

NOBUHIRO KISHIGAMI (ED.) *WORLD WHALING: HISTORICAL AND CONTEMPORARY STUDIES*. OSAKA: NATIONAL MUSEUM OF ETHNOLOGY [SENRI ETHNOLOGICAL SERIES 104] 2021. 358 P. ISBN: 978-4-906962-87-7

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World whaling is a 2021 volume of multidisciplinary papers edited by the Japanese National Museum of Ethnology's Nobuhiro Kishigami. The volume aims to provide up-to-date information on whaling across the world; promote a multidisciplinary perspective by combining fields such as anthropology, international relations, philosophy, ethics, geographic studies, and veterinary fields; illustrate the global scale of issues affecting whaling; and demonstrate the complex interactions between human and non-human actors. With a varied collection of papers, this volume successfully achieves these goals and provides a wide-ranging discussion of the state of world whaling.

Kishigami introduces the volume with an overview of world whaling history and practices, and a review of studies on whales and whaling. He engages with several specific cases of whaling and expertly provides foundational knowledge for any readers unfamiliar with the topic. The volume is then split in four distinct sections, each featuring papers from a variety of disciplines. In Part 1, the volume focusses on historical and contemporary perspectives on commercial whaling. Hamaguchi provides an overview of governmental decision-making regarding commercial whaling in Icelandic waters, approaching the topic from a historical perspective and demonstrating the contours of extremes experienced in this industry, from hunting booms to hunting bans. Akamine offers an analysis of coastal minke whaling in Norway, providing an overview of whaling in the region and detailing the social costs of the industry. As one of only three commercially whaling nations, the absence of insight into the Japanese commercial whaling industry is very stark here, despite the attention it receives in the rest of the volume.

The papers in Part 2 focus on indigenous and local whaling practices in specific regions. Zdor provides a fascinating account of subsistence whaling practices of the Chukotkan indigenous people, highlighting changes made since the 19th century to the social organisation of whaling communities, the adoption of technologies, and ceremonies and rituals. Next, Kishigami's discussion of the socio-cultural significance of bowhead whale hunts for Inupiat in Utqiagvik, Alaska, engages with vital discussions of food security and sovereignty. Honda's article on Greenlandic indigenous whaling details a brief history before exploring an account of modern-day whaling practices and the steep decline of associated hunting rituals and superstitions. Fielding provides an expansive description of the Faroese drive-based pilot whaling known as the *grindadráp*. His discussion of contemporary issues such as international

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backlash and interference from NGOs, environmental pollutants and mercury levels limiting consumption paints a strong picture of a cultural institution under threat through environmental catastrophe. Kawashima's paper also discusses the *grindadráp*, though he focusses more closely on its history, the distribution of whale meat in the community, and conflicts between locals and anti-whaling groups in the 2010s, before drawing comparisons with drive-based whale-hunting in Taiji, Japan. Finally, Sun-ae Li utilises the life histories of people associated with the commercial whaling industry during the 20th century in Jangsaengpo, Korea, to examine historical changes, economic fluctuations and the rise of anti-whaling sentiment that led to its cessation in the 1980s.

Part 3 brings together themes of politics, media, image-making, and changing public discourses. Wakamatsu's paper explores layers of misdirection, politics, truth, and tackles the (re)construction of commercial whaling in Japan through scientific research and cetology. Ikuta details an arduous political fight that the Inupiat and Yupiit of Alaska brought to the IWC in 2018, securing a landmark victory for their hunting rights, bringing into question how regulatory bodies often place unnecessary labour on indigenous people. Takahashi engages with narratives of environmentalism and human-animal relations in the political decisions of the European Union, exploring the convoluted landscapes created by complicated decision-making, and questioning its impacts on human-whale relations. Kawashima explores the power of media to shape public opinion of whales and considers that significant changes in public perception in the last 50 years were influenced by documentaries and media with anti-whaling messaging. Finally, Usada critically engages with the construction of specific pro-Japanese-whaling discourse and demonstrates the role of government agencies, anthropologists, and whaling communities in the creation and dissemination of this discourse.

Finally, Part 4 concludes the volume with an exploration of ethics and animal welfare. Ole Oen's paper discusses research and development improvements in humane hunting techniques alongside ethical and environmental debates. Harfield engages with philosophical and ethical debates in whaling, emphasising the disparity between public and academic debates and demonstrating the necessity of separating animal welfare, animal ethics, and environmental ethics in ongoing discourse. Finally, Iseda discusses this history, the development of Japanese human-animal relations, and the ethics of hunting and killing animals, considering the differences between Japanese and western ideologies of hunting.

For me, the volume's biggest success is its treatment of the leviathan. There are two leviathans here: the whale and the International Whaling Coalition (IWC), which looms with an ever-watchful eye, casting its influence on all realms of whaling practices. The volume does a fabulous job of demonstrating said influence, for better or worse, and highlighting issues associated with international regulatory bodies, including political infighting and the adherence to a moral absolutism that overlooks the nuance of a global practice. Further, by bringing together multiple disciplines, Kishigami was able to delve deeper into themes not often discussed in whaling discourse and it is refreshing to read a volume which steps outside of ethical and moral debates to include alternative impacts, especially environmental and political ramifications.

On the other hand, there are several elements that are less enjoyable. Firstly, the papers could feel repetitive at times with information consistently repeated, especially that concerning the IWC. Secondly, there are several missed opportunities. Despite some limited discussion, the impacts of climate change and environmental pollution are oddly absent from the wider volume, despite being a major issue in the future of whaling. Furthermore, I found that the papers in this volume failed to engage with the wider ramifications of these issues, leaving the reader with a sense of isolation from each stand-alone paper. While there are brief glimpses of connections in Zdor and Kawashima's papers, the volume holistically features little discussion of connections between whaling communities beyond the IWC. Considering the

migratory nature of whales themselves, the volume would have benefited from engaging more with the movements and migrations of techniques, beliefs, and equipment across the oceans that connect all whaling communities.

Overall, the volume provides a strong overview of whaling and delivers a significant foundation of engagement with the many issues facing the practice. It is accessible to non-experts, easy to read, and demonstrates multi-disciplinary engagement with global issues. Kishigami aimed to create a volume which encapsulated whaling in its modern form and has successfully curated a collection which shows a breadth of themes and arguments. The volume is sure to generate further research into whaling and is an excellent starting point for anyone interested in gaining further knowledge of this complex global practice.

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