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INUIT, WHALING, AND SUSTAINABILITY. By MILTON M.R. FREEMAN, INGMAR EGEDE, LYUDMILA BOGOSLOVSKAYAS, IGOR I. KRUPNIK, RICHARD A. CAULFIELD, and MARC G. STEVENSON. Walnut Creek, California: Altamira Press, A Division of Sage Publications, 1998. 208 p., b&w illus., appendices, index. Hardbound, US\$52.00; Softbound, US\$21.95.

At a time when discussion of whaling by indigenous communities is polarized, decontextualized, and limited to one-minute sound bites on television, *Inuit, Whaling, and Sustainability* provides a welcome and thoughtful treatment of the issues from the point of view of the circumpolar Inuit. Carefully choreographed images of whale hunts—which emphasize blood, with condemnations recited by “experts” in the background—are the extent of analysis provided in the popular media. The stated aim of *Inuit, Whaling, and Sustainability* is to engage in dialogue on this issue. The six authors have an appreciation and understanding of Inuit life through sustained contact with Inuit communities in Canada, Alaska (USA), Greenland (Denmark), and Russia. The book, which makes a well-reasoned case for sustained harvesting of whale stocks by circumpolar Inuit, is also well timed. It coincides with increased assertion by indigenous communities (Inuit and non-Inuit) of their rights to whaling, the birth of a new Inuit Homeland in Canada (Nunavut), further oil and gas exploration in the western Arctic, potential for famine in the Russian Arctic, and the increasing public presence of the International Whaling Commission.

A significant portion of the book weaves a narrative of Inuit voices on the significance of whaling. Using the words of leaders, whaling captains, school children, and community members in general, the authors present a circumpolar Inuit point of view in a cultural, economic, legal, social, and spiritual context. Many quotations, some fairly lengthy, express concerns about maintaining traditions and livelihoods. Normally, excessive reliance on quotations is distracting; in this case, however, the narrative is cohesive and succinctly presented. Furthermore, each chapter has a section on suggested readings, which serves as a resource for further research and discussion, especially for the student. In this sense, the work lends itself for use in educational institutions.

The text contains an introduction, six chapters, and an epilogue. It is unclear who among the six authors has

written each chapter. Nonetheless, the chapters follow the narrative, are integrated, and flow well. Subjects covered include the importance of Inuit whaling today; whaling by Inuit yesterday, today, and tomorrow; human rights and the International Whaling Commission; a review of whaling management regimes; challenges to sustainable use of whales by Inuit; and securing the future of Inuit whaling. These topics underlie broader issues, such as the struggle to maintain the cultural and economic diversity of small communities in the context of an imperative towards global homogenization; to come to terms with the unprecedented assault on indigenous values due to social change; and to balance seemingly divergent pressures of corporate interest for large-scale resource development, on the one hand, and the mammoth machinery of the transnational environmental organizations, on the other. Collectively, the chapters illustrate that Inuit whaling is informed by a broader ethical code that links human relationships with their environment, demonstrating the interdependence between the whale and the Inuit in the realms of the spiritual as well as the physical. These issues are significant not only to the Inuit, but also to other indigenous and non-indigenous communities.

Much of the discussion on anti-whaling takes place outside the context of the community or society where whaling occurs. The language used in anti-whaling propaganda is often of a ferocity akin to an evangelical crusade. The opinions of the communities whose cultures and economies are directly affected are completely ignored. This charade, however, is not new for the Inuit or other indigenous communities. The history of colonization informs us that outsiders have visited their fantasies upon indigenous populations in the past. Today, this form of imperialism is rather ironic. Groups that claim to be in the vanguard for human rights in developing countries and for the need to live in harmony with the environment are the very people who seek to dictate to Inuit communities how they practice their livelihood. Extreme environmental groups claim that it is all right for the Inuit to hunt whales as long as they use the technology that they used hundreds of years ago and do not avail themselves of the benefits of modern technology. This view suggests that Native traditions are to be suspended in time and should not be allowed to evolve.

Inuit, Whaling, and Sustainability argues that traditions are not static: they evolve, and they incorporate techniques and values from other cultures. Historical traditions are organic, and not lifeless artifacts to be locked away in museums. Traditions are a process, and not just an event. They are rather like a river: ever flowing. A living tradition remakes itself according to the age in which it lives, using the core of its values to make new from the old. Whaling by indigenous communities should be seen in this context of relationships between change and continuity. The assault on indigenous rights to whaling is seeking precisely to make artifacts out of the Inuit. It is a patronizing enforcement of specific values, ill informed by both the history and the reality of Inuit culture.

Does this mean that the cause to protect whale species globally is a facile exercise? Absolutely not! However, the threat to whales does not come from indigenous communities taking a few animals to sustain their cultural and economic lifestyle. It comes instead from a strong machine driving the commercial interests that have led to the critical environmental situation we face today. Perhaps one of the least known threats to whales is contamination, which arises from activities in the south, rather than from the actions of Inuit or other indigenous hunters in the North. Chemical pollutants are absorbed through atmospheric and marine pathways. Recent research on contaminants is evaluating the effects of global pollution on wildlife species harvested by Inuit communities.

Engaging in rhetoric that promotes superficial, moralistic judgements does not help the cause of the whale; it simply leads to polarization and lack of understanding. Neither the whale nor the indigenous community benefits. Such rhetoric keeps the debate in the realm of dogma and detracts from meaningful discussion. Perhaps the current situation only serves to help raise funds for environmental organizations to raise their corporate profile in the media. It is not so puzzling why other, less-known species like the snail darter (*Percina tanasi*) are not as appealing for a society used to blaming others for its own excesses. For environmental organizations, such species are not photogenic enough to raise funds. They do not fit the corporate marketing strategy. Such institutions are becoming global bureaucracies, and their main function seems increasingly to be self-promotion. According to the authors of *Inuit, Whaling, and Sustainability*, the International Whaling Commission manifests such tendencies.

Why is whaling important to the Inuit? The authors, seeking to answer that question, recognize the complex relationship with the whale, which is both viewed as food and revered as a creature of great beauty and intelligence. In the case of the Inuit, the hunting of the whale cannot be neatly divided between the material and the spiritual. The economic and nutritional needs supported by whaling cannot be divorced from its cultural and spiritual contributions. Whaling and other subsistence activities reinforce values such as sharing, concern for the common good, leadership, disciplined behaviour, a deep respect for nature, the symbiotic relationship between man and woman, and a deep connection between the Inuit and the community of wildlife that surrounds them.

Industrial society and neo-liberal economic policies have diminished these values in favour of profit and individual wealth accumulation. It is ironic that many business schools and social science departments in North American universities are ablaze with buzzwords such as “social capital” and “civil society” but are completely uninterested in applying them to indigenous societies that thrive in spite of the capitalist global economy. Industrial development and capitalist growth models have hardly provided any security to indigenous communities in terms of stability and well-being. Consistently, traditional or

subsistence hunting activities have provided food security to the Inuit. Even today, under the so-called victory of capitalism over communist society, the source of food security for Inuit and other indigenous communities comes from subsistence hunting.

The authors chronicle the twin challenges faced by the Inuit: the constant industrial demand for nonrenewable resources such as oil, gas, and minerals on their lands and the growing, though ill-informed, popular support for the anti-whaling movement. Paradoxically, both the environmental and the commercial threats to Inuit whaling come from large, wealthy, international corporate bodies that have financial backing and use similar organizational tactics to mount an assault on subsistence harvesting. While environmentalists seek to stop whaling through policy and in the realm of public and political opinion, the commercial activities can seriously alter the health of whales. Seismic activity for exploration can change the migration patterns of whales, causing them to swim away from traditional feeding grounds and Inuit harvesting areas. In either case, the result—suspension of whaling—can devastate an indigenous community.

Inuit, Whaling, and Sustainability provides a wonderful background to historical and contemporary whaling in Canada, Alaska, Greenland, and Russia. It is a circumpolar response by the Inuit and their supporters, who call for greater dialogue and understanding on the issue of whaling. Thought-provoking and easy to read, it is a useful book for the scholar, the student or the layman.

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CREATING REGIMES: ARCTIC ACCORDS AND INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE. By ORAN YOUNG. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1998. xii + 230 p., maps, index, bib. Hardbound. US\$35.00.

Readers with an interest in polar politics should read Oran Young's book, which examines in detail the development of two of the most important international polar institutions created in the 1990s—the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) and the Barents Euro-Arctic Region (BEAR). The core theoretical element of the book is regime theory, which the author applies to AEPS and BEAR as case studies to examine how international regimes are created and put into operation.

Readers interested in the development of new international institutions in the Arctic will find here a new set of insights into how these two bodies were created and their international role in the post-Cold War era. Young provides a detailed explanation of the politics behind their formation. However, those with no background in the study