least attempt to understand why he has chosen hunting as a form of recreation (Wood, 1997: 15). This understanding is the first step in reaching common ground and agreement between the hunters and the anti-hunters.

A number of problems regarding the acceptance of hunting have been introduced above. The lack of clear definitions and understanding of a concept have been outlined and their importance illustrated. The clash of interests between developing nations and developed nations, the different value assigned to animals and humans and the misconceptions regarding hunting have all been introduced in the above passages.

If the desire to reach common ground is being taken as a point of departure, where do we need to go from here? What needs to be done in order to begin to lay the foundation which will eventually lead to common ground being reached if it indeed proves possible?

### 3 METHODOLOGY

This assignment attempts to address the question of 'Is there common ground between those who support hunting and those who oppose it?' If so, why has this common ground never been found or never achieved widespread public acceptance? Is this due to a lack of effort or attempt to reach common ground, or, is there a fundamental difference in the value systems and the way that that the two groups conceptualize life? If so, can this be bridged? If it was unanimously accepted that life had inherent value and that it was fundamentally wrong to take a life except under exceptional circumstances, i.e. self-defense, how then would hunters justify the pleasure that they derive from the experience of the hunt? Similarly, if it was proved beyond all reasonable doubt that life only has instrumental value, would the anti-hunters accept hunting? In order to answer these questions, we first need to establish what questions, and in what sequence, we need to address.

Firstly, it would be impossible to strive towards a conclusion if we are unsure of the terms being used. It is essential that terms are used consistently and accurately. Before we begin to look at the current positions of the groups on either side of this conflict, the meanings of each term should be clarified as well as in what sense it will be used in this assignment. A description of the terms used, i.e. 'hunter', 'anti-hunter', 'ethics', 'sport or trophy hunting' and 'hunting', has been provided in the previous section and it has been shown how these descriptions differ between the various groups involved in the debate and the confusion that this causes.

Amongst the aspects that need to be substantiated and clarified is that of the personality of the hunter and the anti-hunter. An understanding of their psyche will enable one to propose more acceptable solutions and seek where there are apparently none. Not only their personalities, but also their attitude towards fellow men, nature and animals will determine the way in which they approach environmental problems. Although this is an important aspect to be addressed, it will not form part of this assignment. The role of personality and attitude in the debate at hand is a large and complex issue that is better dealt with on its own.

Secondly, in the attempt to achieve common ground, the assumption is made that a) such common ground exists, and b) that there is a genuine desire to reach such common ground.

These points will be addressed throughout the document and their evidence will become clear.

Thirdly, the arguments of each group are briefly discussed so as to orientate the reader in the debate. None of these arguments have to date led to a widely accepted argument either for, or against, hunting. Anne Causey (1989: 336) has pointed out that even if one group was proved correct and the other wrong, hunters would still wish to hunt and anti-hunters would still wish to see hunting halted. Why then do people feel the way they do?

A brief description of the various positions and arguments are presented in Chapters 2 and 3. Areas of discrepancy are highlighted and inherent weaknesses of the arguments, which can often be solved quite simply, i.e. by education, are revealed. For example, the fact that many hunters wound game thereby causing it unnecessary pain and suffering can be solved by hunter education and the improvement of shooting skills. It is not a reason in itself to ban hunting altogether. Similarly, methods of hunting can be altered to improve kill rates and the swiftness of the kill.

Once a clear understanding of the positions and arguments of the two groups has been obtained, the next step, Chapter 4, is to look at the solutions that have been proposed to date and identify why they have not been successful in addressing the problems at hand. The issue of whether or not common ground can be achieved and whether or not it is desirable is discussed throughout the chapter.

To do this, four previously proposed positions are briefly analyzed: the utilitarian argument, Regan's suggestion, community conservation and the religious argument. An attempt is then made to see how these principles can be adjusted and combined to reach the desired common ground without either group having to compromise their beliefs and standpoints.

Following on from this, Taylor's Priority Principles are discussed as a possible form of conflict resolution and it is shown how the drafting of guidelines will assist in facilitating discussions between the hunters and the anti-hunters.



If it is possible to find common ground between the hunters and anti-hunters, then surely this ground should be sought. It seems senseless to continue with a debate, which has often been physically and verbally violent, when some form of common ground can be found. Even if one group was to be proved right, it is unlikely that the other would be willing to give up their point of view. An attempt to reach a form of compromise should then be strived for. Should different cultural views not be respected and allowed to continue within some clearly defined guidelines drawn up in conjunction by both groups?

In order for a solution to be considered acceptable by the two groups, a broad outline of a solution needs to be drawn up and the proposal needs to be compatible with these guidelines. The finer details can be worked out at a later stage. The application of the priority principles as suggested by Taylor are looked at and the one most relevant to hunting is discussed. This approach does assume that both the hunters and anti-hunters are seeking an agreement over hunting. The very fact that a considerable quantity of literature is available on the hunting versus anti-hunting debate is support for presuming that there is a desire to find a solution to the problem. In certain instances the literature published is merely an attempt to either put a stop to hunting or an attempt to put a stop to the anti-hunters. Other literature however, does attempt to provide a workable, pragmatic solution to the problem. Authors such as Causey, Taylor, Whisker and Wood, amongst others, can be consulted in this regard.

This assignment does not intend to propose a solution to the problem but rather attempts to lay the first steps towards achieving common ground.

## CHAPTER 2

### BASIC ARGUMENTS OF THE HUNTERS

We have taken the desire to reach common ground as a point of departure and have identified the steps necessary to see if common ground can be reached. Our next step is to look at the arguments and positions of the two groups involved in the debate, the hunters and the anti-hunters. In order to reach a compromise or pragmatic solution to this debate, it is imperative that the arguments presented by each side are clearly understood. Over the years that this debate has been raging, each side has developed arguments, counter-arguments and counter-arguments to the counter-arguments. In this next chapter we will look at a brief outline of the various arguments presented by the hunters. These arguments are well documented in the literature available on hunting and, for more detailed arguments, the reader is referred to the available literature.

To date, those in favour of hunting have defended it in various ways and to various degrees. Ultimately, the hunter needs to recognize the incompatibility between revering nature and the possibility of taking a life. The hunter potentially spends hours stalking his quarry, gaining immense respect for it in the process, and then kills it (Causey, 1989: 327). How does the hunter resolve this conflict in his mind? Why are these resolutions not acceptable to the anti-hunter?

José Ortega y Gasset does not believe that hunters ever truly believe that their actions are correct. However, they are not sure that their actions are wrong either. This inner conflict is something that the hunter continually strives to clarify (Causey, 1989: 328). It also strengthens the hunter's desire to strive for perfection in hunting. No hunter ever thinks that his hunt was perfect and this desire to achieve perfection provides the benchmark against which one can measure their actions.

Ortega argues that photographic safaris should not be permitted as they prevent a proper set of ethics being defined by the hunter and a lack of opportunity to resolve the inner tensions experienced by the hunter. There can be no substitute for genuine hunting as the content of

hunting is precise and definable. The activity of the hunt ends when one pulls the trigger. Death is therefore an unavoidable factor of the hunt. No modernization of this idea or progress can take place because if the basic actions and components of a hunt are lacking, one is no longer hunting (Whisker, 1999: 2-3). Whisker further considers the classification and motivations of the hunt as of 'passing and academic interest' as they do not change the essential characteristics of the hunt itself (Whisker, 1999: 3).

## **1 Religious/Stewardship Arguments**

The euphoric sensation experienced by hunters upon the culmination of the hunt has often been described as an (almost) religious experience (Swan, 1995: 1). The power to take a life brings many hunters closer to God and is often considered a 'sacred act' (Fritzell, undated: 1). The humbleness displayed by God to the creatures of the earth should be mirrored in man's actions towards all forms of life (Rakow, 1997: 15-16) as humans were created in the 'image of God' (Genesis 1: 27).

The Bible is used by hunters and anti-hunters alike to support their respective arguments. With the majority of today's trophy hunters originating in the Western countries of America and Europe, this discussion focuses mainly on the Judeo-Christian Bible and concept of God. Christianity has often been accused of being anthropocentric and is considered by many to be the most anthropocentric religion of all. It has created a dualism between man and nature by giving man 'dominion' over nature. With man having been created in the image of the Creator, he is distinguished from the natural world and the Creation. Unlike ancient paganism where it was believed that every object in nature had its own spirit which needed to be placated before the object could be utilized, Christianity made it possible to exploit nature as the thought that only man possessed a soul or spirit meant that the spirit of an object no longer needed to be placated. Groups such as the ecofeminists have further considered Christianity to be 'patriarchal' and hunting to be 'necrophilic'. This has led to the domineering attitude of men and the consequent subordination of women and nature by men (Wood, 1997: 170).

Natural theology was followed by man in the early years and nature was studied purely to obtain a better understanding of God. Nature was perceived as the medium through which

God spoke to man, i.e. the plagues, burning bush etc. (White, undated: 49; Wood, 1997: 172-173). It was further seen as a place where one went to cleanse one's soul or as a place of penitence. It was not seen as a place of aesthetic wonder in which one could view the wonders of God's Creation (Cheney, 1997: 2).

The experience of being at one with nature combined with a recognition or belief that the world was created by God is strongly supported by the passages found in Genesis. Genesis 9: 3 quotes God as saying to Noah, 'Everything that lives and moves will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything' (Rakow, 1997: 10). This is interpreted as God giving man stewardship or custodianship over the natural world as well as the right to take the life of another living, sentient being for sustenance. It creates a division between the human and the non-human world. Further references of this stewardship can be found in Matthew 25: 14 and Luke 16: 2 (Merchant, 1990: 54).

It must be remembered that stewardship does not imply that nature only has instrumental value to man. When God had completed the Creation, He looked at it and declared it 'good'. This implies that nature is valuable in and of itself, i.e. it has inherent value and not instrumental value because man was not yet upon the earth when God declared the natural world 'good'. It further implies that the exploitation or abuse of this natural system may be considered a blasphemous act (Wood, 1997: 176). The command from God to 'Be fruitful and multiply, and replenish the earth and subdue it' (Genesis 1:28) is interpreted simply as an acknowledgement of man's authority to utilize the earth and not as permission to exploit and destroy the non-human world (Smick in Rakow, 1997: 15-16; Wood, 1997: 176, 179). Reference is made as to the value of man over animals in Luke 12: 6-7 and Mathew 6: 26-29. This again does not mean that animals do not have value (Wood, 1997: 184).

The presence of God in a hunt often leads hunters to achieve a higher degree of fair chase and to adhere to hunting principles more strongly. This is based on the belief that one is dealing with a higher degree of accountability than the nature conservation departments (Rakow, 1997: 18). Inherent in the idea of having 'dominion' over something implies that one is also responsible for it. Indeed, God clearly stated the first laws of hunting in Genesis 9: 4-5. Further restrictions were given in Deuteronomy 14: 5 and 12: 15 and Leviticus 17: 13-14 (Rakow, 1997: 11).

## **2 Instinct – Man the Hunter**

This theory is based on the fact that man is part of the natural world and as such possesses the same instincts as primitive man did. Man, like all the other components of the non-human world, is dependent on the natural world for his survival and is not apart from it (Devall & Sessions, 1994: 113; LaRocco, 1980a: 282). The environment provides food and sustenance to all living beings and, just as each part of the living natural environment derives its nutrition from other parts, man is no exception. The ecologist Aldo Leopold stated that humans are 'plain citizens' of the biotic community, not dominant over all other species (Devall & Sessions, 1994: 114).

Unlike other predators which feed mainly on meat, man is an omnivore. Although there is discrepancy whether man began life as a hunter or as a gatherer, it is generally agreed that his traditionally subsistence lifestyle has been replaced only in recent years by agriculture and stock farming. Instead of most of the people in a community being responsible for the provision of food to that community, now only a few are responsible for the provision of food to a large number of people from different communities. Production is no longer not restricted to the needs of one community.

This change in lifestyle does not however mean that hunting has become obsolete or unnatural. Hunters still hunt in an attempt to recreate the actions of the past and to experience nature in a more intimate manner. The act of hunting is a strong and direct link to nature. Hunting is a basic instinct which still exists in all of us (Rowland, 1998: 24-26). Even those of us who try to deny the existence of these feelings are proved wrong when we slow down to see what has happened at a car accident. This is our blood-lust. We may not have actually killed but we still find some form of pleasure, or at least fascination, from seeing blood.

Ehrenreich in Mallick (1997: 1) feels that man has not always been at the top of the food chain and blames man's attitude of dominance towards nature on their having once been 'a small, smooth, slender, clawless animal' that was 'the choicest item on the food chain'. The terror of having once been hunted is an inherent instinct in man today. Ehrenreich further

illustrates her point by studies conducted on children between five and six years of age. These children are instinctively afraid of snakes, lions, tigers and bears, but not burglars, hijackers and strangers. Man's tendency to be a social being is an attempt to achieve safety through numbers.

Leopold argues that hunting is an instinct that lies very deep in man. He considers it to be 'bred into the very fiber of the race'. The act of hunting is thus merely an expression of this instinct and, if done correctly, is beneficial to man. To Leopold, hunting is also an aesthetic experience which enriches one's life (Wood, 1997: 121). If people, especially children, do not get a chance to experience the act of hunting, their lives will be diminished (Wood, 1997: 121). The 'motive force' of a hunter has been described by Leopold as: 'We seek contacts with nature because we derive pleasure from them'. The pleasure is therefore aesthetically based with the economic and ethical aspects of these activities being secondary and as the result of hunting, not the cause of hunting (Wood, 1997: 198).

José Ortega y Gasset shares this view with Leopold. He argues that hunting is universal to living things (Wood, 1997: 122). They both consider hunting to be an expression of happiness and joy. Most hunters, when asked to describe their hunting experience, will say something about their thrilling experiences, quiet absorption and love of nature. However, most hunters can not express these feelings clearly and adequately. It is left to hunters/authors such as Ortega and Leopold to express these experiences and this they do in a way that is often argued to be so clear that it allows non-hunters to understand why they hunt (Wood, 1997: 109). This however should not be confused with an attempt to convert the non-hunter to a hunter.

Anne Causey (1989: 337) agrees with Ortega and Leopold saying that the conflict of emotions found in hunting is rooted in 'instinct versus intellect'. She argues the desire to hunt is deeply embedded in man but that this instinct became tempered by reason as man developed.

Unlike other predators however, man relies on his intelligence to capture and kill food. Man has thus developed a variety of ways to obtain food (Anonymous, 1992: 8; Reiger, J.F., 1980a: 124). This intelligence allows man to place limits on his hunting. The placing of these limits is often driven by an appreciation of the natural environment and a willingness to

preserve it. The recognition of man's dependence upon nature leads man to set self-imposed limits on his hunting activities. This he does both to extend his enjoyment of wildlife and so that he can pass these values and traditions on to his children and to their children (Reiger, J.F., 1980a: 122). Despite this intelligence and willingness to preserve the natural environment in as natural a state as possible, man's desire for material goods and his move towards civilization and consequently urbanization, has been the factor most responsible for the destruction of many natural areas and habitats (Krajewski, undated: 1; Reiger, G., 1980: 20).

Many hunters gain satisfaction from their ability to provide food. Being the breadwinner and having their wives go shopping does not achieve the same levels of satisfaction that hunting provides. The hunter is challenged with a physical responsibility and not merely an academic one. By providing food, the hunter participates directly with nature and achieves a sense of satisfaction and power by knowing that he can provide food for his family.

The act of hunting thus preserves an experience that was central to all human culture at one time. Hunting can be an act of commemoration, a celebration of older ways of life and of collective experience. According to Larson (1996: 3), hunting is deeply intertwined with memory; each new hunt taking place in the collective context of previous ones, and memories of lessons learned and stories told guide the hunter's actions. Environmental psychologist James A. Swan, in Larson (1996: 3-4), states that 'As long as our psyches do not change, we will never be able to give up our hunting heritage. The hunting instinct is bred into the bone and blood of at least most of us and is one of the fundamental elements of human nature. Our challenge as humans is to find the best ways to express our instinctual nature'.

### **3 Rites of Passage**

Hunting has been used as a ceremony by various communities throughout the ages to mark the reaching of adulthood, usually by young men and occasionally by young woman. These rites of passage were necessary for the very survival of the community itself which depended on providers and not consumers (Anonymous, undated a: 2-3). In order for young men or women to be accepted as adults, and no longer to be considered boys or girls, they are often required to execute daring and courageous deeds. Cultures made use of shame and guilt to

enforce codes which in turn increased the power of their rituals (Allen, 1991: 1). Because the difference between being a boy/girl and being a man/woman was of so much importance to earlier cultures, these communities created carefully ritualized and specified deeds which needed to be executed by the young hopeful. These rites were often highly dramatic and symbolized the death of the child and the rebirth of the child as a man/woman (Anonymous, undated a: 2). These rituals included hunting a dangerous animal, removal of or filing the teeth, patterned scarring of the skin, tattooing, pulling the hair out, circumcision or clitoridectomy (Anonymous, undated a: 2), barmitzvah's and being presented with a pair of long trousers (Anonymous, undated b: 1).

Rituals involve a number of stages in order for the child to make a successful transition into adulthood. These stages are separation (from the mother and caregiver), transition (the rite of passage) and incorporation (acceptance by the community as a provider). The transitional stage might take a short period of time or it might take a number of years depending on the systems available and acceptable to the community. This is the most dangerous stage as the status quo is upset by the young adults spending time away from the home and in the company of elders. It is here that the youngsters are most eager to learn as the elders challenge all their assumptions to help them ground the convictions necessary for adult life (Anonymous, undated a: 3). The achievement of adulthood requires a sacrifice, usually of heroic status, which expands the human capacity for taking on the attitudes and behaviour appropriate for an adult. The destination as well as the path to maturity and adulthood need to be clearly defined (Anonymous, undated c: 1). It is essential that this status is recognized by other members of the community.

Initially, the process of hunting was made up of rites and rituals before the hunt was actually carried out. These rituals were considered vital to the success of the hunt thereby ensuring the survival of the community. To not observe these rituals was considered taboo and they thus functioned as the earliest laws of conservation (Wood, 1997: 170). Young boys were taught these lessons when they underwent their rite of passage and were expected to adhere to them throughout their adult life.

Initiation rites, marking the passage from childhood to adulthood, are no longer as clearly defined in today's Western societies as they were in earlier times (Anonymous, undated b: 1).



This is due to the change from a rural to an urban lifestyle as well as a change in value systems. Methods of transformation have been lost and have not adequately been replaced (Anonymous, undated d: 1). How many of us remember wondering exactly when we were men and were no longer boys? The initiation rites of today's Western world are usually caught up in completing schooling, one's final exam's at university, obtaining a drivers license etc. What was originally a physical ordeal has since become a mental and academic one (Heacock, 1995: 1).

The informal rites of today's society are thought to have led to a breakdown in the maturing of a person and that persons uncertainly as to what role they are expected to play in society (Anonymous, undated e: 1). Many youths in today's Western world thus feel the need to undergo some form of ritual to ensure their acceptance into society. Teenagers have often resorted to self-initiation such as pregnancy, experimentation with sex, drugs and alcohol (Lee, 1998: 1), cigarettes, drivers license, military induction and training, the first job, graduation, games of danger (chicken, tracking, computer hacking, arrest and jail) and initiation into a gang (Anonymous, undated a: 1). Other teenagers and indeed many men, have used hunting, or the testing of their skills against nature, to self-initialize. These 'rites' serve to gain them attention in a world where they have become 'nameless' (Anonymous, undated a: 2).

Not all rites are however negative. Some families are still helping their children reach adulthood and make the necessary transitions in their life by looking to nature. Many families today still participate in camping weekends or hunting trips to simulate the passing on of knowledge from one generation to the next. Hunting's code of conduct and the hunter's value system are passed on to his children during these trips. This method is however often criticized for not recognizing modern man's concept of time. One cannot simply 'go back to nature' and partake in these rituals. These rituals will not achieve the desired result as youngsters will not be made fully aware of how to deal with today's urbanized, technological and materialistic world (Throop, 1998: 1).

When asking if a rite was successful, one simply needs to ask 'what kind of transformation has taken place in the process'? Has the person taken on the perspective and behaviour of an adult or does he still retain 'immature' attitudes (Anonymous, undated a: 3-4)?

#### **4 A Part of Nature**

As man has 'progressed' and become more civilized and changed from a rural to a urban lifestyle, he has become alienated from the land and from nature. His consequent lack of understanding of the natural world has led to fear and hence a desire to conquer or dominate it. In order to overcome this fear man needs to participate in nature (Wood, 1997: 23-33). This he can do through hunting. Mans desire to participate in nature can be seen in the ways in which man attempts to 'return to nature' (Wood, 1997: 154-155).

Ortega y Gasset (1995: 96-97) feels that 'one does not hunt in order to kill; on the contrary, one kills in order to have hunted'. A sportsman enjoys going through the process of having to make his own kill. If this were not the case, he might as well go to the butchery or supermarket and purchase his venison. The hunt presents the hunter, or sportsman, with the opportunity to immerse himself in the countryside, participate in healthy exercise and experience a distraction from the routine humdrum of the everyday working environment.

Although often criticized for not using traditional weapons when attempting to 'go back to and be a part of nature', man has always used what he considers to be state-of-the-art technology (Whisker, 1999: 3). Improvements in design of weapons have often made these weapons more effective thereby decreasing the potential suffering of an animal.

Leopold (1966: 227) felt that any man who was not moved by some form of interaction with nature is 'supercivilized'. Man's association with nature is something 'very deep'. He argues that: i) there is value in any experience that reminds us of our distinctive national origins and evolution; ii) there is value in any experience that reminds us of our dependency on the soil-plant-animal-man food chain, and of the fundamental organization of the biota; and, iii) there is value in any experience that exercises those ethical restraints collectively called 'sportsmanship'.

Leopold sums this attitude up as the 'man-earth' relation. He feels that it is only by participating in nature that one can fully learn the valuable lessons that nature can teach us (Wood, 1997: 125-126).

## 5 Sustainable Utilization

To the settlers arriving in a new country such as South Africa, the interior was filled with unknowns. While some of these unknowns were beautiful, many were violent and dangerous. Imagine the first settlers arriving in South Africa and being confronted with the power and danger of a lion (*Panthera leo*), the strength of an elephant (*Loxodonta africana*) or even the height of a giraffe (*Giraffa camelopardalis*)! Many of these early settlers were missionaries who regarded the indigenous inhabitants of the land as 'disciples of evil' as they appeared to be able to live in harmony with these 'evil' and dangerous beings (Cheney, 1997:2). The indigenous people further carried out 'primitive' rites aimed at pleasing the spirit of an animal which, according to the missionaries, were well known not to possess spirits. These people also practiced what was assumed to be witchcraft by speaking to their ancestors. It was therefore assumed that they were communicating with the devil.

These evils and dangers were best conquered, the wilds 'civilized', so that man did not have to fear for his very life. Janse van Rensburg (1990: 39) feels that it is also possible that the world view of having to conquer nature, rather than to live in harmony with it, stems from the projection of inner fears onto nature.

This conquering mindset led to the exploitation of many species. The seemingly endless numbers of game led to uncontrolled harvesting levels and sport shooting. As these settlers realized and admitted that certain species were becoming harder and harder to find, so game restrictions and regulations were introduced. These measures usually restricted the lower classes and indigenous people's access to the game which was in keeping with the way the Americans and Europeans had been implementing game laws for centuries (LaRocco, 1980a: 282). The settlers soon began to realize that everything had to be used in a sustainable manner so as to make it last. This sustainable utilization could be achieved in many ways i.e. trophy hunting, wildlife watching, commercial use, photographic safaris, ecotourism etc.

With a recognition for the need for sustainable use, the 'use it or lose it' train of thought has developed. Wildlife has lost its inherent value and has taken on a commercial value to many people. Developing nations fail to see why they should conserve wildlife and sacrifice their

development for the enjoyment of First World nations without deriving a great deal of benefit from doing so. Wildlife, in short, has to pay its own way. If it doesn't pay, it can't stay!

The 'use it or lose it' train of thought led to the need for a code of conduct to be developed. This code of conduct is in essence nothing more than common sense. Hunting however, soon ceased to be part of the daily lives of many people as food could be sourced elsewhere. With this distancing of people from their food source, many no longer saw the need to hunt, especially not for food. This led to the development of further codes of conduct as hunting fast became merely a sport to many people (Larson, 1996: 2-3). It was recognized that there would be no true sport unless the animals had a fair chance of escaping, and unless there was at least some risk to the hunter, however theoretical that risk might be (Reiger, J.F., 1980b: 130).

Furthermore, the importance of communities in conservation was recognized. The importance of the dependence of these communities on natural resources for their daily survival was acknowledged. Methods and principles of sustainable use needed to be and were drafted. The drafting of these methods and principles is however still in its infancy and it will be many years before a widely accepted proposal is put forward.

## **6 Wildlife Management Support Argument**

One important reason that hunting exists and is supported by professional wildlife managers is its usefulness as a wildlife 'management tool'. Hunting provides a mechanism to manage some wildlife populations, control social and environmental damages caused by certain species of wildlife and generate reliable funding for conservation. Through the direct contribution of funds for the management of populations and purchase of land, hunters have brought many species back from the brink of extinction (Wood, 1997: 42-43). Other species have benefited indirectly from this (Loftin, 1984: 248-249). However, these practical reasons are secondary to providing millions of people with an enjoyable and rewarding form of recreation. One of the most successful programmes is Ducks Unlimited which, since its establishment in the 1930's, has completed 2,900 wetland projects throughout North America, raised more than US\$337 million and reserved land exceeding 3.9 million hectares (Wynne-Jones, 1993: 66-68).

The majority of those people who oppose hunting feel that nature and wild populations in particular should be left alone and not interfered with by man. Man should not manage them as man is not above nature and has no right to interfere with these natural systems. Hunting as a management tool is thus opposed by anti-hunters.

Hunters, however, feel that the game populations living in natural areas are surrounded by unnatural areas which impact upon the natural ones. It is therefore necessary to manage the populations within these systems so that no one population is allowed to dominate and overrun the other. Hunting is a valuable management tool which enables this. Hunters were the first group to impose hunting restrictions and enforce laws thereby giving direction to game management (Wood, 1997: 40-41). Hunters further believe that wildlife managers and scientists are in the best position to determine how many animals should be removed from an area based on what the area can carry without detriment to any other species.

Wildlife managers have further, occasionally due to public demand, removed the natural predators of many prey species. The removal of predators is usually a result of insufficient space and/or the fact that predators often pose a threat to people, their domestic pets as well as their livestock. The populations of prey species then need to be controlled artificially (Causey, 1989: 329-330).

Hunters have not always agreed with wildlife managers, however. Trophy hunters generally prefer to take males (the sex most likely to possess trophy quality horns) whereas wildlife management requires a random selection of animals to be taken to ensure that no bias occurs in the population (Wood, 1997: 40-41).

The trophy hunter has a vested interest in conserving wildlife – if he hunts it all there will be nothing left to hunt. His desire to hunt can become self-defeating. Loftin (1984: 248) feels that if hunting is banned, one of the most successful pressure groups for conservation will be removed and conservation as a whole will be worse off for it.

## 7 Excess Population Argument

This argument can, according to Wood (1997: 40) be divided into two subarguments, the starvation argument and the renewable resource argument. These arguments are often confused. An excess population does not necessarily lead to starvation and starvation is not a result of overpopulation only.

### 7.1 Starvation Argument

Hunters have long claimed that they are doing their part to help control wildlife overpopulation, thus decreasing or eliminating starvation in areas that are overpopulated or experiencing a drought. They further claim that they are helping the farming industry by controlling animals which would otherwise damage crops or livestock (Krajewski, undated: 1).

Elephant, buffalo (*Synceros caffer*) and rhinoceros (*Ceratotherium* spp. and *Dicornis* spp.), the so-called 'megaherbivores', are reputed to increase in number to the point where they outcompete the smaller, and at times less numerous, species for resources. This could lead to the (local) extinction of some of these species. It is for instance, well known that where nyala (*Tragelaphus angasii*) and bushbuck (*Tragelaphus scriptus*) occur together, the nyala will always outcompete the bushbuck. Elephants, similarly, have the ability to destroy or alter their habitat at the expense of other species. Other herbivores such as impala (*Aepyceros melampus*) have the ability to increase so in numbers that they can alter the balance of competition between grass and trees allowing the trees to increase to their, and other species, detriment.

Man's unsatisfiable desire for land for agriculture and housing has reduced the possible areas for game to migrate to avoid negative factors, i.e. drought, overgrazing and floods in game reserves and other designated natural areas. Man thus has a moral responsibility to ensure that these last remaining vestiges of natural areas do not become so degraded that the populations living in them have nowhere else to go and consequently starve to death. Man has taken upon himself the responsibility of preserving biotic diversity by altering his natural habitat (Wood, 1997: 45-47).

In many areas, the natural predators of many species have been reduced and even eliminated making it necessary to control the numbers of the 'prey' animals. It is man's moral responsibility, therefore, to take on the role of predator in these situations (Varner in Gunn, 1997: 8).

## **7.2 Renewable Resource Argument**

While the starvation argument applies mainly to herbivores, this argument applies to other species as well. An important distinction is made here between an individual and a population. Game species or wildlife cannot be stockpiled. They have to be managed and kept at optimum levels at all times. We cannot simply put them into a container for later use when needed (Wood, 1997: 114).

Leopold's famous statement 'A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise', is also often used to support this argument. By hunting one, or a limited number of, animal(s) to ensure that their numbers are kept within the limits of the carrying capacity of the habitat, one is ensuring that the integrity, stability and beauty of the biotic community is being maintained. Leopold considers the entire ecosystem to be of value and maintaining the stability and integrity of an ecosystem ensures that this value is secured. Hunting must therefore be 'right' (Wood, 1997: 47-52). The killing of prey by a predator is part of the natural cycles of life and does not destroy the biotic community. It cannot therefore be an ethical violation. Leopold argues that as long as the non-human world does not lose its ability for self-renewal as a result of man's actions, his actions are not unethical (Wood, 1997: 114).

This argument is also supported by the 'replaceability argument' which stipulates that the death of one animal is acceptable as long as it is replaced by another (of the same kind). This however is not always practical, i.e. where an animal is being hunted because it has to be removed (Loftin, 1984: 249; Wood, 1997: 47-52).

## **8 The Money Argument**

Further to the provision of habitat, hunters argue that by creating a financial incentive and giving animals a financial value, there is now a reason to conserve them. The maintenance

and management of protected areas is extremely expensive and by allowing hunters to hunt animals, a high reward is obtained for relatively little effort and impact on the environment.

To hunt an animal costs huge sums of money. A hunter must pay the fee for the animal, equip himself, hire a professional hunter, book accommodation with a hunting outfitter and travel – usually to another country. Hunts usually costs a few thousand dollars depending on the length of the hunt and which species are hunted.

Unfortunately, not all of this money goes back into conservation. Much of it is retained by the safari outfitter. Fortunately, this is not always the case. Some money does find its way into conservation and is used for anti-poaching patrols, the purchasing of additional land, the general maintenance of the veld and other conservation projects.

In many developing countries, the money that can be generated from wildlife is the only reason that wildlife is being conserved (LaRocco, 1980b: 298; Simonds, 1995: 3). The argument here is then that hunting has benefits beyond the financial value of an animal. It is these benefits that need to be highlighted by the hunter (Larson, 1996: 3).

## **9 Human Rights Versus Animal Rights**

When arguing about whether or not it is ethical to shoot an animal, there is the implied statement that animals have rights. Some hunters argue that animals do not have rights in the sense that humans do. This argument suggests that because humans have the power of reason, they are aware of their actions and the consequences of those actions. This awareness makes man morally accountable. Animals, who do not have these same powers of reason, can therefore not be held morally accountable for their actions (Anonymous, undated f: 3; Eastland, undated: 1).

It has also been suggested that the current definition of 'sin' has been defined in a human context and it is therefore impossible to sin against an animal. The concept sin as outlined in the Bible, applies to mans relationship with man and mans relationship with God. Man can not therefore sin against an animal (Wood, 1997: 173).



It is further argued that if animals did have rights, it would then be wrong of us to expect them to work, i.e. the horse and the ox. Whisker (1999: 11) argues however, that man and dogs have developed a special relationship which he terms symbiotic. In this relationship, the two parties tolerate each other as they benefit mutually, i.e. the dog helped man to hunt in return for food. This argument can be extended to horses and cattle who might have found grazing difficult during the winter months but man had the ability to store food which he could feed to the animals during these months.

King (1991: 61) argues that hunting is an activity which deals specifically with wild animals and should therefore not be reduced to human-domestic animal debates. The issue of hunting steps outside of this arena.

Causey (1989: 338) argues that hunting is amoral, that it lies 'outside the jurisdiction of morality'. Hunting is thus not a moral issue. She qualifies this statement by adding that the acts of the hunter may be judged as either moral or immoral.

Eastland (undated: 1), agrees with Causey, arguing that hunting simply needs no justification. The activities of hunters do not harm non-hunters, and thus hunting is, and should be, accommodated by the non-hunting majority. He argues that should hunting become banned merely because it is disliked by the majority, whoever indulges in the next-most unpopular activity had best beware.

Vitali argues that our right to kill stems from our right to life. This right to life includes the taking of life in order to ensure our survival and the conditions necessary to that survival (Wood, 1997: 28-29). Vitali gives further support to hunting by stating that: i) it does not violate any animal's moral rights; ii) its primary object is the exercise of human skills; and, iii) it contributes to the ecological system by ensuring the continuation of the natural cycles. He disagrees with Eastland and Causey that hunting is amoral by arguing that it is a natural good and a moral good (Wood, 1997: 49).

Whisker (1999: 4-5) argues that hunting implies a necessary inequality between the hunter and the hunted. He points out that nature consists of various inequalities, i.e. the lion is stronger and runs faster than an impala, herbivores have the advantage of movement over

vegetation etc. If these inequalities did not exist, nothing would be able to feed and thus survive in nature. He argues that this is why man is unable to hunt other men. A man may only fight, pursue or chase his fellow man, he cannot hunt him.

In a counter attack to the anti-hunters argument that hunting is cruel and animals should have the right to live a life free of pursuit by man, hunters argue that nature does not grant the right to life to any individual, merely the opportunity to try and survive (Anonymous, 1992: 24).

Whether or not humans are the only beings that count morally, human actions towards animals are morally accountable. Causing harm and destruction unnecessarily is not morally acceptable (Anonymous, undated f: 3).

## **10 Enjoyment**

Causey argues that the various arguments put forward to support or oppose hunting are irrelevant. She states that if all arguments were removed, each side would still maintain its position. She argues that hunters hunt simply because they enjoy hunting – ‘the motive for sport hunting boils down to the enjoyment of activities undertaken as part of the quest for and ultimately the achievement of the kill. In the final analysis, the hunter does not hunt to manage, harvest, control, cull or thin herds of game, he hunts to kill, and the accusatory note always rings loudest when the anti-hunter angrily declares that the hunter kills for fun’ (Wood, 1997: 34).

Man no longer needs to hunt for food. He hunts now to fulfill basic needs and instincts. Whisker (1999: 3) states that we ‘hunt now to amuse ourselves, not to survive’. Although many anti-hunters recognize that hunting is no longer necessary for daily survival, they have yet to acknowledge it fully as a form of recreation. By appealing to basic instincts, it satisfies a deep inner need in man. Ortega y Gasset wrote: ‘Other living beings simply live. Man, on the other hand, is not given the option of simply living; he can and must dedicate himself to living. ... And it happens that many men of our time have dedicated themselves to the sport of hunting.’ (Reiger, J.F., 1980b: 128).

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We can see from the positions and arguments outlined above that the hunter attempts to justify his position from a variety of standpoints. These arguments stem from different levels in the human psyche such as the instinctive, emotional, religious and aesthetic. Many of these argument, i.e. starvation argument, wildlife populations support argument etc., merely address the need for the management of populations. They do not address the morality of the question 'does man have the moral right to kill?' These arguments are therefore easily countered by the anti-hunters who argue the issue on a moralistic basis.

## CHAPTER 3

### BASIC ARGUMENTS OF THE ANTI-HUNTERS

While hunters have looked at the ways in which hunting is beneficial to man and to the animals themselves, anti-hunters have asked the question: 'What gives man the moral right to take the life of another living being?' They do not feel that the answers and reasons provided by hunters are adequate.

The meaning of the word 'ethics' has changed over the years from referring to 'human versus human' relationships to referring to 'human versus nature' (Wood, 1997: 112-113). This change was mostly due to the works of Aldo Leopold. He extended the meaning when he defined conservation as 'a state of harmony between men and land'. Leopold further said that all elements of the biosphere were deserving of ethical consideration (Wood, 1997: 112-113). Hunters generally still refer to ethics in the 'human versus human' sense where to them, ethical hunting means following a code of conduct and rules of fair chase. Anti-hunters on the other hand, use the word ethics as meaning 'human versus nature'. To them, ethics implies morality.

The objections put forward by the anti-hunters are as broad and varied as those of the hunters themselves. The main arguments are as follows (Telecky & Lin, 1995: 3-4):

- Trophy hunters kill tens of thousands of animals annually, including hundreds of rare, endangered and threatened animals;
- Governments, especially those of developing countries, encourage trophy hunters because they stand to gain financially from the activity. This often takes place in the absence of sound management and conservation plans;
- Trophy hunting has caused the decline of, and continues to threaten, endangered and vulnerable species. Claims otherwise are unproven;
- Taxpayers in countries such as the United States of America, have contributed more money to conservation than hunters have (through sheer numbers); and,

- Most of the money a hunter pays for his hunt goes to the safari outfitter and not back into conservation. Further, this money seldom reaches the local communities it purports to assist.

Whisker (1999: 116-117) considers there to be six main arguments against hunting: i) it is uncivilized; ii) it is murder; iii) possible harm may come to man himself; iv) hunting produces aggression; v) man allegedly hunts only to prove his masculinity; and, vi) it allegedly has an adverse effect on animal life. Other authors consider there to be more and a summary of these arguments are discussed below.

## **1 Religious Argument**

The value of nature is considered to be supported by the 'Noah Principle'. This theory states that animals and birds are worth saving because God considered them worth saving during the flood which occurred in Noah's time. This can be extended to give reason to support animals that are not of commercial value (Wood, 1997: 179).

The Bible clearly states that God loves all creatures great and small. Guidelines for the treatment of animals are found in Deuteronomy 22: 6-7, Exodus 23: 10-11 and Leviticus 25: 6-7. The Bible also points out that the way a person treats his animals is a reflection of one's true moral character (Proverbs 12: 10) (Rakow, 1997: 14-15).

Many people feel that the younger generations of today do not get enough opportunities to participate in nature and experience it. The Rev. R.S. Crosely (Krajewski, undated: 2) states that 'Personally, I cannot see how anyone can really love God and yet be cruel to any of the creatures He has made.' He applauds the effort made by society today to encourage children to participate in environmental activities and nature walks.

## **2 Instinct – Man the Hunter**

The hunters argument that hunting fulfils a basic need and that man is simply responding to a deep, well entrenched instinct, is refuted by the anti-hunters as not being necessary. It is argued that hunting is no longer a basic need and as man has evolved, so man has moved away from the desire to hunt (Wood, 1997: 75).

While a case can be made for subsistence hunting, a discussion of this is beyond the scope of this document.

Gunn (1997: 2) supports this argument by saying that 'hunting is unworthy of civilized beings' and is not necessary for the fulfillment of important human interests. He considers vital needs to include only those which are essential for survival as well as physical and psychological well-being. This includes having a 'flourishing natural environment' which is easily destroyed by the actions of hunters.

Whisker (1999: 116) reports that although primitive man was like other animals, he was also the ultimate predator who had the capacity to raise himself up to overcome this primitive behaviour and truly civilized man would thus not seek to kill anything.

### **3 A Part of Nature**

Hunting has often been described by novelists in a romantic light (Wood, 1997: 74). Authors such as Wilbur Smith have created a romanticized and stereotyped image of a hunter. They are all portrayed as having a deep love for nature and good fortune always falls on them in the end. However, this is not the case. Blood, pain, sweat, flies and ticks are seldom mentioned. The pain of the wounded animal is seldom mentioned as are the moral aspects of the hunt. Nature, often portrayed as Mother Nature, the sensitive and caring deity, is very different in real life. Hunters who seek to return to nature and become one with it are fooling themselves when they pack stretchers, sleeping bags, insect repellent, mosquito nets and take along tins of food and drinking water.

Humans, according to John Merrick, do not occupy a special place in nature. Humans are just as much a part of nature as the non-human world is. Human genetics are very closely linked to those of chimpanzees (*Pan spp.*) and the other great apes. In fact, scientists have not been able to find any fundamental difference between animals and humans and the differences that they have identified are based on degree and not on kind (Wilson, 1997: 1-2). Evolution has not separated humans from nature (Wilson, 1994: 2). For this reason man should not assume that it is acceptable to hunt or that he has the right to do so. If man is related to other animals, then surely it is not morally acceptable to hunt these animals.

#### **4 Wildlife Management Support Argument**

When answering the questions posed by anti-hunters, hunters often quote impressive sounding statistics and data to support the fact that they are assisting in wildlife management and that without hunting, wildlife management would not be possible. This argument is very similar to the Excess Population Argument and Starvation Argument which states that wild animals will breed until they reach such numbers that they become capable of destroying their own habitat and those of other animals living in that habitat.

But is this true? Animals such as the elephant, a megaherbivore which has the capacity to reach high numbers in a relatively short period of time, indeed are capable of having an impact on the environment and the other animals living in that environment.

The argument put forward by hunters is also often generalized. Not all species have the capacity to reach such numbers that they will impact on the habitat of others. Animals such as wild dog (*Lycaon pictus*) and cheetah (*Acynonyx jubatus*), who require large home ranges, will continue to disperse and recolonise areas without every becoming overpopulated. Also, while animals may become overpopulated, this does not provide one with a moral reason for hunting (Loftin, 1984: 244).

It must however be remembered that nature consists of cycles and fluctuations. If one studies the history of an area over a long enough period of time, one will find that it was possibly once a grassland, later a savannah and still later a forest area. From a forest, it might regress back to a grassland or to a savannah before again becoming a forest. These are natural cycles and it is these very cycles which have caused evolution to 'create' the species we have today. Fluctuations in the vegetation type, often influenced by animals, should therefore be allowed.

Ron Baker argues that the word hunting, which is defined by dictionaries as 'guarding or protecting animals or keeping wildlife populations in a safe or entire state' could not possibly allow for hunting. There is a fundamental contradiction between the aims of the two activities. (Wood, 1997: 73).

Hunting removes animals from the natural population which would otherwise be available to predators and whose nutrients would otherwise have been recycled. While this is not a humane argument for the prey animal, it supports allowing natural ecosystems to function as normally as possible (Wood, 1997: 75-76). Hunting, essentially, is a threat to biodiversity as it removes those genes which are most suitable to be passed on to future generation as the natural breeding opportunity of the animal ceases with death (Gunn, 1997: 2).

Anti-hunters have argued that hunting is not a 'management tool' while the hunters state that ecosystems which are managed, be it for hunting or game viewing, are managed so that as high a population as possible can be maintained. This maximizes the game viewing opportunities and maximizes the revenue that can be obtained from hunters (Wood, 1997: 76-77). Not all species are hunted and those that are, are usually those whose numbers need to be controlled for the continued survival of others.

Sport hunting is reputed to help keep the herds of trophy animals healthy and free from disease. This argument is rejected by anti-hunters as 'simply wrong'. At best, the killing of the healthy and the unhealthy is random and often hunters shoot the largest and the strongest which also happens to be the breeding male. Some anti-hunters prefer natural population-control mechanisms such as disease. Hunting then may have a negative effect on the gene pools of game species which resembles 'evolution in reverse'. Hunters seek the strongest, prime bulls, thereby removing their 'strong' genes from the population. Also, the genetic basis for the size of the horns is removed. Young rams are thus subject to greater stress if allowed to participate in the breeding strategy with older rams and are likely to have a shorter lifespan as a result (Wood, 1997: 76-82).

## **5 Starvation Argument/Overpopulation Argument**

Every population in the wild naturally loses a number of individuals each year. These individuals are often considered 'surplus' as they will die anyway whether it be from starvation, disease, predation or old age. However not all species over populate an area and produce what are truly 'surplus' animals. If a population is not producing truly 'surplus'



animals, why hunt them? Moreover, this still does not give us the moral right to kill that animal. (Loftin, 1984: 245).

Hunting does not remove animals in a natural way (Loftin, 1984: 245-246). Hunters prefer male animals and preferably those with fully developed horns that have not yet started to wear away from old age. They are, therefore, hunting prime breeding animals. Females are seldom taken and this can easily lead to sexual bias within a population. Weak and sick animals are also seldom taken. As a result of this sexual bias, social structures are disrupted with there being insufficient males to mate with the females. Where dominant males control the activities of younger males, the lack of dominant males allows the females to be harassed by younger males who are not yet ready for breeding but are merely going through the motions of doing so. Females may not conceive under these conditions and the population may experience a crash as a direct result of the hunter's activities.

Starvation is also a natural phenomenon in nature. It serves to weed out the weak and inferior and provides food for predators. An animal weakened by starvation or disease is more likely to be removed by a predator which ensures a quick death. Hunting, however, will overlook such an animal and it is more likely to die a slower more painful death.

## **6 Cruelty, Animal Rights and Animal Liberation**

It is an unavoidable fact that every animal has to die eventually. Under this argument the issue is not dying but rather the way that an animal dies. Many hunters today purchase a rifle and fire a few shots in the shooting range before heading out onto safari. Placing a shot on an animal in such a way that it dies instantly is an art and everybody, regardless of how good a shot they are, will get it wrong at some stage. The pain and suffering experienced by an animal while it dies can not be justified according to many anti-hunters (Loftin, 1984: 245-246; Wood, 1997: 64-65). Other animals are only lightly wounded and manage to escape the hunter. While the fortunate few recover from these wounds, many do not and die up to several days later in considerable pain.

This argument was extended by animal liberationists such as Singer and Regan. They argued that animals not only have a right to life but also have a right to a good quality of life,

i.e. good conditions, adequate food and a life free from human intervention (Regan in Causey, 1989: 329; Merchant, 1990: 66). Any human action violating these rights should be considered immoral (Causey, 1989: 329).

The focus here is on the individual animal unlike the hunter who focuses on the population as a whole. Anti-hunters do not want to see even one animal suffer as they feel this suffering to be unnecessary and unjustifiable. Hunters on the other hand, are prepared to sacrifice a few animals for the good of the whole.

According to Paul Taylor (1986: 179), humans are bound to obey a 'Rule of Fidelity' whereby animals place a certain degree of trust in us. Animals that have never seen humans before are curious about them and are not frightened in the least. Fear of humans is not instinctive in animals. This trust should not be broken by hunting animals as it shows a lack of respect. Peter Singer (1995: 58-59) argues that being vegetarian is a moral obligation as not being so causes more pain and suffering than it does pleasure.

Certain animals, such as whales, elephant, rhinos and dolphins, have become 'special animals' (Gunn, 1997: 2). These animals are deserving of special status as they provide considerable satisfaction, aesthetic and recreational value to humans. The pleasure experienced by a human hunting them does not override the aesthetic pleasures experienced.

Animals do not have the ability to communicate with humans on a human level. Humans must therefore speak out on behalf of non-humans to ensure that their interests are looked after and are accorded as much consideration as human interests are (Krajweski, undated).

This interest in the rights of an animal is driven by compassion (Wilson, 1997: 1). Compassion can lead to a bias for one species but rational, logical thought should be employed to guard against this. Emotions should not be allowed to overcome logical thought.

From where does man get his right to take a life? Horwood (1984: 446) states 'I do not think that any man has the right to take life. When he thinks he has he is at his most dangerous'.

Hunting deprives an animal of something that is valuable to it – its life (Gunn, 1997: 2). So, hunting is immoral.

## **7 Aggression and Murder**

Animals are trusting of man and other animals and do not seek to deliberately harm anything. Any killing that is done is done purely for the purpose of obtaining food and ensuring survival. Also, animals seek to kill something as swiftly and efficiently as possible. Man however, through his use of traps and snares, does not seek to kill swiftly and efficiently. Man kills to satisfy an inner desire for sadistic pleasure, he does not kill for survival (Whisker, 1999: 116).

Countries such as America have brought in rules regarding the clothes and methods one may employ in order to hunt. Many hunters have been wounded, even fatally, by another hunter with trigger fever. Hunters are now required to wear orange clothing and to find a suitable area where they wait for the game to come to them instead of stalking and tracking the game. Hunting is criticized by animal rights groups and others because it can cause harm to man himself, the animal and to the property on which the hunt is taking place (Whisker, 1999: 116).

Hunting is used by many men to relieve tension and stress. Aggression and frustration are taken out on the natural world by killing animals. 'Civilized' man should reject violence as he is able to weigh up the benefits and costs of his actions. Civilized man is far enough advanced to have found alternative methods of dealing with stress and tension. Hunting is also used by people to practice the art of killing which might one day be necessary to use against other human beings. Hunting is a natural substitution for war, sharpening and honing one's killing skills (Whisker, 1999: 116).

## **8 Arguments Against Chauvinism**

Many believers in woman's liberation or ecofeminism believe that hunting derives from a desire by men to dominate and possess other objects seeming to possess lesser qualities, be they female or non-human. Patriarchal societies have led men to believe that what they are doing is correct. They have transferred their dominance over woman to dominance over

nature (Wood, 1997: 70-72) which is often seen as female and possessing of female qualities, i.e. Mother Nature.

The act of killing enhances and strengthens man's 'macho' image (Whisker, 1999: 117). Masculinity is measured by the size of the bag or the size of the trophy obtained. Hunting is also seen as a masculine sport which is only undertaken by 'the real men'. A man might hunt in order to be seen as a 'man'.

## **9 The Money Argument**

The claim by hunters that they contribute considerable financial resources to conservation has been refuted by anti-hunters. They argue that by far the larger amount of money a hunter pays for his hunting trip goes to the account of the safari outfitter and not to the communities or conservation as claimed. Organizations such as the Humane Society of the United States (HSUS) and International Fund for Animal Welfare (IFAW) collect considerable amounts of money annually which are invested into actual conservation. Money can also be raised by allowing game viewing and photographic safaris. The death of an animal is not a prerequisite for raising money (Gunn, 1997: 16).

Regardless of how much money is collected by hunting and where this money eventually ends up, money does not give a hunter the moral right to take a life. Hunters feel that conservation can be better supported in many other ways than by killing what one protects (Larson, 1996: 3).

## **10 Special and Rare Species**

The species that inhabit the earth today have evolved over millions of years. These species are continuing to evolve but at a rate so slow it is not evident to humans. A species thus represents a special and unique combination of genes which is valuable in itself. Man has a duty to protect and ensure the survival of these species so that they may continue to evolve in a natural manner which will ensure that they are best adapted to the environment in which they live.

Although killing an elephant has no greater moral significance than killing an impala, the killing of an elephant has a greater environmental impact than killing an impala. It can therefore be viewed differently from an ecological perspective.

Similarly, the killing of the dodo (*Raphus cucullatus*) led to the extinction of the Calvaria (*Calveria* spp.) tree which was dependent upon the dodo for scarification of its seed which allowed germination to take place.

Man does not have sufficient understanding of the various ecosystems to know what impact his actions will have. Man should therefore rather err on the side of caution, especially with rare species.

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As with the positions and arguments of the hunters, we can see from the positions and arguments outlined above that the anti-hunter attempts to justify his position from a variety of standpoints. Again, these arguments stem from different levels in the human psyche, such as the emotional, religious, sympathetic and aesthetic. The most common reason for opposing hunting is the recognition and acknowledgement of the rights of animals. They argue along the Kantian line of thought that a rule must be true for everybody at all times. Just as it is wrong to take the life of a human, it is wrong to take the life of an animal, regardless of the circumstances.

However, unlike the arguments of the hunters, the anti-hunting arguments attempt to address the morality of the questions at hand. They seldom however, allow for different lifestyles and cultural identities which makes them unacceptable to many people. These arguments are often emotional in nature which makes them inaccessible to the hunter who does not have an emotional attachment to the animal he hunts but rather to the process of the hunt itself.

The positions of these two groups can be broadly classified as anthropocentric and utilitarian for the hunters, and as biocentric or ecocentric, with a certain degree of deontology, for the anti-hunters. This supports earlier statements reading the different value systems held by the two groups. This polarization of viewpoints has however, led to considerable mistrust

between the two groups. Part of this mistrust is based on a fear that by admitting to or allowing one point, the group will be forced to concede on all others. In so doing, they will lose their identity and their position.

Is it then possible to bridge this gap and find common ground between the two groups? If differences have been found regarding values and outlooks on life, can these groups move away from their beliefs in an attempt to resolve the problem at hand. While neither groups is being asked to give up its values, it would be advantageous to the animal being hunted if the groups would be willing to find a middle ground which could be used as a point of departure from which new guidelines and codes of conduct established. The hunter and the anti-hunter could agree to a certain amount of hunting taking place which would have to adhere to prescribed rules and regulations. Also, pain, suffering and cruelty could be avoided in the process.

Let us now look at some of the solutions that have been proposed and try to identify why they have failed or have not become widely acceptable. This insight will become an aid in identifying how to go about seeking common ground which will enable these two groups to work towards certain common goals.

## **CHAPTER 4**

### **TOWARDS COMMON GROUND**

#### **1 INTRODUCTION**

We have now looked at the manner in which the various terms will be used in this assignment and the way in which these terms can cause confusion when not used properly. It is essential that the two groups, particularly the hunters, become more proactive in their attempt to identify a suitable definition of the term hunting, ethics and code of conduct. In order to do this, hunters need to be willing to sit down with the anti-hunters and seek a way forward. Anti-hunters must likewise be willing without either side dismissing the other as 'blood-thirsty barbarians' or 'bunny-huggers' respectively.

The first step in reaching any agreement or middle ground is to identify exactly what that middle ground is. It would not be practical to expect everyone to share the same beliefs and ideals as these beliefs and ideals are affected by one's upbringing, culture and experience. What should therefore be aimed for is an acceptance of another point of view (Macdonald, 1987: 464). Hunters and anti-hunters alike should strive for mutual respect.

#### **2 PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS**

If we conceptualize the hunters and anti-hunters as each being inside a bubble or circle, then it is quite feasible to conceptualize these two bubbles being brought together so that they overlap to a certain degree. It would be unrealistic to expect these bubbles to overlap totally but even the smallest overlap would be a start to reaching some form of agreement. To a certain extent these bubbles do overlap already. Certain anti-hunters have acknowledged that the killing of animals is acceptable in some situations, i.e. self-defense, harmful organisms (bacteria and viruses) and for food. What we are now trying to achieve is the extension of this overlap so that it might cover trophy hunting. Safari Club International has recognized the need to address this issue (Anonymous, 1997: 2) if they wish to continue hunting.

## 2.1 VOCABULARY

To achieve this change, both groups need to be willing to accept the weaknesses of their arguments. This requires a change of mindset, thought patterns and enlightened self-interest (Midgely in Prescott-Allen, Prescott-Allen and Trzyna, 1993: 13). The vocabulary of wildlife hunting has changed in recent years but some criticize this saying that this is merely a disguise or an attempt to fool people into thinking that an action is something that it is not. Vocabulary then is not an answer to achieving a greater overlap in thinking. It is the actual actions which need to be addressed. Greater transparency needs to be brought into hunting and the fear of having to give up one's position needs to be reduced. It must however be kept in mind that 'perception is reality' (Anonymous, 1997: 2).

When developing a suitable vocabulary, one should avoid confusing prudence and morality. Acting in a prudential manner means that one is simply acting in one's overall best interests. Morality often requires some form of self-sacrifice so as to ensure that others are not harmed. Moral actions require one to be accountable for their decisions whereas prudence only requires one to have a thorough knowledge of the issue at hand (Rowland, 1998: 24).

Similarly, legality and morality need to be clarified and separated. A legal action may not necessarily be a moral action, i.e. slavery and canned-lion hunting. A moral action requires an accountability whereas legal actions do not (Rowland, 1998: 24).

A universal vocabulary does however need to be developed so that we can be sure that we are all talking about the same thing and using these words in the same sense. We have already seen the confusion created by the two different interpretations of the word 'ethics' i.e. code of conduct versus man's moral behaviour. As with any sport, hunting has developed its own vocabulary. This vocabulary makes it harder for the anti-hunter to understand and relate to the thoughts being expressed by the hunter. Hunters tend to express their experience of a hunt in a more factual (but not necessarily correct or objective) manner which alienates the anti-hunter. Anti-hunters on the other hand, tend to express their thoughts in an emotional and sentimental manner which alienates the hunter. This vocabulary tends to polarize people (Larson, 1996: 5).



Anti-hunters use their language to address the general public and often create a linkage between the wild animal that is being hunted and a pet animal loved and cared for by its owner(s) (Larson, 1996: 5). The arguments of anti-hunters are therefore structured to produce responses more closely aligned with pets than with wild animals. This raises the question of whether or not there should be any moral difference between the way we treat domestic pets, domestic animals and wild animals. Anti-hunters generally feel that there should be no difference while hunters on the other hand feel that there is a difference and it is this difference which allows wild animals to be hunted.

Ethics, by definition, are value-laden and addresses emotional issues (Lyngne in Prescott-Allen *et al.*, 1993: 12) even though it attempts to use rational thought in reaching its decisions. Ethics can be considered an attempt to find common ground between two or more divergent views or perceptions. Priority should therefore be given to reason, argument and logic to create a degree of overlap between these different ideas (Lyngne in Prescott-Allen *et al.*, 1993: 12).

## **2.2 USE OF THE MEDIA**

The anti-hunters and the hunters have more or less clearly defined roles and positions in the media. These positions and roles need to be redefined in order to address the problem at hand. Anti-hunters and hunters alike need to be consistent in their attitudes in order that they may be politically effective.

The anti-hunters are usually quick to address the public by bringing an issue into the public arena. They employ experienced media liaison officers who issue press releases, organize rallies etc. Hunters on the other hand, seldom deal with the media in a proactive way. Hunters generally only respond to press releases and 'disappear' when a rally takes place. In the Tuli Elephant debacle for example, it was groups such as National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals (NSPCA), People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA), IFAW and other animal rights and welfare organizations that brought experts to inspect the elephants, made the public aware of the issue at hand and attempted to put an end to the cruelty that was allegedly taking place. Hunters and sustainable use organizations

such as Professional Hunters Association of South Africa (PHASA), World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Endangered Wildlife Trust (EWT) and, initially, the Rhino and Elephant Foundation (REF) were slow to put out press releases and check up on the cruelty allegedly taking place. The anti-hunters thus shaped the debate and process that followed in this case. In short, they dominated the proceedings which affected the outcome of the situation.

Hunters should therefore establish a sound, professional way of dealing with the media and the public if they wish to achieve recognition and acceptance by the general public and the anti-hunters (Larson, 1996: 1). At a workshop held in August 1999 to address the role of hunters in society, it was agreed that the hunting and sustainable use organizations should have taken a far more proactive role in the debate and should have come out decrying cruelty and in support of the welfare of animals. As it was, the hunters gave the impression that they did not care.

Hunters should make an effort to reach out to the anti-hunters and explain the role that hunting has in their lives, their culture and that the welfare of these animals is just as important to them (Larson, 1996: 1). Hunters should further make videos which can be shown on television which better explain the natural cycles that occur within nature and which show hunting in a good light. These statements should also discuss bad hunting and why it is not considered acceptable by the hunting fraternity (Wood, 1997: 154). It is relatively easy to show an animal being shot against a fence in a few minutes – seconds even. It is much harder to show how a hunter stalks an animal over a period of hours, the difficulties experienced by the hunter and the appreciation and emotional experience of the hunter in the same time period. Likewise, it is difficult to show the impact of overpopulation and habitat deterioration in such a short time. This leads to hunters showing video's of 'shooting' while hunters try to depict 'hunting' (Wood, 1997: 163-164).

### **2.3 TALKING TO EACH OTHER**

Anti-hunters disagree amongst themselves as to whether or not hunting is wrong. Some feel that hunting, or the killing of an animal, is justified in certain circumstances. Others feel that it is not. The majority of anti-hunters do agree that hunting in order to obtain a trophy is morally unacceptable.

Hunters find it hard to understand the viewpoint of an anti-hunter. They do not have emotional attachments (i.e. sentimentality) to the animals that they are about to hunt. Rather, they have emotional attachments to the process and methodology of the hunt. The spiritual and emotional sensations experienced by the hunter are a result of stalking an animal and testing one's wits against that animal. Hunting appeals to an inner need of a human.

Anti-hunters object to the fact that a sport has been made out of killing an animal. What hunters try and explain is that 'killing' is not a sport (Hillis, 1996: 1). It is the stalking and challenge of hunting which makes it hunting and makes it a sport. If hunters merely wanted to kill something there are many easier ways of going about this. The so-called 'canned-hunts' could be used to counter argue this point but the majority of hunters would most certainly also decry this action and would not consider it a sport. Hunters and hunting organizations need to be more vocal in expressing their outrage at such incidents.

The fundamental argument between hunters and anti-hunters is considered by some to be based on the different assessments of the nature of the hunt. Anti-hunters consider it to be blood-thirsty, image enhancing and killing while hunters consider it to be an expression of a love for the outdoors, a way of supporting conservation, participation in a family or cultural ritual or as acting out one's role as a predator in the natural scheme of things (Wood, 1997: 16). Hunters should respond to anti-hunters in the same way that anti-hunters have been questioning hunters for years. Hunters should ask for proof of how 'hunting' impacts negatively on populations and should reject the responses illustrated by example of 'shooting' (Macdonald, 1987: 464), clearly explaining why.

It has been suggested that hunting, in a democratic society, should be considered a minority right. However, hunting should not be done away with on the grounds that some people don't approve of it. Studies conducted by Kellert in the United States of America have shown that approximately 40% of the American population approves of hunting, 17% had hunted within five years prior to the survey and only 5.5% hunted on a regular basis (Macdonald, 1987: 463). If one is going to delve into the world of politics, it must be remembered that the media will have an important role to play in increasing public awareness and understanding. Education at a school level will lead to better understanding by children (Wood, 1997: 164).

As we have already seen, our upbringing and culture affects our attitude to wildlife and this is a valuable tool that is being neglected by the hunters.

## **2.4 MANAGEMENT OF WILDLIFE**

The issue of 'ownership' of game has not been addressed adequately. South African law considers game to be *res nullius*. Clarity regarding the ownership of game is necessary for the determination of who is responsible for looking after the wildlife and who is responsible for enforcing the laws decided upon.

The impact of this acceptance of hunting has far reaching consequences. Certain communities, and indeed countries, are dependent on the income derived from wildlife utilization. In order to ensure this continued source of income they need to ensure that hunting is conducted in a fair and sustainable way and that it complies with a clearly defined code of conduct. Money should not be accepted at the expense of poor conduct as this will impact negatively on their long-term income. Management plans, population surveys and impact studies should be carried out professionally and regularly. It is also essential that they are complied with and this compliance is enforceable.

## **2.5 THE POLITICAL ARENA**

Basie Maartens, Chairman of PHASA, emphasized that an educational system was needed for both hunters and anti-hunters. He stressed the need for the development of a culture of ethical hunting among all hunters. This could best be achieved by using a media campaign to address their members (Anonymous, 1997: 6).

The use of politics to create an awareness and acceptance of hunting is complex. The thought and beliefs of society vary considerable even within a single society. Behan argues that 'a single, comprehensive public interest' does not exist (Wood, 1997: 155). Hunters have generally relied on government's dependency on wildlife resources to continue hunting. This is a dangerous practice as the development of Third World nations might reduce their dependence on these resources and this policy may fall away. Also, with the advent of democracy, governments are being forced to become more transparent in their actions and are now being held responsible for the outcome of these actions. The people that are most

active in holding the government accountable, will naturally become the most influential on government decisions. Political decisions are now based on the desire of the public and are no longer secured by political belief. The desire of a party to stay in power has become more important than the need to follow any specific policy (Wood, 1997: 155, 156).

Hunters have argued and should make a stronger argument in the political arena that because a group (in this case anti-hunters) do not like something (hunting), that is not sufficient reason to motivate for it to be banned (Macdonald, 1987: 464-465). What for example would happen if doctors or the general public decried a sport such as rugby? Would that also be banned? What if the majority of people disliked red cars? Is dislike a reason to put an end to something?.

## **2.6 RIGHTS, VALUES AND NATURAL RESOURCES**

The points discussed so far fail to address one of the main concerns of the anti-hunter organizations – the opinion of the animal. Animals, like humans have a right to life although the source of this right and the implications of this right are still subject to debate. Obviously, no individual, be it human or non-human, wants to be killed merely as proof that the hunters skills are better than its own. Animals do not use a form of communication that can be understood by humans and certain humans have therefore felt it necessary to take this role upon themselves on behalf of the animals. This attitude is consistent with the procedure found in courts of law where one is provided with an interpreter so as to ensure clarity and understanding.

Man's current ability to understand the natural world is severely limited. Man does not fully understand how wildlife populations function and what impact hunting has on them.

What we need to ask ourselves is whether we would like to conserve the individual or the whole. Humans are making attempts to reduce their population which is currently recognized to have unsustainable growth rates. With increased health care, birth rates have risen, life expectancy increased and a way to overcome this growth rate must now be found. Birth control and family planning have been introduced in most countries and in some countries incentives have been implemented to reduce the amount of children a family has. Most

animals also have the ability to increase to levels that are unsustainable. Animals, as far as we are aware, do not possess knowledge of birth control systems although some, i.e. elephants are able to adjust their population growth rates to suit the environment (Skinner and Smithers, 1990: 552).

Both humans and non-humans are dependent on the natural environment for their survival. It is therefore imperative that humans do not exploit the earth's resources. Likewise, man has a duty to ensure that animals do not deplete the available resources. What proportion of these resources should be for the benefit of humans and non-humans still needs to be debated. Man is responsible for enclosing animals into smaller and smaller areas and is therefore responsible for ensuring that the animals that live there have adequate resources. One method of doing this is to calculate how many animals an area can support and to then remove the excess animals. These animals can be removed through culling operations and live removals, often in conjunction with hunting.

What is more important, the individual or the whole? We certainly cannot ignore the individual from a welfare point of view. Cruelty can not be justified on any account. The removal of a portion of the whole population is however another matter. Let us first consider animals that are not presently considered at risk of extinction.

Death is a natural occurrence in the wild. Predators prey on herbivores and in some instances, other predators. This is an ecological fact that cannot be changed by man although philosophies that aim to see predation excluded from nature have been put forward. Individual animals are born and die. Many of these animals live long enough to reproduce successfully but not all do. For a population to survive however, more animals need to have the opportunity to reproduce than not. These reproducing individuals make up populations which continually fluctuate in size for a variety of reasons such as available food, competition with other animals, climatic conditions, disease etc. It is these populations, not the individuals, which are capable of showing genetic adaptation to environmental conditions. This adaptation occurs through a process commonly known as 'natural selection'. Those individuals that are not able to survive under the prevailing conditions do not survive and reproduce successfully. Those that are able to exist in the prevailing conditions stand a better

chance of reproducing and passing on their genetic material. Populations are therefore more important from an ecological point of view (Anonymous, 1992: 10).

Populations can thus be considered a 'renewable resource' in that lost individuals can be replaced. The individual animal cannot be considered a 'renewable resource' as once it is removed, it has been lost forever. Hunters are able to remove individuals from a population on a renewable basis (Anonymous, 1992: 11). But is this ethical? Does the hunter have the right to do this?

## **2.7 THE LAND ETHIC**

One of the earliest guidelines for land use was outlined by Aldo Leopold. His 'land ethic' is based on the 'whole ecosystem'. He considers the land as a whole which comprises humans and non-humans with the humans being dependent on the non-human world for their survival. Leopold suggests that our conservation attention has focused on individual animals such as the elephant, rhinoceros and tiger (*Panthera tigris*) because it is easier to grasp and conceptualize these individuals. It is harder to love an entire ecosystem. We may derive pleasure from being in a forest, meadow or savannah but it is difficult to love everything found within that forest, meadow or savannah. Leopold encourages us to see the land as a whole in our conservation efforts and states that we should work to preserve three aspects of the non-human world – its integrity, its stability and its beauty (Wood, 1997: 114-115, 116).

Leopold stresses the need for Western man to regain sight of man's role in nature. Man's current instrumental understanding of wildlife has simplified and destabilized ecosystems and this had led to many species becoming threatened by extinction and a few having become extinct (King, 1991: 65-66). Man's focus should be on populations and ecosystems and not on individual animals.

Leopold's land ethic revolves around the moral questions regarding utilization. Special status is not given to any individual or population be it human or non-human. No single feature is used to distinguish one group from another and the focus of this ethic is holistic and universal (King, 1991: 66).

The greatest guideline given to man by Leopold is his principle 'A thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise' (Leopold, 1966: 262; King, 1991: 66). From this we can clearly deduce that if hunting preserves the integrity, stability and beauty of an area, it is right and morally right at that.

Three general arguments have been leveled against this suggestion: i) the land ethic is practically inconsistent with sport hunting as it is a contradiction in terms to kill in order to conserve and/or protect; ii) while hunting is consistent with the land ethic, it is unacceptable since it constitutes a barbaric and violent act; and, iii) only certain kinds of trophy hunting are consistent with the land ethic (List, 1997: 405-406).

The land ethic does however consider that integrity, stability and beauty are primary objectives for the biotic community. Also, the 'thing' that is right or wrong, is assumed to be a human action. (List, 1997: 407). List however disagrees stating that the 'thing' is not human action but rather 'practices of conservation'. He proposes a three-tiered model of ethical evaluation for hunting amongst other actions (List, 1997: 408). This model incorporates practices which have inherent standards of evaluation and fall into three kinds: i) standards of sportsmanship (code of conduct); ii) aesthetic versus ethical – hunters enjoy wildlife because of its beauty and yet they remove a portion of this wildlife – this needs to be resolved within the hunter; and, iii) ecological standards which emphasize the importance of conservation and the relationship between humans and the land. These practices furthermore move into the direction of stewardship (List, 1997: 409-410).

This three-tiered model demands the practices of conservation to be evaluated according to their contribution to the integrity, stability and beauty of the environment (List, 1997: 414).

Death is a natural phenomenon and man is simply one of the predators present on earth (Wood, 1997: 177). Unlike other predators however, man has devised ways of killing that are not sustainable and his lifestyle has come to threaten the survival of many species. Man can study the lives and habits of an animal and use this information to outwit the animal. Animals on the other hand rely on natural cunning and instinctive responses as well as their sharper senses (Whisker, 1999: 13). It is man's methods of killing that should be questioned not his



instinct to kill. Man kills individual animals from a limited number of species. Long lists can be provided of the fish, antelope and predators that are killed annually by man but if this list is compared to the total list of species man has identified to date, it is comparatively small. Hunting does not therefore threaten biodiversity if carried out on a sustainable basis. The greatest threat to species today, especially those considered vulnerable, threatened or endangered, is that of habitat loss (Gunn, 1997: 8). Are we willing to live in smaller houses and have smaller shopping malls in order to create more space for wildlife? The goal of wildlife management is to produce excess amounts of wildlife so as to ensure their survival (Macdonald, 1987: 463-464). These excesses cannot simply be stockpiled for later use and a proportion of this excess can be removed by hunting.

It has been argued that it is not necessary to kill to protect. Indeed, this is a contradiction in terms. Man needs to bear in mind that his actions have vastly altered many habitats. Consider the impact that cats have had on Marion Island, how rats introduced by boats have destroyed all but twenty individuals of the Seychelles Warbler (*Acrocephalus sechellensis*) (Lloyd, 1998: 16). In order to restore these degraded habitats it has often been necessary to kill (Gunn, 1997: 8). Trapping has not proved successful. These introduced species have often interbred with local closely related species destroying the biodiversity of the region (Gunn, 1997: 9). Similarly, many introduced species have outcompeted the indigenous species. Should the individual receive preference over environmental protection and preservation? Most people would argue that they should not.

### **3 PROPOSED SOLUTIONS**

We have seen how the media could be used more pro-actively by the hunters, how the anti-hunters could use the political arena to more effect and how, if a genuine attempt is made by the two groups, common ground can in fact be reached. Let us have a look at some of the proposed solutions that have been put forward to date. Let us also consider why these attempts have failed and what we can learn from them. What can we draw from them which will help us to begin moving towards identifying common ground?

### 3.1 UTILITARIAN SOLUTION

Most attempts to justify hunting have been based on utilitarian philosophies. The arguments under this category attempt to weigh up the costs of hunting against the benefits. If the costs exceed the benefits, hunting is not recommended. If however the benefits outweigh the costs, hunting should be allowed (Causey, 1989: 329).

The costs of hunting include fear, pain, suffering and loss of life (Causey, 1989: 329). Indirect costs are also encountered, i.e. population reduction, impact on the environment, etc. Benefits include testing man's wits against an animal, ensuring sufficient and suitable habitat for the balance of the population, etc. From the animals point of view, benefits include reduced competition, better access to food, shelter and breeding partners (Causey, 1989: 329).

These cost-benefit analyses do in theory take the interests of both man and animals into account (Causey, 1989: 329). Although an attempt is made to take the interests of both wildlife and man into account, human interests usually receive more attention as they are better expressed and humans have the advantage over the animals in that they can overstate their case. Quantitative values are hard to describe on behalf of an animal. Man can only do this inasmuch as he experiences an issue, i.e. overpopulation. This factor causes the results of a cost-benefit analysis to be biased in favour of man (King, 1991: 64).

The utilitarian view is, according to Causey, flawed and inconsistent. It is based on the belief that: i) man can and should quantify the factors which influence his moral judgments; and, ii) that a positive cost/benefit ratio necessarily has a positive moral value. This system reduces wildlife to a mere commodity – something which anti-hunters are striving to avoid, and turns morality into a simple cost-benefit analysis (Causey, 1989: 340-341)?

Utilitarianism's cost-benefit analysis attempts to see things done in the most effective and efficient way. Hunting then would not be acceptable. Hunting, as a method to reduce numbers for wildlife management purposes, is not cost- or time effective. Culling operations achieve the objective far more effectively. Utilitarianism cannot justify the maintenance of such a primitive system at the expense of more modern ones. Furthermore, is it mere co-

incidence that hunting and wildlife management coincide? What if hunting was not compatible with wildlife management (Causey, 1989: 341-342)?

An advantage of utilitarianism is that it provides a method for decision making when whatever man does will have harmful consequences. In short, it allows man to choose the better of the evils. Man should strive though to give equal consideration to all components of a problem (Anonymous, 1994: 173).

Utilitarian evaluations also require that we can accurately predict the impacts of our decisions in order to do a thorough analysis. Man does not have the ability to predict all the consequences of his actions and disaster has often been the result of his actions. This hampers man's ability to carry out a cost-benefit analysis (Moriarty and Woods, 1997: 394).

So: 'Killing to secure trophies would be justified (if at all) only if trophies are a non-substitutable good, or if some other non-trivial good cannot be reasonably achieved by any other means' (Gunn, 1997: 1).

### **3.2 REGAN'S SOLUTION**

Following on from utilitarianism, Regan suggests that when faced with options, all of which will produce some harm to an innocent being, one should choose the option that will produce the least harm. This he calls the 'minimize harm principle'. This consequentialist principle assumes that moral agents are 'mere receptacles' of harms and benefits, not of pleasures and pains. It allows for the harm to one to be compensated by the harms spared to others (Regan, 1994: 193). It thus allows harm to be minimized (Anonymous, 1994: 176-177).

Regan adds that when the rights of the few are at stake as against the rights of the many, the rights of the few ought to be overridden (Regan, 1994: 195). Does this argument support the rights of the hunter over the rights of the animals he hunts? Hunters, who comprise the minority of society, hunt a large number of animals annually. These animals probably comprise a larger percentage of the wildlife population than hunters do within the human population. Also, there are fewer hunters than there are hunted. If numbers are compared on

a percentage basis, then the argument is probably not sound. If however, they are compared on the basis of total numbers, then the argument is valid.

Stating that by harming an individual, many others are spared in the process, is not a valid argument favouring the issue of morality in hunting. This way of thinking reduces the individual to not having any inherent worth of its own. Numbers cannot simply override the inherent value of an individual (Regan, 1994: 198). If it did, welfare would not be an issue.

The argument assumes all rights to be equal and it is this equality which allows numbers to override the rights of one group (Regan, 1994: 195). It does not however allow for bias by the human decision makers. Furthermore, can we accept that moral agents (man and wildlife) are 'mere receptacles of value', that they are not receptacles of pleasure and pain? Are we willing to accept that moral agents have no intrinsic value of their own? This does not allow animals (moral agents) to be treated with the respect morality entitles them to (Regan, 1994, 193-194).

A second argument to this solution could be applied to individuals versus populations. If A's right is equal to B's and to C's and to D's, then it could be argued that A's right must be equal to the rights of B, C and D taken together. There is however no aggregate individual who has a right not to be harmed for the simple reason that there are no aggregate individuals in the first place, only populations. This principle assumes that the harms faced by each individual are equal in worth (Regan, 1994: 196-197). Can we compare the loss of life to the appeal to instinct?

Are harms comparable? If an old bull, past breeding age, is shot, is there a greater, lesser or equal harm done to him than if a bull in his prime breeding years is shot? Both lose their life but the one has more impact on the population as a whole than the other. Does value derive from the individual or from the population?

Regan (1994: 194) suggests that harms are comparable when they 'detract equally from an individual's welfare, or from the welfare of two or more individuals'. Further, 'death is a comparable harm if the loss of opportunities it marks are equal in any two cases' (Regan, 1994: 194). According to this definition, hunting an old bull or a young bull are not

comparable as the loss experienced by the one is greater than the other, i.e. lack of further breeding opportunities. Because factors such as pain are experienced differently by individuals, we can only assume that the probability of the two experiencing pain is equal. If the hunter wounds an animal, we cannot presume that the animal is feeling pain, we can only presume this based on our assumption.

Unlike the Miniride Principle, Regan's Worse-off Principle can also be used to assist us in considering cases where harms are not comparable, i.e. hunting. While the Miniride Principle allows us to override the interests of the few in favour of the many, it does this on the assumption that the harms are comparable. So what do we do in cases where the harm to one is equal to the harm done to the many? According to this principle we would be required not to chose the one harmed the least in comparison to all the others, but the one harmed the least compared to each other individual separately.

The Worse-off Principle further assists us where we need to decide between 'harming one innocent or harming another'. Numbers and/or percentages do not form part of the decision making process. It is derived from the respect principle and does not consider individuals to be 'mere receptacles' and forces us to compare equal harms equally, not unequal harm equally. If A experiences a greater harm (death) than B (lack of fulfillment), then these harms cannot be compared on an equal basis according to this principle. The harms done to each are not equal and overriding A's rights in favour of those experienced by B would not be morally acceptable (Regan, 1994: 198).

### **3.3 COMMUNITY CONSERVATION PROGRAMMES**

Let us take a brief look at one of the arguments commonly put forward by the hunters. That is 'do we have the right to deny certain groups of people an income?' Although this view is anthropocentric in its nature, and assumes that people and animals are not of equal moral worth, it is nevertheless an interesting argument.

The majority of both hunters and anti-hunters reside in the Western world and are reasonably or very secure economically. Sickness, malnutrition, starvation and crop damage are not a part of their daily lives. Do these people, based on what most have only seen on television,

have the moral right to deny the people in Third World countries an income that is made off its natural resources? Countries such as America have made their money off cotton, minerals and industry but we are not talking plants and minerals here, we are talking animals, living sentient beings. Does not the provision of food (meat protein) become a social obligation (Ndolanga, 1990: 5)? Does the source of the food matter, e.g. cattle or impala?

Despite claims by the West that it is their subsidies and tourist funds that support conservation in Africa, rural Africans pay a high price to support and maintain their wildlife. Development opportunities are limited in and around reserves and other protected areas due to aesthetic reasons and few employment opportunities are made available. Further, wild animals raid the crops and domestic stock of the local inhabitants.

Africans, and indeed other indigenous people, are concerned about their welfare and wish to take steps towards bettering their lifestyle and reducing their dependency on other countries and foreign aid. They wish to be able to make money in order to fund clinics and send their children to school. This they can only do with money and the only way they have of making money is by utilizing the natural resources around them. They are unable to purchase licenses to hunt game so as to provide their family with meat and are therefore forced to resort to poaching. Nobody – not the Westernized anti-hunter nor the rural African wishes to see their children go hungry and get sick. While these licensing systems are equal, they are not equitable, further disadvantaging the rural African. Sickness, hunger and the lack of educational opportunities, makes it very hard for Africans to understand and respect the regulations imposed on them by Western countries in an attempt to please the Western visitor (Anonymous, 1997: 4).

African countries cannot over-utilize their wildlife on the basis that people are hungry and sick. No moral reason can support over-utilization. African countries therefore need to decide on their moral attitude towards wildlife. South Africa has declared that it wishes to follow a policy of sustainable utilization whereby maximum benefits are derived from its natural resources. African countries also need to decide where they stand with regards to animal rights organizations who are willing to pay governments large sums of money not to utilize their wildlife. It is very tempting to accept these 'donations' but are they consistent with national policy?

Animal rights groups, which include to varying degrees the anti-hunters, have been accused of instilling a new form of colonialism on Africa in which Europe and America try and teach Africans what is best for them (Damm, 1999: 1-2). Africans are as entitled to development as Europeans and Americans are. The only practical solution so far presented is that of integrating development and conservation (Gunn, 1997: 16). Hunting is a valuable conservation tool for developing countries as it allows for low-volume off-take and high income (Jackson, 1996: 8). This however is not a moral reason to hunt but can be used to argue in favour of the development of Africans and the moral implications of denying them an income. Anti-hunters should not be in a position to force government to deny their people this form of income (Adams & McShane, 1992: 167).

Anti-hunters have further argued that it 'is only a matter of time before African culture evolves to a point where Africans will accept the value of strict preservationism'. This statement makes the assumption that Western culture is correct and African culture incorrect and that Western cultures are more developed and 'civilized' than African cultures. This attitude again leads to charges of imperialism (Adams & McShane, 1992: 167).

There is a perception amongst the Western world that Africans have no understanding of conservation and sustainable use. Anti-hunters assume that because the Western world came very close to destroying their wildlife, Africa will do the same. Although the West may provide some useful case studies on sustainable use and have an interest in preserving the wildlife in other countries, this does not give them the moral right to deny the people living in those other countries a form of income or development opportunities (Adams & McShane, 1992: 167-168).

Coupled with the development argument is that of population growth. Estimates of a two to three times increase in population levels have been made. If Africa cannot support its current population, how will it support double its population without increasing its revenue? If wildlife is to survive this onslaught of people, it will need to be able to fund its own way. Governments simply do not have the money to support such an expensive project. If the people of Africa do not see wildlife as something of direct benefit to them, it is unlikely to survive the growing demand for land and food (Anonymous, 1997: 6).

The people of Africa are, despite their dependency on wildlife for income, committed to ensure that its ecological integrity is preserved. Legislation has made processes such as Environmental Impact Assessments compulsory prior to any form of development and some countries, i.e. South Africa have stated in their Constitution that everyone has the right to a clean and healthy environment. Attempts by Western societies to force African governments to comply with their standards and regulations have not been received well. Africans who are striving to become democratic and free of Western ideals, would like the acknowledgement of their capacity to learn from their mistakes (Anonymous, 1997: 4). Development is a pressing need and it is hard to explain to a family why their child should die in order that the elephant may live. Similarly, it is hard to explain to a mother with a sick child in China why medicine cannot be obtained for her child in order to save an animal in a far off country that she has never even seen before (Anonymous, 1996: 87).

Development is costly. African nations have designated a greater percentage of their available land to wildlife conservation than the majority of Western countries – over 48 million hectares have been set aside (Anonymous, 1996: 86). The cost of this conservation is likewise expensive and unless wildlife is able to contribute towards its upkeep, many countries will be hard pressed to continue subsidizing conservation (Pullan, 1983: 321). Although this does not provide a moral argument in support of hunting, one has to ask if it would be ethical to allow the wildlife to disappear when it could have been saved through sustainable use. The money that could be provided by anti-hunting groups might cover the direct costs of conservation but it could never cover the indirect costs that are associated with conservation.

The policy followed by most African governments of segregating wildlife and people was resented, mostly by the people who had been dependent on these resources for their livelihood and were now denied this resource (Anonymous, 1996: 86). These protected areas were seemingly more fertile than the lands that people had been relocated to and were better managed and received higher subsidies. Stock and crop farming is vital to the production of food for a country with a growing population. Wildlife, who often destroyed the stock and/or crops was seen to be a nuisance and a threat to the viability of the farming operation. Wildlife



was soon forced to compete with farming as a viable land use option in countries which need land for food production (Anonymous, 1996: 87).

### **3.4 RELIGIOUS**

Religion has been put forward by some as a way to bridge the gap between the hunters and the anti-hunters. The command by God to 'subdue' the earth is used in support of hunting and managing wildlife populations. Man has however become separated from nature and now sees himself as separate from and not dependent upon nature. This separation has taken place on both a spiritual and emotional level (Wood, 1997: 176). The original inherent value of nature has been reduced to value only insofar as nature is of value to man.

The Bible is generally accepted to be a guideline regarding the way in which man interacts with other men and with God. Although the first conservation laws can be found in the Bible, these laws usually only govern the way in which man treats God's Creation. The commandment 'Thou shalt not kill' has been taken by some (the anti-hunters) to mean that man may not kill anything (Whisker, 1999: 103). No successful description has yet been given regarding what man may kill and what he may not, however. If man is to eat he needs to kill – be it plant or animal, both living beings. Hunters however have taken this statement that thou shalt not kill to refer only to relationships with other men. The majority of the commandments refer specifically to this man-man or man-God relationship and there is no reason to believe that the killing commandment is any different.

The above assumes that the Ten Commandments, as given to man by God, were to establish fundamental rules governing the behaviour of man-to-man as well as man-to-God. It is therefore logical to believe that the Commandments refer to man versus man and man versus God, not to man's relationship with animals or any other part of God's Creation (Whisker, 1999: 105).

Although we have focused mainly on the Judeo-Christian religion so far, many other religions exist. It is this plurality of religions that is the biggest downfall to religion being used as a solution to the hunting/anti-hunting debate. How can the Western world, which is predominantly Judeo-Christian expect Africans, who are not, to share their beliefs and

attitudes towards hunting if based on a system of belief which differs from that of the African? Let us look briefly at the other religions.

Those religions which follow the thought of reincarnation could not possibly justify hunting an animal as it may well be a human who has taken on the form of an animal (Whisker, 1999: 104). These religions are anthropocentric in their outlook believing that the human form is the highest form a spirit can take. Their belief that the human spirit can exist in an animal causes them to have a great respect for the natural world and all the creatures that reside in it.

Pantheism, the belief that God is everything and everything is God, rejects hunting on the basis that it will affect the relationship with all things to the divine being. Hunting would disturb the fundamental harmony of their universe and would be at the least, symbolic of killing the divine being (Whisker, 1999: 104).

Those religions that teach the brotherhood of all animate creatures would also be forced to reject killing on the grounds that killing is fratricide (Whisker, 1999: 104). These religions do not accept that there is a fundamental difference between man and other animate creatures, between the human soul and the principle of animation in animals.

Man, according to the Bible, is the focal point of Creation. The fact that man is made in the 'image of God' is often used to separate him from the rest of Creation and place him at the apex of Creation. According to the Bible, man was given 'dominion' over the animals and was instructed to care for them as a steward (Whisker, 1999: 104).

Whisker, like Causey, considers animals to be amoral. He states that only man is capable of sin as only man's actions can be judged as good or bad as provided for in the Bible. He argues that animals respond to their instincts and cannot be held accountable for their decisions. Animals do not have a system of ethics and the only system man can apply to animals is the/a human system (Whisker, 1999: 105). To say 'good dog' is to mean 'good' in the human understanding of good. Similarly, when hunting, a 'good bull' is good only in that it has what man considers to be a good trophy.

Furthermore, sin, if it is purely a human action, is an action against someone or somebody that you do not love which goes against the instruction in the Bible to 'love thy neighbour'. Sin which has to be against either fellow man or God is thus ascending. Man cannot therefore sin against animals (Whisker, 1999: 105). This argument does not allow for the sin of damaging what God has created and if God created the animals, then harming them could be considered sinning against God.

Whisker (1999: 105-106) argues that there are essential differences between man and animal but does not go on to explain why or what these differences are. He argues that the taking of an animal's life is essentially only the removal of animation from a being whereas the taking of a human life results in the separation of the soul from the body.

This argument can however be extended from hunting into the realm of problem animals. Rats, tsetse flies and other acknowledged pests could, according to this theory, be eradicated (Whisker, 1999: 106). Morally, this would be acceptable from both the Judeo-Christian point of view as well as the utilitarian point of view. Man suffers considerable damage and even death from rats and tsetse flies and it would therefore be acceptable to eradicate them. Is this a moral action? Does the Bible not say that God loves 'all creatures great and small'? Is this action not a sin against God's Creation and against creatures who were seen to be 'good' by God upon his completion of the Creation and before the arrival of man? What does this imply about the inherent value of a creature and about life? The command to subdue the earth does not mean destroy the earth.

Despite Whisker having argued that it could be considered morally acceptable to eradicate a species if it conflicts with man's interests, he states that the hunter has a moral obligation not to waste any part of an animal which he has hunted nor hunt more than he needs (Whisker, 1999: 107). It could be argued that a hunter does not 'need' any of the species that he hunts but if it is accepted that hunting is a response to an inner instinct of man, then perhaps he does need to hunt. Not using all the parts of an animal is to sin against those humans who are in need of food or those parts.

Whisker (1999: 107) states that this moral duty to use all the products of a hunted animal does have a few exceptions. He states that some animals are worthless for human

consumption – ‘I would not expect a crow hunter to cook his kill’ – and yet there are many rural people and indigenous cultures who would not think twice about eating a crow that they had managed to capture. Statements such as these reflect the cultural upbringing of Whisker and cannot be applied universally. Further, if game is plentiful, then it would be acceptable to kill more than you need as you are not preventing anybody else from hunting successfully. In short, the hunter may not destroy the animal needed by another.

### **3.5 PRIORITY PRINCIPLES**

If a resolution to the hunting versus anti-hunting debate is ever to be found, certain principles or criteria need to be established against which a solution can be measured. Without these principles, a proposed solution can not be measured objectively and fairly. Clear guidelines as to the interpretation of the use of words need to be given.

The first and most important principle is that of acceptance. A principle needs to be accepted in broad outline by both the hunters and anti-hunters in order for it to stand any chance of being successful. It is important that a principle first be accepted in broad outline and the finer details and implication of statements can be ironed out at a later stage.

This willingness to consider an idea for a resolution as presented by the opposing group requires a degree of trust that, by compromising on some points, the group will not be forced to compromise their position.

The first question that needs to be asked is ‘should hunting, in an as yet undescribed form, occur?’ Hunters would obviously like to see hunting continue although what form hunting takes, i.e. dart gun, rifle, canned-hunts, bow hunting etc., can be discussed at a later stage. Anti-hunters on the other hand will be divided as to their response to this question. Some of them do not wish to see hunting or killing in any form continue and the onus should then be put on them to provide adequate and acceptable solutions to the problems generated by not hunting or controlling numbers in some or other manner. Other hunters will agree that hunting can take place if carried out under certain circumstances and with the welfare of the animal as a priority.

Taylor (1994: 199) argues that principles for resolving conflicts between humans and non-humans should not assign greater inherent worth to either the humans or the non-humans. Species impartiality is therefore of utmost importance to ensure fairness. Taylor suggests five principles for the resolution of conflict:

- a) the principle of self-defense
- b) the principle of proportionality
- c) the principle of minimum wrong
- d) the principle of distributive justice
- e) the principle of restitutive justice

The principles of self-defense, distributive and restitutive justice are not applicable to the hunting argument at hand and will not be discussed here. Hunting is the deliberate act of stalking and killing an animal while self-defense is the unplanned taking of a life in order to prevent one's own life being taken. It differs from hunting in that the hunters life is not in direct danger when hunting. Distributive justice requires that an unequal justice system be altered so that it is equal. In the case of hunting, the value of an animal needs to be determined before a suitable justice system can be implemented. If it is shown that animals do not have the same value as humans, then it would not be possible to subject them to the same value system. On the other hand, if it can be shown that they have the same value as humans, then they would be expected to adhere to man's justice system. This point raises many questions which are beyond the scope of this assignment. There are several justice systems throughout the world so which one would animals be required to adhere to? While an animal may have the same value as a human, could it be expected to become part of the human community and if so, which one? Restitutive justice requires us to restore the balance of justice between man and nature (Taylor, 1994: 209). In setting about identifying common ground, man is not making an attempt to rectify harms done in the past. He is instead attempting to reduce harms done in the future. These three principles are normally used when an animal is not harmful to humans and where potential harm can easily be avoided (Anonymous, 1994: 177). In the case of hunting, the game is occasionally harmful to humans but the human is well equipped to protect himself. In hunting, it is the hunter who is harmful to the hunted. Let us briefly discuss the principles of proportionality and minimum wrong which are applicable to the hunting debate.

These principles attempt to resolve conflict between the non-basic interests of a human and the basic interests of an animal. The outcome in resolving an argument will depend on whether hunting is considered a basic human need or a non-basic human need. The word 'interests' needs to be defined so that a general understanding is ensured. Interests can be considered as those events and conditions necessary for a life to be lived to the full, i.e. from birth to adult, including successful reproduction. If these conditions are not met, then a life cannot be said to have been lived to the full. By hunting an animal and ending its life, the hunter is denying the animal a chance to live a full life.

It can also be argued however, that death is a natural thing in nature and death by the hunter's gun or by a predator both deny the animal the chance to live a full life. This is true but let us look at the purposes of the hunt. Man hunts for one or more of a variety of reasons which are not necessarily basic needs. The predator on the other hand hunts to fulfill a basic (food) need which cannot be denied. Interests can also include those objects and events which are necessary to protect or maintain the good of a living thing (Taylor, 1994: 202).

In order to determine which needs are basic needs one should be in a position to empathize fully with the other being (Taylor, 1994: 202-203). Man cannot speak on behalf of an animal unless he understands what factors and conditions are necessary for the survival of that animal. Because humans are able to converse on a verbal basis by using a limited number of languages, it is much easier for a human to understand or empathize with another human. Animals, who make use of different forms of communication than human forms are much harder for humans to fully understand. This does not mean that humans should not speak on behalf of an animal; merely that they should be careful of what they say, and why, as some actions are obviously harmful to an animal, i.e. its death. Humans should err on the side of caution. Further, behavioral studies will reduce the gap humans have in understanding animals.

Humans also have basic and non-basic interests. The basic interests are usually considered to extend beyond simply growing up and having children. Also, each person is different in that material goods may be an essential way of life to some people while others can happily live without microwaves, remote controls, etc. Similarly, some people prefer a rural way of life

to an urban lifestyle. How then can we distinguish between what is a basic human need and a non-basic human need? Taylor suggests that while humans do have a right to the necessary conditions for the maintenance and development of their personhood, they do not have a right to whatever makes them, or contributes towards, making them happy. If I, for example, think a television will make me happy, I do not have the right to a television set. I do however have the right to work so that I can earn money in order to purchase one. While a television will make me happy, it is not a basic human need. Factors such as food, water and shelter are basic human needs. Non-basic human needs vary from person to person while basic human needs do not (Taylor, 1994: 203). Hunting, under this definition of human interests can not be considered basic human need, it is non-basic to human survival.

Non-basic interests can be divided into two groups: those which are intrinsically incompatible with the attitude of respect for nature, i.e. hunting and fishing (Taylor, 1994: 203-304) and those which are not intrinsically incompatible with the attitude of respect for nature, i.e. ecotourism and photographic safaris. The pursuit of these compatible needs may still have consequences that clash with the attitude of respect for nature. Taylor feels that a person who has respect for nature would willingly give up those activities in which the costs outweigh the benefits (Taylor, 1994: 205).

The question now is whether or not the non-basic interests of humans should be given preference over the basic needs of animals. Many would say 'no', only the basic needs of humans should be given preference over the basic needs of animals and ditto for non-basic needs. Others would say 'yes' and argue that the interests of a human, be they basic or non-basic, will always take preference over those of an animal. Both opinions are anthropocentric in their outlook and Taylor argues that anyone who has a respect for nature could not assign a higher interest to the basic needs of a human over an animal's non-basic needs (Taylor, 1994: 204). This is a point which needs to be discussed and agreed upon in principle before the finer details are fleshed out.

The principle of proportionality thus demands that we give greater weight to basic needs than to non-basic needs. The basic needs of an animal, i.e. its life, cannot be overridden by the non-basic needs of a human, i.e. hunting (Taylor, 1994: 205-206).

The principle of minimum wrong however applies to conflicts between basic needs and interests of animals and those non-basic needs of humans which have such a high value that the majority of people would be reluctant to give them up regardless of the damage that may be caused to an animal and of their degree of respect for nature (Taylor, 1994: 205).

This principle can be applied to the following cases:

- when the basic interests of animals and plants are unavoidably in competition with non-basic interests of humans;
- when the human interests in question are not intrinsically incompatible with respect to nature;
- when the actions needed to satisfy those interests are detrimental to the basic interests of animals and plants; and,
- when the human interests involved are so important that rational and factually informed people who have genuine respect for nature are not willing to relinquish the pursuit of those interests even when they take into account the undesirable consequences for wildlife (Taylor, 1994: 206).

Under what circumstances would it be morally permissible for a human to pursue a non-basic need when it conflicts with the basic need of an animal? This action is permitted by human ethics but can we accept this on a level of morality? Will our conscience allow us to accept this? Human ethics permit man to have a right to freedom which allows him to pursue legitimate interests which do not infringe on the rights of other humans. Environmental ethics, however, demands that we take the interests of other living beings into moral consideration.

What gives us the right to override the basic needs of an animal? Taylor suggests that the answer can be found in the role that these non-basic needs play in human society and that the root of the special value assigned to these non-basic needs can be found in people's rational conception of the 'good life' (Taylor, 1994: 207). The pursuit of non-basic human needs which infringe on the basic needs of animals are permissible only if in so doing, fewer wrongs are committed than if an alternative way of achieving such non-basic needs was pursued. That is, the action can be pursued if it results in the least wrong to the environment



(Taylor, 1994: 208). Hence, if hunting is the action that causes the least wrong to a population of animals, then it is permissible. If, however, there is another way of achieving the goal of hunting, i.e. population reduction, or providing food, then that action should be pursued over and above hunting. To hunt would then be morally unacceptable.

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In the above discussion, some of the solutions to the hunting versus anti-hunting debate have been presented, analyzed and their inherent weaknesses identified. This has allowed the discussion of a method of conflict resolution in the debate. Taylor's principles of proportionality and minimum wrong have been discussed as a possible method to use to identify common ground between the hunters and the anti-hunters. The identification of a way to find this common ground implies that it is there to find. The practical advantages of achieving common ground have also become self-evident in the above discussions.

A start has been made to identify common ground and the steps needed to be taken to get there. Considerable work still needs to be done in this field before it becomes possible to engage in meaningful discussions between the hunters and the anti-hunters. A clear set of guidelines needs to be drawn up by both the hunters and the anti-hunters. It is essential that they agree on this set of guidelines. These guidelines then need to be implemented and continually revised to ensure their validity and applicability. But before this, the fear, skepticism and hostility of each group towards the other needs to be overcome.

## CHAPTER 5

### CONCLUSIONS

Historically, hunting ethics have been transferred from father to son or from elder to child. The passing on of knowledge and ethics has occurred in a random, haphazard manner which has caused a deficiency in the development of a formal instruction programme. Because hunters have learnt from their fathers and village elders, they have seldom questioned the morality of their actions. They have grown up believing that it is acceptable to hunt but have not looked deeper into their action to see if it is consistent with their lifestyle or the other beliefs that they hold. This lack of questioning means that most hunters are unable to defend their actions adequately.

Hunters are acknowledging that they need to portray their sport in a positive light if they wish anti-hunting groups to fail in their lobbies for the banning of the sport. Ethics components are being included in most hunting courses and attendance of these courses is compulsory in many countries for those people wishing to apply for hunting licenses. It has also been argued that hunting is not an ethical issue. Animals have no ability to reason and therefore have no rights. There is still a strong school of thought that animals are just a means to an end, that end being man. Hunting is further considered to be amoral – it is outside of morality and cannot be considered either positively or negatively.

Hunting is the sport of a minority which can easily be banned through the actions of anti-hunters (Benjamin, 1997: 1). If hunters wish to continue hunting they must make a proactive effort to portray their sport in a positive light. While the development of a code of conduct and hunter education is a good start, it does not address the issue of whether or not it is moral to hunt. This point needs to be well workshopped by the hunters and new solutions found which are potentially acceptable to the anti-hunters.

Many suggestions have been put forward as to why people are prepared to take the life of an animal. There are two main approaches to the issue, those of the hunters and those of the non-hunters.

Hunters see their actions not in the light of killing or 'murder' but see the death of the animal in the context of the skill, experience, aesthetic value and spirituality of the hunt. Hunters consider their actions to have beneficial effects on the veld as they prevent the population from exceeding its carrying capacity, ensure that there are enough resources for all and eliminate animals that would otherwise impact on farmers. They enjoy honing their skills and the exercise gained during hunts. They feel that hunting helps to develop a moral code concerning the ethics of hunting.

The argument that one should not take the life of an animal because animals have a right to life just as humans do, is one of the strongest arguments against killing animals. The non-hunters, a group which includes the anti-hunters, believe that everything has a right to life. This belief is often based on religious foundations - God gave life and it is not within man's rights to take it away. Anti-hunters consider the sport of hunting to be barbaric and reject the use of words such as 'crop' and 'cull' as words which merely disguise the action and do nothing to reduce the unethical nature of the pattern.

As communities have developed from primitive man to technological man, so cultures and cultural practices have also changed. Importance is no longer placed on the ability to survive in a harsh world. People have come to rely on social welfare and redistribution programmes. With increasing technological knowledge, man has inherited a responsibility for looking after his fellow man. Communities can afford to look after members of society which do not contribute directly towards the welfare of the society without the whole community becoming endangered in the process. With this so called development and progress, the importance and process of partaking in a rite of passage has diminished. The time and resources used to conduct such rites are often no longer available to many people. This has left many men feeling insecure and unsure of their social standing. The need to please and be accepted is still strong in many men and to satisfy this need, they carry out deeds which they, and their peers, deem worthy of the status 'man'.

There are many who find it strange that 'good hunting means good conservation'. They react violently to what they see as the destruction of gamebirds and wildfowl but they fail to realize that those who take an active interest in the maintenance of habitat and the provision of ideal

environments for gamebirds are also doing a huge amount of good for conservation itself. '...good wildlife management requires a realistic attitude of mind to the subject together with an ongoing practical programme of support rather than periodic outbursts of moral indignation, often misplaced' (Wynne-Jones, 1993: 66).

A decision needs to be reached between the two groups as to whether the individual or the species is more important. Which one should hunting ethics focus upon? The issue of inherent worth also needs to be addressed. By focusing on the population and not the individual implies that only the population has inherent worth, not the individual. Furthermore, proposed solutions need to be evaluated in the light of whether or not they are applicable to the debate and not just to one side of the argument (Wood, 1999: 189). Does the proposed argument provide a potential solution to the problem or not?

It has already been argued that populations are more important ecologically but does this also imply that they are morally more important? It is the population which survives for future generations and has the greatest impact on the habitat, not the individual. If our aim then is to preserve populations for future generations, should populations not be the focus of our moral attentions? This is not to say that the individual is not important. Welfare should be ensured at all times.

Death is a natural part of the natural system. Everyone, both human and non-human, will die at some stage. Death by the hunter or by natural selection will ensure that only certain genetic material is passed on to future generations. The genes that are passed on will ensure that the animal is able to compete in its ever changing environment and that it learns to avoid the hunter whether it be through skill or by reducing the quality of trophy passed on to its offspring.

The money argument has been proved not to be sound. While money is essential to the continuation of conservation, it does not buy one the moral right to hunt. The majority of hunting takes place in rural areas which are in desperate need of development and the money raised by hunting can be put towards ensuring the development of the people in the area and lessening their dependence on natural resources. It also helps to build a more

positive attitude towards conservation by reducing conflict between nature conservation officials and so-called poachers.

Stephen Kellert suggests that we 'move beyond the simple affection for animals to a broader ecological appreciation of species in relation to their land base' (Wood, 1997: 191).

Another factor leading to a lack of compromise or attempt to reach common ground, is that each side is afraid that if they give on any point, all will be lost. While hunters may condemn one form of hunting, they are afraid that they will be forced into a position where they have to denounce all forms of hunting. This argument is questionable though as some anti-hunters have agreed that some hunting is necessary, but not all types, and the hunters have been forced to admit that all hunting is desirable (Wood, 1997: 10).

To sum up then, we may conclude, following Aldo Leopold, that legal and ethical hunting which tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community is acceptable according to pragmatic ethical principles. Although money does not buy one the right to hunt, hunting is a useful management tool in developing areas in which conservation is forced to pay its own way. Hunting is the only source of income many developing areas have and to deny those people the chance of development is immoral in itself. In accepting this position, nonetheless, we may still, as Leopold did, demand a higher standard of self-restraint among hunters, and expect that this self-restraint, as the ultimate source of ethical value in hunting, will foster attitudes appreciative and protective of wildlife generally (Loftin, 1984: 249-250).

## LIST OF ACRONYMS

EWT	Endangered Wildlife Trust
HSUS	Humane Society of the United States
IFAW	International Fund for Animal Welfare
NSPCA	National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals
PETA	People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals
PHASA	Professional Hunters Association of South Africa
REF	Rhino and Elephant Foundation
WWF	World Wide Fund for Nature

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