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Arne Kalland. *Unveiling the Whale: Discourses on Whales and Whaling*. Studies in Environmental Anthropology and Ethnobiology Series. New York: Berghahn Books, 2009. xiv + 253 pp. $95.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-1-84545-581-1.

Jun Morikawa. *Whaling in Japan: Power, Politics, and Diplomacy*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2009. xii + 170 pp. $45.00 (cloth), ISBN 978-0-231-70118-1.

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Save the Whales or Save the Humans? Whaling Politics and Culture Wars

In Western popular culture, whales serve as evocations of the majesty and tragedy of nature. Even the most environmentally disinclined individual recognizes that whales are the preeminent symbol of marine life and often the embodiment of capricious human abuses of nature. But how did this romantic portrait come to be, and how were whales transformed from resource to icon? When and how did whaling become an unnecessary evil? Whaling remains a critical political issue on the world stage, alienating or allying unlikely global partners, and the two books reviewed here, Arne Kalland's *Unveiling the Whale* and Jun Morikawa's *Whaling in Japan*, provide fascinating insight into the environmental, political, and cultural complexities of this industry. Commercial whaling has received attention in recent historical and popular works, but few authors have dealt so transparently with the current politics of whaling as Kalland and Morikawa in these complementary studies.[1] Kalland and Morikawa offer diametrically opposed perspectives that are largely unseen in current secondary literature in English. Kalland's work, which studies representation and perception of whales, whalers and whaling, and transformations of whaling economics, will appeal to social and cultural historians, social scientists, and those with an affinity for whaling. Morikawa's analysis of whaling in modern Japan offers a thorough case study for students of international politics, environmental studies, and history.

Kalland's *Unveiling the Whale* is broad in scope and anthropological, focused more on discourse, perception, and concepts and less on historical context. Kalland seeks to expose the rival ecological, economic, and political discourses that have led to irreparable political and cultural fissures between whaling and anti-whaling nations. What distinguishes Kalland's work is his open defense of whaling, as he states in his preface that he will "not pretend to be 'objective' and neutral.... My main sympathy lies with the whalers" (p. x). With this admission, his work proceeds to explore the "hegemonic discourse" that has shaped global perceptions about whaling and whalers, and the transformation of whales from practical commodities to conceptual icons (p. 59).

Kalland's introduction and chapter 1, "The Creation of a 'Superwhale,"' begin by considering perceptions and constructions of animals, especially within the context of protectionist, environmental, and animal rights movements. Among all animals, though, whales are constructed, especially in Western thought, as unique. The "superwhale," he argues, offers a single, anthropomorphized, conceptual construct that replaces, in most Western perceptions, proper recognition of the seventy-five different species included within the taxonomic order of Cetacea. The "superwhale" oversimplifies and obscures the actual ecological circumstances of whale species, so that all whales simultaneously are conceived of as endangered, and all whalers, whether commercial, indigenous, or otherwise legitimate, are rendered barbaric. Chapters 2 and 3 turn to the anti-whalers or protectionists, the "cultural hegemons" in Kalland's eyes. In these chapters, he identifies key opponents of the industry and the political strategies and media used to transform whales from practical to protected resources. Especially valuable here is his articulation of diverse approaches of various groups who seek to protect whales for diverse reasons, from environmental radicals and animal rights groups to more fringe New Age movements. This chapter also reveals what Kalland sees as the double standard and cultural chauvinism of Western anti-whaling nations and the fact

that cetaceans are equally exploited among non-whaling nations: whales are objects of tourism and theme parks and are even tolerably hunted by indigenous peoples. Chapter 4 focuses on the International Whaling Commission (IWC), revealing the transformation of this body from a management to protectionist body. Kalland approaches the IWC with an insider's eye, having participated in IWC meetings, but this same insight reveals some frustration with respect to the membership, decision making, and efficacy of this group. Chapters 5 and 6 stand apart from the rest of the book as less derisive and accusatory of non-whaling nations and whale sympathizers, and offer a moderate and informative look at the perspectives and practices of whalers, valuable information for any historian or social scientist. These chapters, along with chapter 4, are also the most significant to compare to Morikawa's work as they provide opposing perspectives to the politics of whaling.[2]

It may be difficult for some readers to move past Kalland's palpable derision for opponents of whaling. His perspective simultaneously renders the work interesting, insightful, and nonacademic. Anti-whaling sympathizers are portrayed monolithically at times (as are the thoughts and beliefs of citizens of whaling nations). Non-whaling nations, mostly Westerners, are depicted as ignorant, misled, and culturally chauvinistic proponents of an oppressive hegemonic discourse on aspecific superwhales and barbaric whalers. While Kalland's perspective is valuable for anyone involved in the whaling debate, past or present, his work falters in its academic value in his use of sources. His sources include canonical anthropological works, as well as modern cultural and political data, but Kalland often relies on a panoply of popular and fringe media to exemplify how ill-informed and generally radical most whale protectionists are.[3] Many of these sources ultimately are logical, given his focus on Western popular perception, but only if used contextually and reasonably. Kalland's indiscriminate use of sources is seen, for example, on a single page (p. 39) where he cites two writers for women's magazines; the poems of Heathcote Williams; a reader's letter from *Fish International*; John Lilly (New Age pioneer and proponent of alien-origins for dolphins); two eco-feminists; Carl Jung; Jacques Cousteau; and the biblical book of Genesis. Readers may be tempted to dismiss his work because of the strategically chosen radical or ill-informed voices whom he chooses to highlight, whose notions may not accurately represent the true perspectives of most non-whaling populations. Despite this, the book stands as a unique and important work, the antithesis of most academic, scientific, and popular literature that belies a sympathy for whales and negative judgments of whaling.

In contrast, Morikawa, in *Whaling in Japan*, offers a more focused case study of whaling's role in modern Japanese culture and politics. Morikawa argues that Japanese whaling continues today as a political contrivance with a limited cultural favor, little economic demand, and a faux archaism. The popularity of whale meat, he argues, is waning and isolated to postwar populations, not younger generations, despite strident efforts by various government agencies to create a demand for whale meat. Whaling is a nationalistic issue by design, the political and economic bailiwick of a small elite echelon that exists within several incestuous government agencies. Morikawa's work, like Kalland's, is bold and critical, and seeks to rectify what Morikawa sees as wrongs within Japanese domestic and international policies. Morikawa relies on a wide range of contemporary data, surveys, and sources from government agencies, nongovernmental organization (NGOs), and the media in revealing the complex portrait of how whaling is perceived and supported within Japan. A useful series of appendices includes several key documents, media releases, resolutions, and compiled data.

Chapters 1 and 2 offer explanation for why whaling, which was historically significant locally but not nationally in Japan, became a critical cultural issue after World War II. Whaling, the Japanese government has maintained, was necessary for "Japan's economic security," although arguments today more often assert that whaling is culturally innate and scientifically essential (p. 9). Despite public indifference to whaling, Japan's government, Morikawa argues, continues to promote whaling based on four key issues, explored in chapters 2 and 3: tradition, culinary culture, nationalism, and scientific survey. Chapters 3, 4, and 5 will be of great interest not only to environmental and whaling historians, but also to all students of international relations, as whaling here is contextualized alongside other significant international policies and concerns, including Japan's international status and participation in the United Nations, particularly the Security Council. Whaling, diplomacy, and international and economic security are intertwined, and Morikawa reveals the extent of Japanese ministers' willingness to cooperate or cajole on the issue of whaling based on international politics and partners. In chapter 3, Morikawa exposes the close relationship between the government's Fisheries Agency and the Institute for Cetacean Research (ICR), revealing the doubtful neutrality of this supposedly scientific institution. Whaling in Japan is not commercial but scientific, conducted under

the auspices of the ICR. Chapter 4 offers insight into domestic politics and media control, as whaling is promoted to a nation whose access to the anti-whaling movement is curtailed. Morikawa documents the contrivance of the cultural relevance of whaling, citing both the means by which the Japanese government attempted to promote whaling and the consumption of whale meat, and the relative insignificance of whaling, as seen in surveys, according to a majority of Japanese respondents. Chapter 5 shifts focus to Japanese whaling and the global stage. Morikawa prudently emphasizes that whaling is important, but not a singular driving issue for Japan in international relations. In the book's longest (forty pages) and surely most controversial chapter, Morikawa scrutinizes Japanese economic aid partners and IWC voting records, revealing the means by which Japan seeks to alter the voting membership of the IWC if it cannot change minds on the issue of whaling itself. Morikawa clearly establishes the synchronicity of Japanese economic aid and the rise since 2000 of a voting block sympathetic to whaling within the IWC. One of the few accomplishments of the 2011 IWC meeting was approval of a resolution to prevent vote buying, precisely the issue Morikawa unveils in chapter 5. Finally, Morikawa concludes in chapter 6 with four potential scenarios for Japan's future path in whaling. Had Morikawa's work been written more recently, we must imagine that an additional scenario would be included, taking into account the calamitous effects of the 2011 tsunami, which some believe may bring Japanese whaling to its final stage.

Whaling in Japan and *Unveiling the Whale* are complementary and informative in different ways, and readers on either side of the whaling debate are encouraged to read both works. Historians will find useful context for any contemporary study of whaling, past and present, while students of international relations and politics will be reminded of the cultural and economic significance of whaling on the global stage. Morikawa's work is the more traditionally academic of the two, and offers more useful academic apparatus. Both works are well written and generally well edited (Kalland's work includes a few typographical errors), with useful notes and bibliographies. Both works also serve as exceptionally good primers for anyone interested in current IWC policies and issues, debates on animal rights, and environmental movements.

Notes

[1]. Other recent works offer popular perspectives or broader surveys and none offers insiders' perspectives as seen in the works of Kalland and Morikawa. See Eric Jay Dolin, *Leviathan: The History of Whaling in America* (New York: W. W. Norton, 2007); Philip Hoare, *The Whale: In Search of the Giants of the Sea* (New York: Harper Collins, 2008); and Joe Roman, *Whale* (London: Reaktion Books, 2006).

[2]. On page 198, Kalland states that "most Japanese do not understand why it is more morally wrong to kill a whale for food than to kill a cow or a pig for the same purpose.... 'How can people kill an animal they have fed?-' is a rhetorical question often heard in Japanese whaling communities." Morikawa strongly rejects such broad statements about what "most Japanese" believe with respect to whaling, citing instead a "silent majority" who find whaling, and the eating of whale meat, of remote relevance to their daily lives (p. 121).

[3]. Morikawa describes a similar phenomenon in Japan, in which non-whalers and Westerners in general are described as "emotional and unscientific" on the issue of whaling (p. 13).

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