

a hunter. Together, they provide context for the seven chapters that follow, which explore Inuit beliefs specific to particular animals or classes of animals and to penetrating the underlying ontological concepts that facilitate or disturb relations between humans and animals. In this regard, the testimony of the authors' informants, supplemented by observations drawn from early ethnographic sources, is much appreciated. The authors conclude this comprehensive work with an insightful discussion of the complexity of Inuit understanding about human-animal relations.

The "animal" chapters open with the importance of Raven. To non-Inuit, ravens are the most ubiquitous of Arctic birds, scavengers present all year around the settlements; however, Inuit know Raven to have many social roles: as Creator of the present world, as Trickster and possessor of knowledge, and as a creature that can be helpful at times, but dangerous at others. More than any other material in the volume, I found this exploration of the meaning of the raven illuminating.

The chapters that follow Raven engage readers with *qupirruit* (a category of creatures that includes insects, arachnids and crustaceans), the *qimmiit* (dogs), bears, caribou, pinnipeds (ringed and bearded seals), and cetaceans, notably the bowhead whale. Each chapter offers numerous insights into the nature of the relationship that Inuit have with each of these animals. Over time, I have been fortunate to learn, firsthand from Inuit, a few things relevant to some "keystone" species of the North, such as polar bear and caribou, but only bits. The material provided here certainly has helped me order what too frequently was more intuitive than reasoned. Where Laugrand and Oosten's hard work is especially remarkable is in relation to those animals that we *Qallunaat* either "know" (dogs) or acknowledge because of their annoying qualities (mosquitoes and flies). This material has given me a much fuller appreciation of the place of *qupirruit* and *qimmiit* in Inuit culture and life.

This volume, drawing as it does on the knowledge of Elders and ethnographic observations dating back to Boas and beyond, offers important insights into the multi-layered nature of Inuit-animal relations. For serious students of Inuit culture, especially essentialists like me, this material, coupled with the deep structural analysis employed by the authors to unpack what can seem to be contradictory understandings among Inuit of these non-human beings, is much appreciated, and it has a depth well beyond my personal knowledge. My one concern is that more casual readers may interpret these materials as speaking to things in the far distant past.

Laugrand and Oosten mitigate this somewhat in their final chapter and make an essential point that bears reiteration in this review because it is salient to the present circumstances of Inuit hunting: namely, that Inuit respect these non-human beings. At a time when so much research about Inuit and wildlife is centered on game management, conservation, and food security, not to mention the role or place of *Inuit Qaujimagatuqangit* in northern science, what is rarely noted is that Inuit relations with wildlife are rooted

in an ontological system the core of which is respect for the active sentience of animals. That critical quality is, in turn, respected by the "prey" Inuit hunt.

I recently had a conversation about the potential viability of commercial markets for traditional food in Nunavut. From a non-Inuit perspective, such markets seem an innovative way of reducing food insecurity and of improving the nutritional health of Inuit for whom access to traditional food has become too often irregular. Leaving aside more pragmatic objections, commercialization as a solution ignores the full content of the Inuit-animal relationship. Laugrand and Oosten make it clear that the willingness of animals to share themselves with humans rests as much on the hunter's respect for the animal's generosity as on his individual skill, so the hunter understands that the generosity he received brings with it an obligation to be generous with other humans. What we interpret as an action between a human hunter and an objectified animal is for Inuit a social transaction that reaffirms human-animal and human-human bonds. This idea is the essence of this volume, and the authors and the Inuit who shared their understanding have explicated this without reducing the complexity of the dynamics between Inuit and animals.

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Greenland is perhaps the only late colony of a European state that after a referendum decided to become an integral and semi-autonomous part of that state, in this case the Kingdom of Denmark. According to the 2009 Act giving Greenland its self-government, Greenland additionally gained the right to have a referendum and maybe decide one day to leave the Kingdom of Denmark and be an independent sovereign state.

Accordingly, I feel it is very interesting and instructive to read Spencer Apollonio's book about Greenland in colonial time, which gives a better understanding of the development in Greenland from the first colonization until the change in the constitution in 1953. Spencer Apollonio visited Greenland three times in the early 1950s. He was surprised by what he learned about the transformation of a 19th century native people to an essentially westernized 20th century culture. In *The Land at the Edge of the World*, Apollonio has selected 23 personal accounts of visits to Greenland during the period from 1850 to 1900. Most are

from English-speaking explorers from the United Kingdom or the United States passing Greenland on their way to other duties, but a few accounts are from Scandinavians with duties in Greenland.

Spencer Apollonio provides some personal comments on each account, but he has functioned more as an editor, selecting the accounts presented from those that were available.

His choices seem good to me, but I must admit that I do not have an overall knowledge about the possibilities. Although I dealt with the same time periods in my own paper on the early exploration of Greenland (Taagholt, 1991), my focus was on scientific exploration. I used several references also used by Apollonio, but I appreciate all the new, more detailed information I found about Inuit life at that time by reading this book.

The authors of the 23 accounts all seem to be fascinated by Greenlandic nature, from the green valleys in the narrow fjords between the high mountains in the south to the Arctic deserts in the high northern regions. Their accounts include information about plants and wildlife (not only fish and marine mammals, but also hares, reindeer and muskoxen) and Inuit hunting techniques.

Focusing on the small towns and settlements, the accounts describe the three to four Danish houses in each one: wooden houses build in Denmark and shipped to Greenland. They tell about Danish family life in the settlements. But most of the accounts focus on Inuit life. They describe the construction of turf huts—the material used, the entrance through a long, low and narrow tunnel to keep the warmth inside, the interior dwelling arrangement including “furniture,” and the blubber lamps used for illumination, heating, and cooking. The book contains detailed descriptions of the unique hunting and transportation gear, especially the kayak and its equipment.

For those interested in Inuit life 150 years ago—anthropologists, historians, sociologists, and people interested in political science—the many accounts in the book provide valuable information about everyday life in this remote Arctic island, including information about the local administration, the trade and catch-and-export figures, as well as health conditions, as some of the writers had backgrounds as surgeons.

The book has a small map of Greenland that includes the names of several locations mentioned in the accounts. The general reader might have difficulty finding all the named locations, as I, with 55 years involvement in Arctic research and access to all maps at the Danish Arctic Institute, had some difficulties with my navigation. On the other hand, if all the relevant maps had been included, the book would likely have had many more pages. Apollonio points out some discrepancies between the accounts, and I found a few minor errors.

Spencer Apollonio notes the evolving relationship between Greenlanders and Danes, which began as a typical missionary and trading colonization and then became something quite different. As anthropologist Hubert Schuurman

points out, Greenland may be the only colonized area in the world that chose integral ties with the colonizing power. As stated in the account by Sir George Nares in Apollonio's book (p. 190–191), “Since 1721, the year of Hans Egede's settlement at Godthaab in South Greenland, the Danes have consistently endeavoured to improve and ameliorate the condition of the Eskimo inhabitants of Greenland. Their efforts have been crowned with marked success.”

Other accounts contain more critical remarks. According to the Norwegian Fridtjof Nansen (p. 225), “We have undoubtedly done the Greenlander considerable harm by importation of various European products—coffee, tobacco, bread...” But, as stated by Nansen, if Denmark had not taken responsibility over Greenland, others would have taken over. It is unrealistic to suppose that Greenland at that time could have continued an isolated existence.

At present there exists a logical (but maybe economically unrealistic) movement in Greenland for complete independence from Denmark. Apollonio's book gives readers a better understanding of the colonial history leading up to the political changes from colony to self-government as part of the Kingdom of Denmark. The future will show how cooperation between the Greenlanders and the Danes will develop.

REFERENCES

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