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OCEAN ETHICS

*Reshaping the relationship between humans and the ocean
through respect*

Master's dissertation in Political Science, concentration in political theory
Faculty of Social Sciences (SDS)
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Abstract

Acknowledgments

I. Introduction

A. Presentation of the issue and justification of the subject's relevance

B. Contribution and worth of the subject

C. Research question and directions

II. A new relationship with the ocean

A. Conceptualizing ocean ethics

- a. Respect
 - i. Darwall's framework
 - ii. Dillon's and ecofeminist theories framework
- b. Exploitation
 - i. Darwall's framework
 - ii. Dillon and ecofeminist theories framework
- c. Human
 - i. Darwall's framework
 - ii. Dillon and ecofeminist theories framework
- d. Ocean

B. Exploring upgraded practices

- a. Darwall's framework
- b. Dillon and ecofeminist theories framework
- c. Merits and limits of each scenario

III. Conclusions

A. Summary of the fundamental steps of the argument

B. Contribution to the considered question

IV. Bibliography

V. Images references

Abstract

This dissertation explores the pivotal theme of reshaping humanity's relationship with the ocean through the normative concept of *respect*, positing it as the sole force capable of constraining our practices in ocean exploitation. The central research question driving this inquiry explores the possible outcomes of considering the ocean as an object of respect on our practices in ocean exploitation. The dissertation explores two distinct paths, each necessitating conceptual work on four interrelated main concepts: respect, exploitation, human, and the ocean. First, within a Darwallian framework, the ocean is contemplated as an indirect object of respect, emphasizing its instrumental value for future generations and invoking a moral duty of reparation for past damages. Second, drawing from Dillon's care respect theories within an ecofeminist lens, this framework advocates for considering the ocean as a direct object of respect, acknowledging its inherent value beyond mere utility. These findings underscore the need for a new normative framework to enhance ocean protection, offering a nuanced and comprehensive approach that aligns with the urgent global imperative to safeguard the ocean for the well-being of the ocean itself as well as current and future generations. In essence, this dissertation contributes to the evolving field of ocean ethics by offering a perspective on respect as a transformative tool in reshaping our moral stance towards the ocean.

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I. Introduction

A. presentation of the issue and justification of the subject's relevance

The aim of this dissertation is guided by the will to try to (re)entangle humans and the ocean through respect. Shaping a respectful relationship with the ocean could be the key to a renewed connection and upgraded practices in ocean exploitation. Shaping such a relationship is necessary because of the current severe degradation of our ocean, damaged mainly by anthropogenic activities, especially pollution, and overexploitation, which are both damaging for seafloors. The scientific community already laments the lack of action of our governments and the international community in general. Humanity could not and would not exist without the ocean, as it is one of the primary source of life on our planet (Bossi, 2020). GIEC scientists are apprehensive that the ocean will not be able to be restored in time for our survival if no sufficient actions are taken (GIEC, 2023).

Moreover, we have lost, through time, our connection to nature and tend to see humans more and more as a separate entity from nature, especially in Western countries. The patriarchal and heteronormative dominant discourse is what mainly distances us from nature today (Hird, 2011). This dissertation aims to show that including respect in our relationship with the ocean could enable us to exit this one-way-only exploitative mechanism. "The current state of our oceans is a direct reflection of our colonising relationship with the ocean as a mere resource" (Bossi, 2020, p.24). It is estimated that more than : "3 billion people rely on the ocean for their livelihoods", and this number only considers people relying on the ocean as a primary source of food (Sonigara, 2022, p.2). However, humans rely on the ocean for survival in many ways, mainly because the ocean plays a crucial role in the freshwater cycle. Another significant role it plays is climate regulation and furnishing most of the air we breathe. Not only does it produce up to fifty percent of our oxygen, but it also acts as an essential carbon sink of the planet, which helps humanity regulate its carbon emissions (GIEC, 2023). Additional arguments could be put forward, such as our use of the ocean for transportation, commerce, and renewable energy. Thus, it is essential to add something to the debate on environmental protection, and we need to think of what could be done, especially for the ocean. Building new and strong policies by establishing the ocean as an object of respect that could constrain our conduct is a unique and essential thing to do for our basic survival.

This dissertation aligns seamlessly with the prevailing global concerns for the ocean, also coinciding with the United Nations Decade for the Ocean. As the international community increasingly recognizes the urgent need for concerted efforts to address the diverse challenges facing the ocean, this essay contributes a timely and nuanced perspective. This decade serves as a pivotal

moment for raising awareness, fostering sustainable practices, and redefining humanity's relationship with the ocean. In this context, the paper serves as a valuable addition to the ongoing global conversation, offering insights and considerations that align with the broader imperative of safeguarding the ocean for current and future generations.

B. Contribution and worth of the subject

This dissertation entangles two existing debates in political philosophy : respect and environmental protection. The first, the debate on respect, is still very discussed and rich in political philosophy. Respect is a fundamental basis for all interactions (Dillon, 1992), but in its Kantian version, nature and humans have been separated through reason (Hird, 2011). Thus, I would use this dissertation to think about what can be considered an object of respect and argue that the ocean could be an object of respect. Supporting this view, eco-feminist literature offers an excellent basis for why our current domination of nature is unjustified (Warren, 1990 ; Bossi, 2020 ; Hird, 2011). As mentioned above, this dissertation also contributes to the debate on environmental protection, specifically on ocean protection. It will allow me to explore about what should be done regarding ocean protection policies if we can establish the ocean as an object of respect.

From a practical point of view, it is essential to address this issue because of the current precarious and insecure ocean situation. It faces many different problems, most of which are anthropogenic. Some of the most harmful practices for the ocean are industrial and commercial fishing, deep sea mining, and plastic pollution. Those practices are responsible for considerable biodiversity loss; they also destroy the marine environment and seabed. Those harmful practices greatly exacerbate climate crises (GIEC, 2023). As mentioned above, humanity could not and would not exist without the ocean, as it is one of the primary sources of life on our planet (Bossi, 2020). To give a specific example ; tropical shrimp trawling is estimated to be responsible for 15 to 20 million tonnes of bycatch¹ each year, and European countries are the top importers of those shrimps (Davies, 2016). To these numbers, for every kilo of shrimp bought in European countries, up to 98 kilos of bycatch (rays, sharks, dolphins, fishes...) have been rejected dead or dying in the ocean. To give some other, more general examples, the area of living coral on coral reefs has nearly halved since the 1870s, with ocean acidification and rising water temperatures (in combination with other loss factors) causing its most significant declines in the last 20 to 30 years. The predictions for coral reef loss are

¹ Bycatch : fish or other sea creatures that are caught unintentionally by people who are trying to catch other types of fish: Bycatch can be kept and landed as part of the commercial catch or discarded (Cambridge dictionary, n.-d.)

particularly dire. Due to rising temperatures, most (70 to 99 percent) of Earth's corals are expected to die in the coming decades (IPBES, 2019). We could also mention that the world's mangrove area has declined by about 40%, and the area of salt marshes has reduced by an estimated 60% (IPBES, 2019). The ocean lost 49% of all vertebrates between 1970 and 2012 (WWF, 2015). All of those ecosystems work together to allow a healthy ocean, and the degradation of one of them ultimately affects the others. As mentioned above, billions of people rely on the ocean as a primary source of food, so if we were to empty it, there would be as many humans starving to death, without mentioning the horrendous number of animal deaths or any other loss (Sonigara, 2022). As I already said, the list could go further on the ocean's critical role in life, but I wanted to underline that action needs to be taken and those examples serve as illustration.

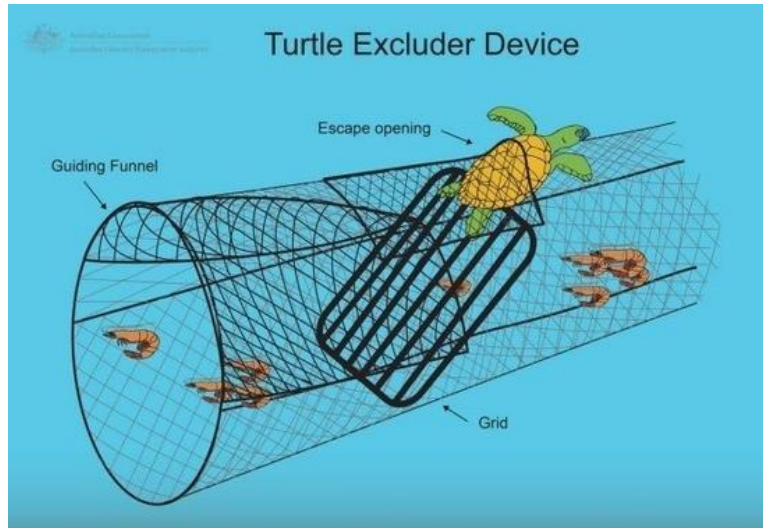
From a theoretical point of view, defining the ocean as an object of respect and thus giving us moral ground for action could be an exciting contribution to the literature on respect and political philosophy more generally. The theoretical interest also comes from addressing this issue, which could allow us to think of a new conceptual framework to build new policies. At the moment, as the ocean is not considered an object of respect, laws or policies can only constrain our conduct to a certain extent; each country that has access to the ocean is free to rule its exclusive economic zone at its discretion, and there is even less of a legal frame for high seas and seabeds. The objective of a new conceptual framework is to give foundations for policies for the sake of a more protected ocean. This is necessary if we want strong protection of the ocean. There are many shortcuts in the actual governance of the ocean, such as lack of reglementation, lack of surveillance, lack of enforcement, and more.

Let us go back to our shrimp trawling fisheries as an example. In the early 2000s, this problem was brought up and caught general public attention because many sea turtles were victims of this kind of fishery (sea turtles indeed struggle more than other species to escape nets because they are slow swimmers, and they need to breathe air regularly so they drown when they get caught). Sea turtles benefited from being a very emblematic and beloved ocean species; the scientific community devised a solution : the turtle excluder devices² (TEDs³). The correct use of TEDs reduces turtle bycatch by 97% with less than 2% loss of target shrimp (Davies, 2016). Not only do TEDs drastically reduce bycatch mortality, for sea turtles but for other species as well, but they also help increase shrimp quality and reduce sorting time for fishermen (Gullett, 2003). We could agree that imposing the use of TEDs looks like a perfect solution, which has a cost, of course, but it remains minimal,

² A turtle excluder device (TED) is a specialized device that allows a captured sea turtle to escape when caught in a fisherman's net. Turtle excluder devices promote sea turtle conservation by addressing interactions between sea turtles and trawl fishing gear. (NOAA Fisheries).

³ Image 1 : NOAA Fisheries (n.-d.)

especially in the long run (Gullet, 2003). Still, in Europe, it is legal to import shrimps from fisheries that are not TED-equipped, as opposed to Australia, where it is now illegal to import shrimps from non-TED-equipped fisheries. As easy and low-cost as this solution is, it is still not regulated and



enforced. Scientists also underline that some fisheries may still cheat by incorrectly using their TEDs and not maintaining them sufficiently (Jenkins, 2023). We here have a clear example of a lack of surveillance and enforcement that needs to be addressed. There are a lot of similar issues that could be solved if we managed to build a new conceptual framework based on respect to new global policies.

That being said, the goal is to work on my conceptualization of respect to address a specific issue within a particular context, which would be a new variety of respect that is owed to the ocean, not a rival. This proposition will lead me to consider the ocean as a proper object of respect to establish normative implications for policy-making, significantly limiting human activity and impact on the ocean. Ultimately, the goal is to shift public attitudes to enhance ocean conservation actions. Even if the ocean seems remote, it is nonetheless connected to all human life (Auster & al., 2009).

C. Research question and directions

This dissertation is driven by my willingness to think of and develop strong and cross-border protection for the ocean. Respect will be my core concept as it gives us moral grounds for action. Now, turning our attention to the inquiry that drives this study, the research question guiding this dissertation will be :

- (1) If we were to establish the ocean as an object of respect, which gives us moral grounds for action, (2) how should we handle our relationship to the ocean, and how would respect constrain our practices in ocean exploitation ?*

This question is composed of two sections. The first question will serve me to conceptually work on a new framework and argue whether or not the ocean can indeed be an object of respect that gives us moral grounds for action.

I chose *conceptual analysis* based on Olsthoorn's work on this subject (Olsthoorn, 2017). Concepts are portrayed as fundamental elements of our thoughts and the basic building blocks of propositions we form. In this context, conceptual analysis involves the systematic study of concepts, taking on various forms, such as finding proper definitions for terms, identifying conceptual distinctions, exploring connections between different concepts, and studying conceptual change over time (Olsthoorn, 2017). Conceptual analysis also involves breaking down complex notions into simpler components to clarify them (Olsthoorn, 2017). This conceptual analysis is necessary to address my issue. Four concepts will be the core of my work : *respect*, *exploitation*, *human*, and the *ocean*. To do so, I will follow two different and distinct paths. The first one will be based on Darwall's framework on respect; this will lead me to explore if and how the ocean could be a proper object of respect in his terms. The second path belongs to an ecofeminist framework paired with Dillon's considerations and *care respect*. Ecofeminist theories have already addressed the unjustified domination of nature (Warren, 1990), which results in the unsustainable exploitation of nature. Indeed, following this theory, we need to rethink our conceptual frameworks that define the relationship between humans and nature because some of our fundamental beliefs, values, or attitudes are oppressive and justify the subordination of women and nature (Warren, 1990).

Those two new relationships being established will create new implications, leading us to the second part of the research question. In this second part, I will use hypothetical reasoning as established by the contractualist tradition to define precisely the rights and duties required by those new relationships based on respect. It will then lead me to determine what this will imply regarding public policies in ocean protection and regulating ocean exploitation. I chose this methodology because it allows philosophers to explore hypothetical scenarios that may not be possible or practical to test in reality. This can shed light on abstract or complex concepts and theories. Hypothetical reasoning can challenge our assumptions and biases and allow us to develop more nuanced and consistent moral frameworks. This thought experiment will thus challenge our current understanding of the ocean as a resource to be exploited and instead encourage a new conceptualization of the ocean-worthy of respect and protection. Finally, this methodology can provide a structured way of testing and refining philosophical arguments and theories.

There is, nevertheless, a particularity of this relationship that I would like to address. If a relationship is based on respect, it usually derives rights and duties for both parties. Here, the relationship I aspire to build is asymmetrical in a sense. Indeed, in my conceptualization of this

relationship, humans might have duties towards the ocean, and the ocean might have rights against humans. This asymmetry comes from the dependence of humans on the ocean for their survival (and scientists wonder if we could survive without a healthy ocean). Still, the ocean exists for itself and does not need humans to survive and live.

Embarking on a voyage through the complexities of ocean ethics, this dissertation unfolds a narrative aimed at unraveling the challenges facing the well-being of our planet's life-sustaining ocean. The emergence of respect as a potent normative tool is central to this exploration, offering a transformative potential to redefine humanity's relationship with this critical ecosystem, delving into two contrasting frameworks, Darwallian respect, and Dillon's care respect, within an ecofeminist lens. The dissertation meticulously examines their normative implications in reshaping our practices. Beyond theoretical constructs, the normative work undertaken here extends into hypothetical reasoning, simulating real-world impacts. A resounding message emerges in anticipation of the conclusion: a paradigm shift is indispensable for efficient and sustainable ocean protection, necessitating a departure from exploitative tendencies. The unique normative contribution of this essay lies in its advocacy for considering the ocean as a direct object of respect, a daring proposition that, despite its ambitious nature, holds the promise of transformative change, emphasizing the imperative for a more respectful and harmonious coexistence with the ocean.

II. A new relationship with the ocean

A. Conceptualizing ocean ethics

As mentioned previously, concepts are constituents of thoughts that are the building blocks of our proposition. All those concepts are somewhat linked and must be worked together to create a broader conceptualization framework. This dissertation also promotes a paradigm shift in how we think about the ocean, abandoning detrimental habits and relying instead on respect as the cornerstone of a rekindled relationship. A route to a sustainable and peaceful relationship with the ocean can be created by understanding the value of the ocean, the shortcomings of current conceptual frameworks, and reevaluating the exploitation of its resources.

a. Respect

Respect is my central concept and needs to be reframed because, in our current situation, the primary assumption of states is that they are answerable only if their behavior harms or has infringed on the sovereign rights of other states. This assumption hardly makes states and governments answerable to the ocean; that is why respect, as it is one of the only concepts used to constrain our conduct, is a potential convincing candidate to overcome this breach. The goal is to see if the ocean could be a legitimate object of respect and where respect is grounded.

Considering natural language and common sense, respect is primarily understood as our *consideration* toward someone or something (Larousse, n.d.; Robert, n.d.). Another essential component of respect in natural language is considering the *sacredness* of the term respect. It can imply some attitudes of veneration; for example, we might have a sense of veneration for what is considered sacred, like respect for the dead. The last component of respect I decided to underline in its natural definition is that when we are being respectful towards something or someone, there is the implicit will not to harm or damage the object of our respect. In natural language, respect implies *non-harmful practices* towards our object. There are several varieties of respect : some give moral grounds for action, some do not. We thus need to find a variety of respect that can recognize the ocean as an object of respect, and this respect needs to be binding and give us moral grounds for action.

i. Darwall's framework

If we move on to the domain of political theory, respect is an already very thick and rich concept. So, to avoid too vast considerations. I started directly from Darwall's conception of respect (Darwall, 1977 ; 2006). Respect must be understood as an *ideal* that gives us reason for *action*. Darwall states that two kinds of respect exist: *appraisal respect*⁴ and *recognition respect*⁵ (Darwall, 1977). Usually, this concept of respect is used on an individual level, meaning that the most frequent objects of respect are human beings. Therefore, I want to know if the ocean could be an object of such respect. If the idea is to reckon the ocean's functioning, beauty, or virtues just for itself, we must ask ourselves if the ocean could be the object of appraisal respect. It can be argued that the ocean does constitute a potentially valid object of respect. Still, as appraisal respect is subjective, it does not give sufficient moral grounds for some general action (Darwall, 1997). Unfortunately, appraisal respect is not a kind of respect that can be used to constrain our practices. Otherwise, if the idea is to consider the ocean as something that could restrain our conduct, we need to ask ourselves if the ocean could be the object of recognition respect. Recognition respect is constructed as something impersonal, usually symmetric, meaning we must adequately weigh things in our deliberations (Darwall, 1977).

To refine his work on respect, Darwall worked with a new concept he established, the *second-person standpoint* (Darwall, 2006). He rethinks the concept of respect with the second-person standpoint at its center. In this conception, the author draws a circle of 4 interrelated ideas : *claim*, *accountability*, *second-personal reason*, and *authority*. It follows that respecting someone is acknowledging their second personal authority (relating to them as a person, second personally) (Darwall, 2006, ch.3). There is a presupposition that we share a common personal authority, competence, and responsibility simply as free and rational agents. Respect is the appropriate response to our dignity as moral equals and equally accountable agents. Respect also requires that we discharge duties of respect and is the ground for moral obligations (Darwall, 2006, ch.6). In addition, key principles go along with the second-person standpoint and reasons. Second-personal reasons are inherently tied to accountability and recognition of moral agency of others. Moral obligations and reasons for action are generated within the context of moral relationships within the moral community (Darwall, 2006).

When looking back at the research question, can the ocean be a proper object of respect in this framework ? Unfortunately no. The main reason is that the ocean lacks second-personal competence

⁴ Appraisal respect is the positive appraisal itself. It is like esteem or a high regard for someone, although, as I shall argue later, the appropriate grounds for appraisal respect are not so broadly based as those of these latter attitudes (Darwall, 1997, p.39)

⁵ There is a kind of respect which can have any of a number of different sorts of things as its object and which consists, most generally, in a disposition to weigh appropriately in one's deliberations some feature of the thing in question and to act accordingly (...) I shall call it recognition respect. (Darwall, 1997, p.38)

and thus lacks the authority to demand anything. In that case, neither mutual responsibility nor duty of respect can be engaged between humans and the ocean.

The author proposes two options to overcome the problem of second-personal competence, which are : “an entity that lacks second-personal competence might elaborate its rights through trustees authorities or entities that lack second-personal competence could be given some sort of “proto or quasi second-personal personality”” (Darwall, 2006, p.29). Unfortunately, these two options are irrelevant to our objective, as those options would raise some problems regarding agency and accountability. Nevertheless, we might have another path to follow to constrain our conduct toward the ocean in Darwall’s framework. The vulnerability stands in Darwall’s difference he makes between respect and *care*: “Respect concerns how we are to conduct ourselves in relating to others, whereas care is sensitive to how things go for others, whether that involves relating to them or not” (Darwall, 2006, p.129). My intuition about this statement is that things go wrong for the ocean because of humans (our lack of consideration for it) because we do not care enough. I think we could indeed argue that this lack of consideration from us creates a second personal reason that we, at least if we cannot enter a relationship of respect with it, care for it. Moreover, in some ethical theories, respecting the environment is considered a moral obligation because of its impact on human well-being and the rights of future generations. For example, showing care for the environment can be seen as respecting the conditions that sustain life and the interests of prospective individuals. Those consequentialist arguments and our responsibility to care when things go wrong create a duty of repair and care, at least, grounded in a consequentialist view.

Let us go back to our shrimp fisheries example to enlighten my argument. Imagine a conscientious consumer in Switzerland who buys 1kg of shrimp from a local supermarket. These fisheries, known for their harmful practices, have been linked to seabed destruction and alarmingly high bycatch rates (Gullet, 2003). Though seemingly insignificant in isolation, this purchase contributes to the demand for these unsustainable fishing practices. By buying these shrimps, the consumer indirectly supports and encourages these environmentally damaging activities. The consequences of such actions extend beyond the immediate environmental impact. They also affect local communities that rely on more traditional, sustainable fishing practices. Promoting industrial, non-TED-equipped fisheries can disadvantage these communities, undermining their way of life and economic well-being. In this scenario, the duty of reparation and care arises from recognizing that one's consumption choices have far-reaching effects. Conscientious consumers are morally obligated to make amends for the environmental harm caused by their purchase and show care for the traditional fishing communities that suffer from promoting unsustainable practices. This may involve taking actions such as supporting organizations that work to mitigate the negative impact of such fisheries, advocating for sustainable seafood choices, and seeking ways to reduce one's own ecological footprint

in the future. Ultimately, the duty of reparation and care emerges from the interconnectedness of human actions and their consequences on the environment and society.

ii. Dillon and ecofeminist theories framework

As I previously noted, respect is causing no harm or a form of veneration. This is a good starting point for discussing the nature of respect. Dillon's concept of care respect suggests that respect is not merely about the object but is focused on it, with attention being central. It is grounded in the nature of the object itself, not personal desire or interest. Respect involves appreciation, recognition, and worth of the object. This view of respect sets a strong foundation for respectful attitudes and actions (Dillon, 1992 ; 2007). There is an attempt to refine respect as an attitude of appreciation, care, and consideration toward the ocean, emphasizing its importance and value. This aligns with care respect, especially in recognizing the ocean's worth and dignity. Care respect involves behavioral components like giving attention, showing consideration, and so on. Put differently, the nature of respect and how we act depends on the nature of the object itself. This approach suggests that respect is not solely a matter of personal preference but is grounded in the object's characteristics (Dillon, 1992 ; 2007).

Moreover, as mentioned, this perspective fosters a sense of mutual concern, acknowledging individuality and interdependence. This is important when considering how we relate to nature. Several eco-feminist theories emphasize the interconnectedness of humanity and nature and challenge the morally significant differences between humans and non-humans. These theories argue that nature has the moral significance to have respect. Ecofeminism school of thought already challenged this ontological separation, especially by asking if they were morally significant arguments for separating humans and non-human entities (Warren, 1990). Ecofeminists aim to overcome this separation that is, in their view, rooted in our patriarchal and heteronormative discourse towards nature (Hird, 2011). For example, it has been stated that such categories as agency or reason are irrelevant to assuming that humans are superior to nature (Hird, 2011). Furthermore, denying non-human agency is false and unjustified because : “human emerges in relation to nonhuman” (Hird, 2011, p.114). To elaborate on this point further, a researcher added some knowledge to the post-human debates by demonstrating that objects can be considered to have agency; Vitellone gives a brilliant example in one of her essays (Vitellone, 2011).

We must remember from those arguments that humans would not exist without non-human, which means that there is an unwavering and asymmetric dependence between the two, showing that it does not make sense to separate humans from non-human. To elaborate further on our relationship with the ocean, we need to underline our connections with the ocean. That means, without the ocean,

we would not have even existed, and if the ocean were led to stop functioning now, we would disappear. We live thanks to the ocean, and the ocean also lives in us : “We sweat and cry saltwater, so we know that the ocean is really in our blood” (Hau’ofa, 1998, p.341). Respect, as understood in the context of care respect and eco-feminist theories, is primarily grounded in the inherent value of the object (in this case, the ocean) and our profound dependence on it. These perspectives argue that the ocean possesses inherent worth and significance, making it deserving of respect once again. This inherent value is not contingent on personal desires or interests.

Furthermore, recognizing our interdependence with the ocean reinforces the moral duty to respect it. As these perspectives suggest, the ocean and its ecosystems are more than mere resources; they are vital and interconnected components of our existence and should be treated with care, appreciation, and consideration. Based on these arguments, it is reasonable to conclude that the ocean could be considered an object of respect. Care respect, combined with eco-feminist theories, suggests that the nature of the object, in this case, the ocean, matters. If we accept that the ocean has inherent value, is unjustly dominated, and has no morally significant differences between humans and non-humans; it is plausible to argue that the ocean deserves respect. This respect involves recognizing its worth, appreciating its value, and taking actions that align with the inherent characteristics of the ocean.

b. Exploitation

Addressing the concept of exploitation is necessary because building a respectful relationship with the ocean implies giving it some strict rules and directions on exploiting it and its resources. It is also essential to acknowledge that some resources extracted from the ocean are still needed for the survival of some people. For example, we could think of some communities that rely on fish as a primary food source, or some communities depend on the income they make from the ocean through ecotourism. In some cases, scientists stated that it is unnecessary and that it would not make sense to completely ban some practices of tourism or fishing (O’Malley & Al., 2013). Indeed, some practices could be compatible with a respectful relationship towards the ocean, but we need to define what could precisely be such a consistent practice. That is why addressing this concept of exploitation fits right in this work.

As we did for the previous sections, we will proceed similarly for this concept, so let us start with the natural definition of exploitation. In common language, the term "exploitation" typically refers to the act of taking *unfair advantage* of someone or something for personal gain or benefit. Generally, exploitation carries a negative connotation, highlighting the unjust or unfair nature of the

actions involved. Natural resource exploitation refers to using or extracting natural resources, such as minerals, fossil fuels, forests, water, or wildlife, for various purposes, including economic gain, industrial production, or energy generation. In natural resource exploitation, exploitation retains its common meaning of taking advantage or utilizing resources for personal or societal benefit (UNEP, n.d.).

Moving on to the challenges derived from this natural definition, contrary to the term exploitation in general, the harmed party is nature. It often raises ethical, environmental, and sustainability concerns, as it can lead to depletion or degradation of natural resources, disruption of ecosystems, and negative impacts on local communities and indigenous populations who may depend on these resources for their livelihoods. Exploiting natural resources can involve practices such as overexploitation, illegal or unsustainable extraction, lack of proper regulations, inadequate environmental safeguards, and inequitable distribution of benefits. It is essential to balance the responsible and sustainable use of natural resources with the need to preserve ecological integrity⁶, protect biodiversity, and ensure the well-being of present and future generations (WWF, n.-d.).

To go further on the concept of exploitation in political and ethical philosophy, I would like to take Vrousalis' considerations into account. His view of exploitation focuses on the idea that individuals or groups in society can exploit others by dominating them and using their power and control for personal gain, typically at the expense of the exploited party (Vrousalis, 2013). Vrousalis defines exploitation as such : "A exploits B if and only if A and B are embedded in a systematic relationship in which (a) A instrumentalizes (b) B's vulnerability (c) to extract a net benefit from B" (Vrousalis, 2013, p.132). He emphasizes the role of domination in the process of exploitation. Domination refers to one group or individual having significant control, influence, or power over another. This control can manifest in various forms, such as economic, social, or political power. Exploitation occurs when the dominant group exercises this control over the exploited group. The core of Vrousalis's concept of exploitation is the pursuit of self-enrichment at the expense of others. Those who engage in exploitation aim to benefit themselves economically, socially, or in some other way, often without regard for the well-being or interests of the exploited party. This self-enrichment can result from accumulating wealth, gaining social status, or achieving personal goals (Vrousalis, 2013).

⁶ "ecological integrity refers to the pristineness, undiminished wholeness, or completeness of an entire ecosystem, whether it be a planet, an ecoregion, a preserve, a pond, or an alpine meadow. The concept of protecting large natural areas from development is the basis for marine and terrestrial national parks, biological reserves, and wilderness areas distributed globally." (Hughes, 2019, p.1)

Vrousalis introduces an ethical dimension to discussions on exploitation, urging consideration of its social and economic implications and the ethical aspects of dominating others for personal gain. Vrousalis's conceptual framework is versatile and applicable to diverse scenarios such as human relationships, labor practices, and environmental issues. This versatility enables a nuanced exploration of exploitation's multifaceted nature, transcending narrow viewpoints for a holistic understanding of the dynamics involved. His insights challenge simplistic economic perspectives and established norms, encouraging critical analysis and reevaluating power structures. By fostering a deeper understanding of the root causes of exploitation, Vrousalis's work paves the way for transformative approaches to address this complex issue. His considerations on exploitation contribute significantly to ongoing discourse, providing a theoretical framework and a morally grounded and versatile lens for analyzing and critiquing exploitation in various forms. This work invites scholars, policymakers, and advocates to further explore the ethical dimensions and systemic structures underlying exploitation, fostering a comprehensive and critical approach to addressing this pervasive societal challenge.

I argue that this definition of exploitation can also be relevant in natural resources exploitation, even though Vrousalis focuses on human economic vulnerability (Zwolinski & al, 2021). In the context of ocean exploitation, humans often instrumentalize the natural environment. This means that humans view and treat nature primarily as a means to their ends. Natural resources, ecosystems, and landscapes are frequently used for human benefit, such as economic gain, convenience, or technological development. Biological systems and the environment are inherently vulnerable to human actions. Human activities, such as overfishing, pollution, and over-extraction of resources, can disrupt and harm natural ecosystems, making nature vulnerable to these impacts. Nature's vulnerability is compounded by its inability to defend itself or respond to human actions in the way that sentient beings can. By applying the definition of exploitation to the relationship between humans and nature, we can argue that humans, in many instances, instrumentalize the natural environment's vulnerability to extract a net benefit. Thus, to answer those challenges, and as I mentioned previously, there have always been respectful ways to extract resources from nature, especially from the ocean. Inglis, for example, theorized this concept as traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) (Inglis, 1993). Some specific features of TEK are, among others, that it is qualitative, holistic, moral, and spiritual (Inglis, 1993). The authors also highlight how TEK could frame our instrumental practices : “Much traditional knowledge is relevant for contemporary resources management” (Inglis, 1993, p.5).

i. Darwall's framework

In Stephen Darwall's moral framework, respect is grounded in mutual recognition and accountability among moral agents. A challenge can occur when extending this framework to the natural world. This challenge may lead to a situation where the environment is susceptible to exploitation without sufficient moral constraints for its protection. Respect and moral obligations are based on mutual recognition and accountability (Darwall, 2006). However, the natural world, including the ocean, has no reciprocal moral relationship with humans. This lack of reciprocity can create a situation where the environment is treated as a one-sided moral subject. In such cases, the natural world is more susceptible to exploitation, as humans may not feel morally constrained by reciprocal obligations to protect or respect it. Thus, the absence of a second-person relationship with the environment can result in a more anthropocentric perspective, where human interests and benefits take precedence. This may result in environmental exploitation without adequate moral constraints. Exploitative practices are often rationalized based on human needs, potentially harming the natural world. In a framework where the environment is predominantly viewed as instrumental for human use, it becomes more susceptible to exploitation. When nature is considered merely a means to human ends rather than an end in itself, the motivation for its protection and conservation may wane, contributing to over-exploitation and resource depletion. The challenge within Darwall's framework lies in the absence of reciprocal moral relationships with the natural world, fostering an anthropocentric and instrumental perspective. Establishing a sustainable relationship with the environment entails balancing human needs and minimizing harm to the natural world.

When linking Vrousalis' considerations on exploitation with Darwall's considerations on respect in our context, the challenge arises when extending this framework to the natural world. The environment does not possess the capacity for reciprocal moral recognition and accountability. Unlike human moral agents who can engage in mutual recognition and accountability, the natural world, including the ocean, lacks this capacity. When nature is primarily seen as having instrumental value for human use and benefit, it becomes more susceptible to exploitation. Exploitative practices may be justified based on human needs and desires, such as overfishing in the ocean, often at the expense of the environment. In such a framework, our relationship with the ocean is purely instrumental. We still can seek to maximize ocean exploitation as long as future generations are ensured to have a functioning ocean. It can thus reduce the rate of our actual ocean exploitation because our current rate does not guarantee future generations a healthy ocean. Still, this framework does not offer strong ocean protection.

To give more substance to my argument, consider the example of the Marine Stewardship Council (MSC) label, designed to certify products from sustainable fish stocks with limited

environmental impact and effective fishery management (msc.org). The founder of MSC, having connections to the Unilever group⁷, raises questions about potential conflicts of interest. The concern arises when the actual functioning of MSC seems to prioritize financial gains through the sale of labels over the genuine environmental sustainability of fisheries. Surprisingly, only a few fisheries (less than 10) have not been given the MSC label in the last two decades. What experts are reporting about the ocean's condition does not match what we see in our supermarkets. This situation highlights the risks associated with an anthropocentric and instrumental perspective on the environment. Prioritizing the maximization of label sales without robust sustainability verification can result in blue-washing practices. In such instances, financial interests may overshadow the moral obligations and respect advocated by Darwall's framework for the environment. The MSC example illustrates how economic concerns might take precedence over authentic environmental protection in a framework lacking reciprocal moral relationships with the natural world, potentially leading to exploitation. Viewing nature merely as a means to human ends may diminish the motivation to safeguard it, allowing exploitative practices that undermine the credibility of sustainability labels. This underscores the importance of scrutinizing the motivations and practices of organizations like MSC to ensure alignment with genuine environmental stewardship rather than mere economic gain. Addressing systemic issues, including conflicts of interest and the potential for exploitation, within frameworks promoting environmental sustainability becomes crucial.

ii. Dillon and ecofeminist theories framework

Both Dillon's care respect and eco-feminist theories emphasize the inherent value of the ocean. Recognizing the ocean's value means understanding that it has worth beyond its utility for human purposes. In its traditional sense, exploitation involves taking unfair advantage of something for personal gain. When we consider the ocean as having inherent value, it becomes evident that exploiting it solely for economic profit is inconsistent with respecting its inherent worth. These perspectives underscore the interconnectedness between humans and the ocean. Human well-being is intimately tied to the health and sustainability of the ocean's ecosystems. Exploiting the ocean in ways that harm its ecological balance, directly affects our own well-being. Recognizing this interdependence and dependence on the ocean should lead us to treat it respectfully and restraint in our actions. The perspectives advocate an environmental ethics that extends beyond human interests. When following them, the ocean deserves ethical consideration in its own right. This ethical standpoint challenges exploitative practices prioritizing immediate human gain over the ocean's well-being, biodiversity, and the ecological systems it sustains.

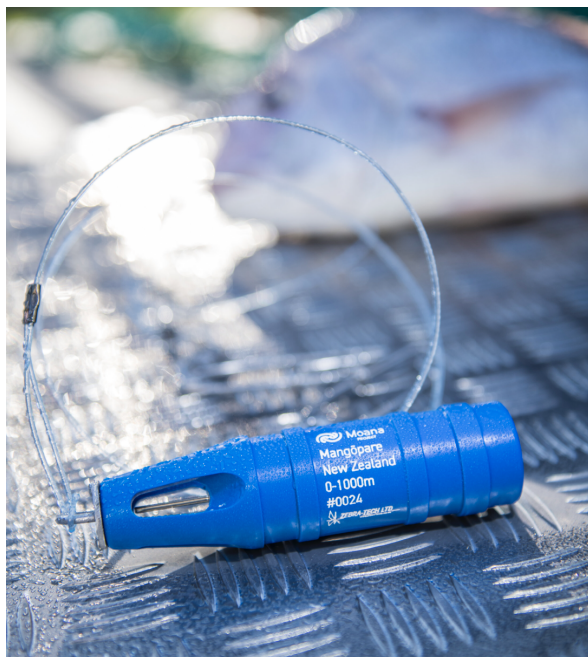
⁷ Unilever plc is a British multinational consumer packaged goods company.

The recognition of the ocean's moral value and our dependence on it calls for the implementation of sustainable and ethical practices in resource extraction. This means ensuring that fishing, tourism, and other activities do not deplete or harm the ocean's ecosystems. Robust regulations are necessary to strike a balance between human needs and the preservation of the ocean's ecological integrity. These regulations should address issues like overfishing, pollution, and habitat destruction, among others. Additionally, a fundamental change in cultural norms is needed. This involves fostering a broader understanding of the ocean's value and our interconnectedness with it. Such a cultural shift should discourage exploitative practices and encourage behaviors prioritizing the ocean's well-being. Advocating for policies and practices that prioritize the ocean's health over immediate economic gain is essential. This includes supporting policies that protect marine ecosystems and biodiversity.

Vrousalis' perspective on exploitation, defined as a systematic relationship in which one entity instrumentalizes another's vulnerability to extract a net benefit, resonates with the broader ethical frameworks of care respect, and ecofeminism when applied to the exploitation of nature. In essence, the intersection of Vrousalis' considerations on exploitation, ecofeminist principles, and care respect suggests a holistic ethical stance towards nature. It advocates for recognizing the inherent value and vulnerabilities of the natural world, restraining systematic relationships that exploit these vulnerabilities for human gain, and instead fostering reciprocal and respectful interactions that prioritize the well-being of both human and non-human entities. This convergence reinforces the importance of an ethical relationship with nature that transcends exploitative practices and aligns with principles of care and interconnectedness. In the case of marine exploitation, Vrousalis' concept of exploitation is evident. A systematic relationship exists where human activities exploit the vulnerability of marine ecosystems for economic gain. Overfishing, as an example, involves depleting fish populations faster than they can replenish, showcasing the exploitation of marine species for short-term economic benefits. Applying the care respect framework to this context consists of recognizing the needs of marine ecosystems and refraining from actions that harm their well-being. Overfishing through the care respect lens implies acknowledging the vulnerability of fish populations and ecosystems, emphasizing sustainable use over short-term economic gains. From an ecofeminist perspective, the exploitation of the marine environment stems from viewing nature, including the ocean, as a passive resource to be dominated for human gain. This perspective advocates recognizing the inherent value of the ocean beyond its utility for human purposes. Destructive fishing practices like bottom trawling, which harm seafloor habitats and non-target species, exemplify a patriarchal mindset prioritizing immediate human gains over the well-being of the marine ecosystem.

To illustrate my argument, consider Kaiser & al. (2019) case study on New Zealand. The case study detailing the profound significance of the marine environment to Māori communities in New Zealand beautifully encapsulates the synergies between Dillon's care respect and eco-feminist frameworks. Both frameworks converge on the recognition of the inherent value of the ocean beyond its utilitarian purposes. The centrality of seafood in the Māori marine economy is not merely an economic asset but an acknowledgment of the interconnectedness between Māori well-being and the health of the marine ecosystem (Kaiser & al. 2019). Dillon's care respect, with its emphasis on recognizing and responding to the needs of others, aligns seamlessly with the Māori cultural practice of kaitiakitanga. The reciprocal responsibility of care, transcending spiritual, intellectual, and physical dimensions, resonates with care respect's call for a holistic and ethical approach to environmental stewardship. The Māori worldview, increasingly influencing commercial fishing practices towards sustainability, mirrors care respect's commitment to ethical considerations in resource management (Kaiser & al. 2019).

Simultaneously, the case study dovetails with eco-feminist theories, which underscore the interconnectedness of environmental well-being with spiritual and intellectual aspects. The Māori concept of kaitiakitanga, emphasizing guardianship and wise management, aligns with the



eco-feminist insistence on recognizing the inherent value of the environment. The Moana Project, an embodiment of the transdisciplinary approach, exemplifies integrating traditional Māori knowledge with scientific advancements, a principle echoed in eco-feminist thought that encourages recognizing diverse forms of knowledge⁸. The emphasis on sustainability and ethical considerations within the Māori worldview, especially evident in the Moana New Zealand project, resonates with both care respect and eco-feminist theories. The commitment to revolutionize ocean forecasting for New Zealand's blue economy reflects an understanding that exploitation solely for economic gain is

inconsistent with the inherent worth of the ocean.

⁸ Image 2 : Example of one of the developed device used to “collect and collate historical and near-real-time ocean temperature and salinity data”. Moana Project (n.d.)

In essence, the case study provides a compelling narrative of how the Māori community's relationship with the marine environment aligns with the principles of care respect and eco-feminist theories. It illustrates a holistic approach that recognizes the inherent value of the ocean, integrates traditional knowledge with scientific advancements, and prioritizes sustainability and ethical considerations in marine ecosystem management. This convergence reinforces the importance of ethical, reciprocal, and interconnected relationships between humans and the environment.

c. Human

In this section, I want to dig into what it means to be human in its ontological sense. First, for clarity, let us make a little reminder of the definition of ontology. Here, ontology will be understood as the philosophical study of being in general (Britannica, 1993). As we previously did, let us look at the natural definition of human. Now, the natural definition of a human being, often used in common language, basically refers to an individual belonging to the species *Homo sapiens* (Robert, n.-d.). We are thus defined as living organisms part of the *Homo Sapiens* species, possessing a unique combination of physical, mental, and social attributes (Larousse n.-d.). What has to be noted is that in none of those definitions there is an element that could lead us to separate humans from nature. Those definitions are very descriptive and say nothing about the distinction or superiority of human beings. However, when we move on to the definition made by Britannica, we find here some elements that could imply some form of superiority. This definition highlights some elements, such as humans as culture-bearing primates with advanced cognitive abilities and a resultant capacity for articulate speech and abstract reasoning (Britannica, 1993). Still, in those definitions, it is nowhere written that some kind of separation from nature needs to be considered. The concept of human is reexamined in the context of our relationship with the ocean. The dissertation suggests that humans should view themselves as part of the more extensive natural system and recognize their responsibility to protect and preserve the ocean for itself or more instrumental reasons like previously mentioned.

The concept of human nature has evolved from essentialist views to more nuanced and multifaceted understandings. While some theories suggest a fixed human nature, others emphasize its malleability and dependence on various factors, including cultural influences, genetics, and personal choices. In contemporary philosophy, the concept of human nature remains a dynamic and debated topic, with various scholars offering diverse perspectives and insights. Understanding the evolution of these currents of thought is essential when discussing human nature, as they provide valuable insights into our ever-developing comprehension of what it means to be human (Roughley, 2023).

I choose to dig deeper into two distinct perspectives on human nature, Aristotle's and Kant's, because they are fundamental and relevant to my subject. Aristotle's view on the relationship between humans and the natural world was rooted in the idea of humans as integral components of nature (Roughley, 2023). While he did not advocate for a strict separation, he recognized distinctive aspects of human nature. At the core of Aristotle's perspective was the concept of rationality. He believed that human beings possessed a unique and defining quality – *rationality*. While other creatures in the natural world might exhibit forms of perception and instinct, humans stood out due to their capacity for conscious thought and deliberation. This rationality enabled moral reasoning, conscious choices, and contemplating the good life. Aristotle also underlined the social and political nature of humans. While firmly situated within the natural world, humans exhibited a distinct inclination toward forming communities and societies. This social dimension of human nature enabled cooperation, knowledge sharing, and the pursuit of shared objectives. Moreover, Aristotle's emphasis on virtue ethics underscored the integration of human nature with moral and ethical dimensions of existence (Roughley, 2023). By cultivating virtues such as courage, wisdom, and justice, individuals could lead a life in harmony with their rational and social nature, enhancing their potential within the broader natural context.

Immanuel Kant's philosophy introduced a fundamental distinction between the natural and moral realms, suggesting a separation of humans from the natural world in a particular sense. Kant's philosophy presented the idea of two parallel worlds where humans exist (Roughley, 2023). The first is the phenomenal world, a realm of appearances governed by deterministic natural laws. Here, individuals are subject to the mechanical cause-and-effect principles of nature. However, Kant also introduced the concept of the noumenal world, which represents the realm of moral freedom and rational autonomy. In this noumenal world, humans transcend the deterministic laws of nature and become *free moral agents*. Central to Kant's perspective was moral autonomy, which he saw as a defining characteristic of human nature. He argued that individuals possessed the capacity for rational moral judgment and the ability to act according to moral principles they established (Roughley, 2023). This moral autonomy set humans apart from the natural world, which operated under deterministic causal laws. Kant emphasized a separation between the deterministic, natural, and moral realms, in which human rationality and moral autonomy played a central role. While humans remained within the natural world, their capacity for moral choice and self-imposed moral principles marked a distinct realm in Kant's philosophical framework.

Challenging traditional views on human nature, as presented by Aristotle and Kant, is important for building greater support for ocean conservation. While these philosophical perspectives have their merits, they can also have limitations in addressing complex modern issues like environmental conservation. Challenging traditional philosophical views on human nature can help

shift perspectives towards a more ecocentric and responsible approach to ocean conservation. By considering our dependence and intercontendeness to the ocean, the collective moral duty to protect them, and the universality of environmental ethics, we can build a stronger foundation for global efforts to preserve and conserve our marine ecosystems.

i. Darwall's framework

Stephen Darwall's moral philosophy, particularly from the perspective of his "second-person standpoint," is more focused on the nature of moral relationships and how we interact with one another as moral agents rather than on providing a comprehensive ontology of what it means to be human. Nonetheless, Darwall's framework does have implications for our understanding of human beings in moral terms, including dignity and rights, also because his reflection is engaged in a Kantian framework (Darwall, 2006, ch.2).

I would like to highlight three points that Darwall puts at the center of his understanding of ontology as I got them. First of all, human beings have inherent dignity as moral agents. This dignity stems from the capacity to make moral judgments and enter into moral relationships with others. Recognizing each individual's moral worth and capacity is central to the second-person standpoint. The fact that humans can engage in moral dialogue, mutual recognition, and accountability gives them inherent dignity within this moral framework (Darwall, 2006, pp.55/56). Second, while Darwall's framework is more concerned with the nature of moral relationships, recognizing rights is a critical component. Human beings have rights that are grounded in the recognition of their moral agency. These rights emerge from acknowledging that individuals are entitled to be treated with respect, fairness, and justice. For example, individuals have the right to be free from harm, to have their promises honored, and to be treated with respect for their autonomy (Darwall, 2006, pp.13/14). Third, being human involves being part of a moral community where individuals are held morally accountable for their actions and decisions. Human beings are seen as moral agents capable of moral judgment and are responsible for justifying their actions to others in the context of moral relationships (Darwall, 2006, ch.4).

Overall, while Darwall's framework does not provide a comprehensive ontology of human beings, it highlights the moral aspects of humanity and underscores the importance of recognition, dignity, and rights in the context of moral relationships. It sees human beings as participants in a complex web of moral interactions, where our capacity for moral judgment and our responsibilities toward one another are central features of our humanity within the moral domain. This teaches us that humans and the natural world, such as the ocean, can not be considered equals in moral terms due to

the asymmetry in moral agency and the nature of moral relationships. Indeed, humans and the natural world, including the ocean, are not considered equals in Darwall's moral framework because moral agency, recognition, accountability, and the basis for moral obligations are primarily features of human moral relationships. While ethical considerations related to the environment and the treatment of natural resources exist, they are grounded in the impact on human well-being and future generations, not in recognizing moral agency in the natural world. (Darwall, 2006).

ii. Dillon and ecofeminist theories framework

The question is, then, how come a separation between human and nature is yet so present in our conception of what it is to be human ? Here lies the limit of those definitions that I would like to address. We need to find another definition that could encompass our connection and belong to nature because the current definitions of what it means to be human are insufficient to think of ourselves as organisms belonging to a broader ecosystem. Ecofeminism school of thought already challenged this ontological separation, especially by asking if they were morally significant arguments for separating humans and non-human entities (Warren, 1990). Ecofeminists aim to overcome this separation that is, in their view, rooted in our patriarchal and heteronormative discourse towards nature (Hird, 2011). Ecofeminism offers alternative ethical frameworks that promote care, empathy, and interconnectedness. This contrasts with Kantian ethics, which can be more individualistic, and Aristotle's virtue ethics, which focuses on human-centered virtues. Ecofeminist ethics advocate for an ethic of care and responsibility towards nature (Warren, 1990 ; Bossi, 2020 ; Hird, 2011), emphasizing that both Aristotle and Kant may overlook or underplay issues related to domination and hierarchies. Ecofeminist theories highlight the connections between patriarchal systems of domination and the domination of nature, challenging these hierarchies and promoting a more equitable and sustainable relationship with the natural world.

Moreover, some researchers have already demonstrated human and nature dependence. For example, it has been stated that such categories as agency or reason are irrelevant to assuming that humans are superior to nature (Hird, 2011). We must remember from those arguments that humans would not exist without the non-human (Warren, 1990 ; Bossi, 2020 ; Hird, 2011 ; Vitellone, 2011). That means there is an unwavering dependence between the two, showing that it does not make sense to separate humans from the non-human. To elaborate further on our relationship with the ocean, we need to underline our connections with the ocean. As stated earlier, the ocean is a major source of life on our planet (Bossi, 2020), and we would not be able to function properly without it because it provides us with what we need to survive (mostly food and oxygen) (Sonigara, 2020). That means, without the ocean, we would not have even existed, and if the ocean were led to stop functioning now,

we would certainly disappear. It is thus essential to put nature and the ocean back in the concept of human.

Moving on to the eventual conceptual distinction that we should address, we need to distinguish human in its ontology from other concepts such as existence (neutral concept of just being, existing), personal identity, or even essence, which are more related to the philosophical questioning that is proper to some human abilities. Indeed, if we take the concept of personal identity, it would not make sense to link it with the concept of human that we are trying to build here because identity is some questioning from ourselves to ourselves (Britannica, 1993). However, regarding our arguments, the ocean should have its part in conceptualizing human.

d. Ocean

Earth is commonly also known as a “blue planet” because the ocean covers a large part of our planet. Defining the ocean is easy and challenging at the same time. Let us start with our natural language; what does the ocean mean in natural language, and what first comes to mind when we speak about it? The natural definition of the ocean seems to be very clear and common for all of us. According to encyclopedias, we could define the ocean as a large and continuous body of salt water. (Britannica, 1993 ; National Geographic, 2023). These definitions thus accord themselves to say that the ocean must be firstly considered as the only entity constituted by what we decided to call oceans and seas. There is only one global ocean (Britannica, 1993 ; National Geographic, 2023). Britannica goes further in its definition of the ocean; it gives us information about its geographical reputation, origin, or even formation (Britannica, 1993).

Even though this largely standard natural definition of the ocean helps us understand what the ocean is, it does not address the ocean’s importance in many ways. I wish to give two ideological arguments to justify the necessity of addressing the ocean's importance in its natural definition. The first argument is instrumental, and the second is deontological. Let us consider our instrumental argument ; as previously stated, today it is estimated that more than : “3 billion people rely on the ocean for their livelihoods”, and this number only considers people relying on the ocean as a primary source of food (Sonigara, 2022, p.2). However, humans rely on the ocean for survival in many different ways, mainly because the ocean plays a vital role in the freshwater cycle. Another significant role it plays is climate regulation and furnishing most of the air we breathe. Not only does it produce up to fifty percent of our oxygen, but it also acts as the most important carbon sink of the planet, which helps humanity regulate its carbon emissions. Additional arguments could be put forward, such as our use of the ocean for transportation, commerce, and renewable energy. The second argument, the

deontological one, wants us to think of the ocean as something valuable itself, regardless of its instrumental value and irrespective of the negative consequences we might face if we continue to over-exploit and pollute it.

The ocean is unarguably vital for maintaining life on earth. However, the whole “world exists for itself, rather than for “us”” (Hird, 2011, p.113) thus, the ocean, which constitutes the most significant part of the surface of our planet (71%), also exists for itself and is valuable in that sense (Britannica, 1993). The ocean, home to numerous species, defies precise enumeration due to our limited exploration. Currently, we have only scratched the surface, with an estimated 91% of observed species yet to be classified (National Ocean Service, 2023). Beyond its biodiversity, the ocean forms the heart of a vast and incomprehensible ecosystem. Moreover, it has contributed to medicinal knowledge, influencing traditional and ancient Chinese medicines. Additionally, the ocean holds cultural significance in various religions and mythologies, featuring figures like the ancient Greek goddess Amphitrite or the African Vodun deity Mami Wata, revered across West, Central, and South Africa, the African diaspora, the Caribbean, and parts of North and South America.

All those elements give us a consistent base for formulating both an instrumental and deontological argument about the need to address the value of the ocean in its natural definition. To further clarify, it would be necessary to make some clear conceptual distinctions to elaborate our concept (Olsthoorn, 2017). As discussed here, the concept of the ocean should be distinguished from other notions like water and sea. There is no meaningful distinction between oceans such as the Atlantic or Pacific. Attempting to separate marine life from the ocean is illogical, as both are integral ; the ocean is defined by its living creatures, and these creatures owe their existence to the ocean. The conceptualization of the ocean I am trying to build here seeks to consider the ocean as a valuable entity, as a whole, because it englobes all the features of the ocean previously underlined, instrumental as well as deontological.

Overall, examining whether the ocean can serve as an object of respect with moral implications is a multi-faceted journey that involves a thorough conceptual analysis. Through applying Olsthoorn's framework, the study dissected four key concepts: respect, exploitation, human, and the ocean, which laid the foundation for a deeper understanding of the subject employing Darwall's perspective on respect and the ecofeminist framework intertwined with Dillon's insights on care respect, two distinct paths were forged, each offering unique insights into the moral relationship between humanity and the ocean.

The Darwallian framework, while providing some insights, offers a less constraining connection between humans and the ocean, potentially limiting its moral influence. The ocean can only be considered an indirect object of respect. The relationship with the ocean this framework offers is a relationship that is still instrumental and exploitative but can enforce a reduction in our current exploitation. On the other hand, the ecofeminist framework, coupled with Dillon's perspective on care respect, showcases a more robust potential to guide human conduct and encourage respect for the ocean. This approach aligns with ecofeminist theories that emphasize the unjustified dominance of nature and the need to rethink the relationship between humans and the environment. In this reimagined conceptual landscape, the ocean emerges as a more compelling object of respect, pointing toward moral imperatives that could shape our actions and attitudes, ultimately fostering a more sustainable and harmonious coexistence with the natural world.

B. Exploring upgraded practices

Hypothetical reasoning, a cognitive process deeply rooted in the contractualist tradition, serves as a valuable method for exploring potential relationships of respect within different conceptual frameworks. This form of reasoning involves speculative and imaginative thinking to envision hypothetical scenarios, consequences, or outcomes, providing a conceptual tool for understanding complex relationships. In political theory, hypothetical reasoning becomes instrumental in exploring the ethical implications of decisions and policies (Bagnoli, 2021).

The adoption of hypothetical reasoning within the contractualist tradition emerges as a particularly robust methodology for exploring potential relationships of respect between humans and the ocean within the realm of environmental ethics. By engaging in speculative and imaginative thinking, hypothetical reasoning allows to envision novel scenarios and consequences, offering a unique avenue for probing the ethical dimensions of human interactions with the environment. Within two different conceptual frameworks, this method becomes indispensable for navigating the complexities of environmental ethics, offering a lens through which to analyze and anticipate the challenges associated with human-ocean relationships. It enables us to assess the feasibility of proposed solutions, envision alternative courses of action, and delve into the ethical implications inherent in environmental decision-making. The contractualist tradition's reliance on hypothetical reasoning thus proves to be a powerful tool in the pursuit of understanding and fostering new potential relationships of respect between humanity and the ocean within the diverse landscapes of environmental ethics.

a. Darwall's framework

Embarking on a journey of hypothetical reasoning, let us delve into constructed scenarios and agreements that resonate with rational individuals' choices. The overarching question that guides this exploration revolves around our evolving practices and relationship with the ocean, which finds itself in a precarious state. Within the framework of Darwallian philosophy and the concepts reworked within it, a precise question emerges for this thought experiment :

If we were to consider the ocean as an object we either owe a moral duty of reparation (because of our lack of care towards it) or as indirect object of respect (for the sake of future generations, for example), how would our practices towards it change ?

As a reminder, in exploring respect within the Darwallian framework, I emphasized the second-person standpoint, highlighting mutual recognition and accountability among moral agents. This conceptualization unveiled the intricate connections between respect and interpersonal relationships, emphasizing the acknowledgment of moral agency. However, we encountered a significant challenge when attempting to extend this framework to encompass respect toward the ocean. The lack of reciprocal moral relationships with non-human entities, such as the ocean, poses difficulties in applying the same principles of respect, highlighting a potential gap in the framework when addressing environmental ethics. Despite this challenge, our analysis underscores that respect, within a Darwallian perspective, remains fundamentally relational and normative, hinging on the mutual recognition of individuals as moral equals.

Hypothetical reasoning

An emphasis on an instrumental perspective becomes evident to decipher the intricacies of respect within the context of our relationship with the ocean. The absence of reciprocal moral relationships may propel an anthropocentric and instrumental viewpoint, wherein the ocean is primarily valued for its utility to human interests. Despite this, an avenue for enhanced ocean protection emerges through the integration of ethical perspectives that acknowledge the moral value of the natural world. The amalgamation of Darwall's framework with environmental ethics forms a robust moral foundation that would advocate for responsible stewardship, mitigating exploitation, and fostering sustainable practices to safeguard the ocean.

In the realm of this hypothetical reasoning, I should envision a congress dedicated to the ocean, leading to the conception of the "Wave of Tomorrow Accord." This accord strives to address the complex challenge of transforming humanity's exploitative relationship with the ocean.

Setting scenarios in academic writing is a methodological tool to explore hypothetical situations, enabling researchers to probe potential outcomes, implications, and the feasibility of proposed frameworks or ideas. Establishing a scenario provides a structured and controlled environment for examining various factors and variables, facilitating a nuanced understanding of potential challenges and opportunities. Within environmental ethics and policy, scenarios become essential tools to conceptualize and assess alternative approaches, exemplified by the scenario of the "Wave of Tomorrow Accord." Recognizing that a transformative relationship with the ocean demands diverse perspectives and collaborative decision-making, the accord ensures inclusivity by involving representatives from various stakeholder groups. This dedicated body becomes pivotal in advocating

for responsible practices and ensuring ongoing stewardship, highlighting the significance of diverse voices in the decision-making process.

The foundational steps should involve the creation of a "Marine Rights Charter" that sets clear principles, framing the ocean as a vital resource for the well-being and survival of future generations. Emphasizing the instrumental value of the ocean, this charter becomes the ethical foundation of the "Wave of Tomorrow Accord," grounding it in principles that highlight the interconnectedness of the ocean with human well-being and future sustainability. Acknowledging historical exploitation, is introduced for addressing past harms ; the "Stewardship Fund for Oceanic Reparation." This fund would provide a tangible way for nations and industries to contribute to repairing damages inflicted on the ocean ecosystem, aligning with Darwall's concept of moral duty by translating acknowledgment of past mistreatment into tangible actions for reparation. Finally, to encourage ongoing commitment to responsible practices, the introduction of a "Sustainable Blue Economy Certification" would be proposed. This certification system aligns with the principles outlined in the Marine Rights Charter, incentivizing businesses and nations to adopt sustainable practices. By creating a market-driven incentive, this step aims to drive a broader adoption of responsible practices and facilitate a cultural shift towards a more sustainable and respectful relationship with the ocean. The Sustainable Blue Economy Certification becomes a tangible measure of a nation's or business's commitment to ocean stewardship, fostering a sense of responsibility and accountability within the international community.

Finding an agreement

Navigating the complexities of hypothetical reasoning, our methodological compass would shift toward seeking a consensus ; a convergence of diverse individuals on foundational principles for a just society. This transformative endeavor envisions significant changes in legal frameworks, economic paradigms, and societal values related to the ocean, particularly on the international stage. On this global platform, governments should engage in high-level discussions to establish the legal foundation for the Wave Of Tomorrow Accord. This consensus would form the basis for international agreements that articulate common commitments among nations, shaping the legal backbone of the Accord.

Within this legal framework, countries may enact national legislation aligned with the principles of the Wave Of Tomorrow Accord, focusing on sustainable fishing practices, pollution control, and reducing plastics in the ocean. Emphasizing shared responsibility underscores global interconnectedness, with governments investing in robust enforcement mechanisms and surveillance infrastructure using advanced technologies.

Economically, the scenario would chart a transformative course by redirecting fishing industries toward science-based management and a green technological shift. Governments play a pivotal role by supporting sustainable fishing technologies and fostering a paradigm shift in fisheries management. Economic activities related to the ocean pivot towards green technologies, innovation, and recognizing that a healthy ocean is fundamental for long-term prosperity.

Governments and businesses may collaboratively tap into the potential of eco-tourism and the blue economy, promoting sustainable tourism practices and embracing initiatives like seaweed farming and marine biotechnology. In intergenerational commitment, a profound sense of responsibility shapes an ethical framework. Educational campaigns would foster public awareness, and inclusive decision-making processes actively involve intergenerational advocates, ensuring policies are shaped with meticulous long-term perspectives. Pursuing a consensus becomes a practical pathway toward building a just and sustainable relationship with the ocean.

Implications and application to practical issues

Addressing the implications of the envisioned scenario is pivotal as it charts a transformative course in our relationship with the ocean. The derived principles, centered on indirect respect and intergenerational duty, must now be extended to practical issues, facilitating the application of these principles to address real-world challenges.

The first key implication, environmental stewardship, should mark a shift in decision-making, prioritizing long-term sustainability over short-term gains. This change influences policy formulation, regulations, and industries. Governments would collaborate on regulations emphasizing sustainability, recognizing the interconnectedness of ocean health with broader well-being. Increased investment in scientific research ensures informed, adaptive decision-making, aligning with the goal of environmental stewardship.

The second implication, focusing on balancing interests, would introduce a tension between immediate economic growth and long-term ecological protection. This societal challenge prompts policy innovation for sustainable growth, exploring eco-friendly technologies, circular economies, and sustainable business practices. Robust public dialogue delves into trade-offs, fostering understanding and inclusivity in decision-making.

The third implication, resource preservation, should reframe ocean protection as a duty of care and stewardship. This ethical responsibility encourages industries to adopt practices minimizing negative impacts on the ocean, promoting sustainable resource use, and responsible waste

management. The goal is a legacy of a healthy oceanic ecosystem, contributing holistically to societal well-being. In summary, these implications signify a paradigm shift, promoting environmental stewardship, addressing the balance between economic interests and ecological protection, and framing resource preservation as a profound duty of care for future generations.

Conclusion

By conceptualizing the ocean as a vital resource essential for the well-being of future generations, the scenario would establish an ambitious ethical standard. Incorporating a moral duty of reparation for past mistreatment further elevates the ethical discourse surrounding ocean stewardship. Nevertheless, potential objections arise, questioning the framework's moral adequacy, the clarity of duty, the intricate balance between short-term and long-term interests, and the allocation of resources. These objections would serve as poignant reminders of the complex realities associated with implementing such a framework on a global scale, necessitating clear guidelines, robust enforcement mechanisms, and inclusive decision-making processes.

The overarching challenge may lie in the effective global implementation of the proposed paradigm shift, requiring the nuanced negotiation of diverse national interests. The scenario acknowledges the need for meticulous navigation through these intricacies, recognizing the potential for objections and divergent perspectives. Despite introducing innovative concepts, the proposed framework prompts reflective consideration of its efficacy in substantially enhancing ocean protection, given its semblance to existing approaches.

In essence, this hypothetical reasoning, while ambitious, offers a nuanced understanding of the intricacies and real-world challenges inherent in reshaping our relationship with the ocean for the benefit of both current and future generations. It underscores the imperative for thoughtful consideration, global collaboration, and adaptive strategies to address the multifaceted dimensions of ocean stewardship. As we contemplate this visionary shift, recognizing challenges becomes an integral aspect of the discourse, emphasizing the need for a comprehensive and dynamic approach to navigating the complex terrain of ocean governance.

Challenging Darwall's framework

For a more effective approach to enhancing ocean protection and to challenge Darwall's point, it would be valuable to explore the potential outcomes of considering it a direct object of respect. However, this proposition encounters challenges within Darwall's framework. Darwall's concept of respect necessitates a second-person standpoint, requiring an entity capable of reciprocating reasons. Nevertheless, with its diverse ecosystems, the ocean lacks a singular entity embodying its interests and possessing the necessary cognitive capacities. Within the framework of Darwall's concept of respect, designating the ocean as a direct object of respect presents a significant hurdle : identifying an entity capable of representing the collective interests of all ocean inhabitants and ecosystems. The challenge lies in locating an entity endowed with the necessary second-person standpoint capacity to understand and reciprocate reasons. The intricate nature of the oceanic ecosystem, spanning from diverse marine organisms to vast interconnected ecosystems, complicates this endeavor.

The methodology employed, a *Reductio ad absurdum*, serves as a compelling tool to demonstrate the inadequacy of the Darwallian framework in addressing the complexities of the relationship between humanity and the ocean. The hypothetical scenario involving an entity embodying the ocean's interests exposes the inherent impracticality within this ethical framework. Consequently, this *Reductio ad absurdum* underscores the inescapable limitation of the Darwallian framework, invariably relegating the ocean to an indirect object of respect due to the inherent complexities and interconnectedness inherent in the oceanic realm. The methodology effectively highlights the need for alternative ethical frameworks capable of accommodating the intricate nature of the ocean while acknowledging its significance beyond a mere indirect object of respect. Consequently, alternative ethical perspectives and frameworks that can address the value of the ocean while accommodating its intricate nature may better serve as foundations for comprehensive and effective ocean protection initiatives. This last argument offers the perfect transition to the second framework I work in.

b. Dillon and ecofeminist framework

For our second hypothetical reasoning based on care respect and ecofeminist theories, the identified question to explore within this hypothetical framework is:

"If we were to consider the ocean a living entity deserving moral respect, how would our relationship with it change?"

As a recall, drawing from Dillon's care respect and eco-feminist perspectives, respect for the ocean is grounded in the inherent value of the ocean itself and our interdependence with it. This form of respect emphasizes recognizing the ocean's worth beyond human utility, advocating for sustainable and ethical practices, and fostering a cultural shift toward appreciating the interconnectedness between humanity and the ocean. By understanding the ocean's value and our dependence on it, we are prompted to conduct ourselves in ways that prioritize its well-being, balancing human needs with ecological integrity and promoting a respectful relationship with this vital natural entity.

Hypothetical reasoning

Imagine a future where the World Ocean Congress convenes in a state-of-the-art underwater conference center, serving as a symbolic commitment to understanding and preserving the ocean. In this scenario, decision-makers from nations, scientists, environmentalists, and representatives of indigenous communities would gather to engage in meaningful dialogue about the ocean's pressing issues.

In the ongoing endeavor to redefine our relationship with the ocean, the second phase should involve pursuing an agreement; a collective agreement among diverse stakeholders on fundamental principles. In this hypothetical scenario, pivotal actors from different spheres should unite to establish a collaborative alliance that acknowledges and respects the ocean's moral value.

At the forefront are scientists, individuals of groundbreaking intellect who acknowledge the moral significance of the ocean. Armed with evidence and insights, they could take center stage at the World Ocean Congress, articulating the urgency of adopting ethical practices for the ocean's preservation. Their role may extend beyond research, encompassing a commitment to bridging the gap between scientific understanding and the implementation of policies. Complementing the scientists are policymakers, the architects of international policies shaped by the principles of care respect, and eco-feminist theories. Driven by a steadfast desire to safeguard the ocean's moral value, these visionaries would exhibit diplomatic prowess and resilience even in the face of political and economic pressures. Their commitment lies in enforcing stringent regulations to benefit the ocean and future generations. Intersecting with these voices are representatives of commercial interests, hailing from fishing companies, shipping industries, and various other entities with vested interests in the ocean. Initially resistant to change due to economic concerns, they may find themselves under mounting public awareness and pressure to adopt sustainable practices. Among them, some might

recognize the economic potential in transitioning to eco-friendly operations, introducing a diverse array of perspectives.

Facilitating the collaboration among these diverse entities would be the Global Oceanic Diplomatic Corps, comprised of diplomats and experts dedicated to mediating conflicts, fostering agreements, and ensuring that international policies align with principles of care respect, and eco-feminist theories. Their commitment should foster cooperation and understanding among nations, navigating the intricate web of international relations with cultural sensitivity and diplomatic skills.

In this hypothetical scenario, the collaborative dynamics between scientists, policymakers, commercial interests, and the Global Oceanic Diplomatic Corps should form the top of a global effort to protect the ocean and uphold its inherent moral worth. The scientists could provide the foundational knowledge, policymakers drive the formulation of policies, commercial interests contribute diverse perspectives, and the diplomatic corps ensures international cooperation. This united front, fueled by a shared commitment to ethical practices and the preservation of the ocean's moral value, might exemplify how diverse individuals can find common ground to work toward a just and sustainable society.

Finding an agreement

In pursuing principles leading to a potential agreement; where diverse individuals align on foundational principles. The scenario should unfold with key decisions, actions, and interactions shaping a transformative relationship with the ocean.

Inspired by acknowledging the ocean's moral value, the World Ocean Congress unanimously adopts the "Oceanic Respect Accord," initiating transformative legal changes. Governments worldwide might collaborate to designate extensive marine sanctuaries, enact stringent regulations to control pollution and ban destructive fishing practices. The scientific community collaborates to establish sustainable fishing quotas based on ecological carrying capacity.

Governments should recognize economic repercussions and implement a "Blue Transition Fund" to support affected industries. This fund triggers essential economic shifts, investing in sustainable ocean industries. Policymakers work with communities on job transition and retraining initiatives, aligning economic opportunities with the ocean's moral values.

Global awareness campaigns launched by governments and NGOs may educate consumers about the impact of their choices on the ocean. This would lead to crucial shifts in people's behavior, encouraging sustainable practices and thus also pressuring companies to adopt eco-friendly practices.

The Oceanic Diplomatic Corps is pivotal in mediating conflicts, ensuring collaborative decision-making, and establishing conflict resolution mechanisms.

In this unfolding narrative, legal changes, economic shifts, changes in consumer behavior, and diplomatic efforts merge into a harmonious symphony of actions. Rooted in an agreement on the ocean's moral value, these initiatives showcase the transformative potential of collective decision-making in fostering a just and sustainable relationship with the ocean.

Implications and application to practical issues

In extending the methodology to practical issues, the scenario's implications would manifest across various dimensions, addressing real-world challenges and providing tangible solutions.

Recognizing the ocean's moral significance sparks widespread discussions on the interconnectedness of humans and the natural world. This realization may prompt an evolution in ethical frameworks, incorporating a deeper understanding of the symbiotic relationship between humanity and the ocean. Society grapples with the moral obligation to act as stewards of the environment. Environmental ethics should take center stage, emphasizing the responsibility to protect the ocean not only for its inherent value but also for the well-being of future generations.

The fishing industry's decline might necessitate proactive measures to address job displacement. Governments should implement comprehensive programs supporting affected communities, offering retraining initiatives, alternative employment opportunities, and investments in sustainable economic activities. The economic shift catalyzes a transition to sustainable economies. New industries centered around marine conservation, eco-tourism for instance emerge, contributing to long-term economic resilience.

Stricter regulations and environmentally conscious behavior would lead to a significant recovery of marine ecosystems. Fish populations would rebound, and the ocean's health would improve, enhancing biodiversity and ecosystem services. Marine ecosystems become more resilient and adaptable to environmental changes. The scenario should demonstrate the remarkable capacity of the ocean to recover when given proper protection and care, reinforcing the importance of ethical and sustainable practices.

Recognizing the ocean's moral status necessitates unprecedented levels of global cooperation. Countries may collaborate to establish treaties and agreements prioritizing the protection and sustainable use of the ocean. Shared responsibility would become a guiding principle in international relations. The formation of the Oceanic Diplomatic Corps facilitates ongoing diplomatic efforts to

address conflicts and promote ocean stewardship. Nations learn to navigate shared responsibilities, fostering a new era of cooperation in managing this vital global resource.

The scenario would profoundly reevaluate humanity's relationship with the natural world. Philosophers, ethicists, and policymakers engage in discussions that challenge anthropocentric worldviews, considering the moral status of non-human entities and their place in ethical systems. Environmental ethics should become a central theme in academic and philosophical discourse. The moral consideration of the ocean sets a precedent for broader conversations about the ethical treatment of other ecosystems and living entities, sparking a paradigm shift in worldviews.

Conclusion

I have engaged in a thoughtful exploration of hypothetical reasoning, delving into a methodology that envisions a profound shift in our relationship with the ocean. From constructing scenarios at the World Ocean Congress to seeking overlapping consensus among diverse actors and applying derived principles to practical issues, I have woven a narrative of transformative change.

The journey began with hypothetical reasoning, envisioning a scenario where the moral value of the ocean takes center stage. I then transitioned to the intricate dynamics of consensus, where scientists, policymakers, commercial interests, and diplomatic entities collaboratively crafted a global alliance for oceanic protection. Finally, I applied these principles to practical issues, unraveling the profound implications for ethical considerations, economic shifts, environmental benefits, global cooperation, and evolving worldviews.

My exploration underscores the interconnectedness of ethical, economic, and environmental dimensions, illustrating the potential for collective action to address pressing challenges. As I conclude, I recognize the power of imaginative reasoning, collaborative decision-making, and the application of ethical principles in fostering a just and sustainable relationship with the ocean : one that extends beyond theoretical constructs to tangible, real-world solutions.

c. Merits and limits of each scenario

In the ensuing discussion, I will explore the inherent limitations of hypothetical reasoning, emphasizing its reliance on imagined scenarios and its inability to anticipate unforeseen external

factors that may influence outcomes. The method's effectiveness hinges on the accuracy of assumptions during scenario construction, and deviations from real-world conditions can compromise the scenario's validity.

Comparing the two scenarios reveals distinct approaches to ocean protection, each with unique strengths and limitations. Adopting a Darwallian framework, the first scenario sets an ambitious ethical standard by tying the ocean to a moral duty of reparation. While elevating the discourse around ocean stewardship, it faces objections regarding moral adequacy, duty clarity, and the balance between short-term and long-term interests. Global implementation challenges require clear guidelines, robust enforcement mechanisms, and inclusive decision-making processes.

In contrast, the second scenario, rooted in care respect and ecofeminist theories, offers a more comprehensive and dynamic framework for ocean protection. It bridges theoretical constructs with tangible solutions by emphasizing collective action and interconnectedness among ethical, economic, and environmental dimensions. The scenario stands out for its ambitiousness in addressing global complexities, but its sheer scale may encounter resistance, bureaucratic hurdles, and delays. Balancing long-term sustainability with short-term economic priorities poses a delicate challenge.

Normatively, the second scenario provides a solid foundation for ethical ocean consideration, prioritizing the ocean's moral value over certain sovereignty concerns. This principled approach reduces conflicts of interest, aligning actions with the overarching goal of ocean protection. However, its ambitious nature introduces practical challenges, making immediate implementation less feasible. Balancing normative strength with practicality requires careful navigation between principled aspirations and the pragmatic realities of global governance.

III. Conclusions

a. Summary of the fundamental steps of the argument

In exploring the ocean's intricate ecosystem, this thesis embarked on a journey to unveil the severe challenges threatening its well-being. By delving into the depths of the ocean's complexities, I shed light on the alarming issues that pose a significant threat to its ecological balance. I presented instrumental arguments and also pointed the inherent value of the ocean, advocating the urgent need for enhanced protection measures. The ocean, a vital cornerstone of our planet's sustainability, demands immediate attention and concerted efforts to safeguard its delicate equilibrium.

The concept of respect emerged as a compelling lens through which to redefine our relationship with the ocean, transcending traditional perspectives of exploitation and resource extraction. Recognizing the ocean ecosystem's value and its intricate web of life, I posited respect as a transformative force capable of reshaping our moral and ethical compass in the treatment of this vital environment. This conceptualization prompted the formulation of my central research question: *If we were to establish the ocean as an object of respect, which gives us moral grounds for action, how should we handle our relationship with the ocean, and how would respect constrain our practices in ocean exploitation?* Furthermore, the inquiry sought to unravel how the principle of respect would impose constraints on our practices in ocean exploitation. This research undertook a nuanced exploration, delving into the philosophical underpinnings of respect and its potential to guide sustainable practices, fostering a paradigm shift towards a more harmonious coexistence with the ocean.

In my pursuit to operationalize the concept of respect in the context of ocean protection, I identified two promising candidates that offered distinct perspectives: Darwallian respect and care respect within an ecofeminist framework. The Darwallian framework, a more conventional and widely embraced approach, defines respect as a second-personal relationship grounded in mutual recognition, moral accountability, and the acknowledgment of normative authority among moral agents (Darwall, 2006, ch.2). Its prevalence in ethical discourse underscores its popularity as a well-established paradigm. On the other hand, care respect, rooted in an ecofeminist lens, represent a minority position but one that holds exciting promise. The ecofeminist framework, emphasizing relationality while focusing on the objects, offers a lens that is particularly adept at being extended to nature conservation and protection. As we navigate the complex terrain of ocean ethics, exploring these two frameworks enriches our understanding, providing a nuanced foundation for redefining our moral stance toward the ocean.

In exploring respect within the Darwallian framework, our emphasis on the second-person standpoint underscored mutual recognition and accountability among moral agents. This conceptualization illuminated the intricate connections between respect and interpersonal relationships, emphasizing the acknowledgment of moral agency. However, when extending this framework to encompass respect for the ocean, we confronted a significant challenge due to the lack of reciprocal moral relationships with non-human entities. This limitation poses difficulties in applying the same principles of respect, revealing a potential gap in the framework concerning environmental ethics. Despite this challenge, our analysis reaffirms that it is possible to consider the ocean as an indirect object of respect for the sake of future generations and a specific duty of reparation due to our lack of care towards the ocean.

Contrastingly, drawing from Dillon's care respect and ecofeminist perspectives, the concept of respect for the ocean is grounded in its inherent value and interdependence. This perspective shifts the focus from mere utility to a holistic understanding of the ocean's worth, advocating for sustainable and ethical practices. This form of respect fosters a cultural shift that appreciates humanity's interconnectedness and allows us to exit our exploitative relationship with the ocean. By recognizing the ocean's value and our dependence on it, this approach prompts responsible conduct that prioritizes its well-being. It balances human needs and ecological integrity, promoting a respectful relationship with this vital natural entity. Dillon's care respect within an ecofeminist framework thus emerges as a promising alternative, offering a more adaptable and inclusive approach to address the complexities of environmental ethics, particularly in ocean conservation.

To bring the theoretical frameworks into practical consideration, I engaged in hypothetical reasoning to simulate the impact of these two distinct conceptions of respect on our real-life practices concerning the ocean. This exercise shed light on the potential constraints and transformative possibilities arising from adopting these new, more respectful relationships with the ocean, as envisioned within the Darwallian and care respect and ecofeminist frameworks. In the hypothetical reasoning within the Darwallian framework, conceptualizing the ocean as a vital resource for future generations establishes an ambitious ethical standard. The discourse surrounding ocean stewardship is elevated by introducing a moral duty of reparation for past mistreatment. This scenario suggests that ocean protection would be better enhanced than current practices. However, as we can only afford the ocean an indirect form of respect within this framework, the envisioned protection remains incomplete. Potential objections arise, questioning the framework's moral adequacy, duty clarity, the balance between short-term and long-term interests, and resource allocation. The complex realities associated with global implementation necessitate clear guidelines, robust enforcement mechanisms, and inclusive decision-making processes. Challenges in negotiating diverse national interests underscore the need for careful consideration and international collaboration. While ambitious, this

hypothetical reasoning offers a nuanced understanding of the complexities in reshaping our relationship with the ocean, emphasizing the imperative for comprehensive and adaptive approaches to ocean governance.

Conversely, within Dillon's care respect and ecofeminist framework, exploring hypothetical reasoning envisions a profound shift in our relationship with the ocean, presenting a more ambitious and constraining approach that offers better ocean protection. Beginning with scenarios at the World Ocean Congress, seeking consensus among diverse actors, and applying derived principles to practical issues, this methodology weaves a narrative of transformative change. The journey highlights the interconnectedness of ethical, economic, and environmental dimensions, illustrating the potential for collective action to address pressing challenges. The application of ethical principles is showcased in fostering a just and sustainable relationship with the ocean, extending beyond theoretical constructs to tangible, real-world solutions. This exploration recognizes the power of imaginative reasoning, collaborative decision-making, and ethical application in shaping a future where our practices align with a more respectful and comprehensive relationship with the ocean, ensuring enhanced protection and sustainable coexistence.

As the author of this dissertation, I align myself with the second scenario within Dillon's care respect and ecofeminist framework, not only because it presents a more ambitious vision for reshaping our practices toward the ocean but also because it introduces exciting challenges in political theory. The complexity and ambition of this framework offer an invigorating prospect to push the boundaries of conventional thinking and propel us toward innovative solutions. Embracing the challenges inherent in this approach encourages a deeper exploration of political theory. It fosters a forward-thinking mindset, essential for developing transformative solutions in our approach to ocean stewardship.

b. Contribution to the considered question

In conclusion, this dissertation underscores a crucial take-home message for effective ocean protection: a paradigm shift is imperative to break free from our exploitative relationship with the ocean. The exploration of respect emerges as a potent normative tool in this endeavor, offering a transformative lens to reshape our moral and ethical compass. The normative work presented in this dissertation posits that, for sustainable and efficient protection, considering the ocean as a direct object of respect is paramount, even though it entails a highly ambitious proposition. By envisioning the ocean as more than a mere resource and recognizing its inherent value, this paradigm shift

becomes the linchpin for fostering a respectful relationship, ensuring enhanced protection, and paving the way for a more harmonious coexistence with this vital natural entity. The normative foundation in this exploration challenges conventional thinking, advocates for a radical reevaluation of our moral stance, and encourages a collective commitment to fostering lasting change in our interactions with the ocean.

This essay contributes to the blooming literature in political theory and ocean protection by approaching the complex issue of ocean exploitation through the transformative lens of respect ; it introduces a fresh and unique perspective to the discourse. By conceptualizing the ocean as an object of respect, the essay sheds light on innovative ways to address the challenges associated with sustainable practices and conservation efforts. This approach not only expands the theoretical frameworks applied to ocean ethics but also fosters a deeper understanding of the intricate relationships between humans and the ocean ecosystem. By delving into the normative dimensions of respect, the essay offers a valuable contribution to political theory, pushing the boundaries of traditional ethical considerations and advocating for a more holistic and harmonious coexistence with the ocean.

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