

THE INTERNATIONAL POLITICS OF WHALING. Peter J. Stoett. 1997. Vancouver: UBC Press. xii + 228 p, soft cover. ISBN 0-7748-0604-4. \$Can24.95.

Few animals fire the excitement and imagination of the general public as whales do, and few wildlife issues have received as much exposure or debate as whale hunting. During the past three decades, the environmental lobby has seized on whaling as the epitome of man's careless and ruthless exploitation of the planet. The whale has been built into an icon, a totem, and is perhaps the single most recognisable and powerful symbol of the new age of environmental enlightenment.

Faced with rapidly changing public perceptions, and the reality that many whale populations had indeed been devastated by whale hunting, the stance of many nations on the whaling issue has undergone dramatic change. Some, like the UK, United States, and Australia, which profited from industrial whaling operations as recently as the middle decades of this century, have now made a U-turn and forcefully argue for the permanent abolition of commercial whaling. Others, like Japan, Norway, and Iceland, however, maintain that whales are a resource that should be sustainably harvested. These opposing views are deeply held and aggressively defended, and have become increasingly polarised. Even the protectionists know that there are sufficient whales of many species to sustain commercial whaling again, but the majority of International Whaling Commission (IWC) member nations, privately or publicly, are no longer prepared to support it no matter how many whales there are. Half a century after the IWC was created by the International Convention for the Regulation of Whaling, the purpose of which was to 'provide for the proper conservation of whale stocks and thus make possible the orderly development of the whaling industry,' the majority of member nations no longer concur with those objectives.

This is the core of the intriguing and complex issue that Peter Stoett's book *The international politics of whaling* addresses. As the title suggests, its principal subject matter is indeed politics, of several different hues, but it provides a substantial amount of background material on whales and whaling, a large bibliography, appendices, and an index. Stoett's book takes the form of an annotated essay in five chapters, and refers to an impressive list of information sources, both written and verbal (through interviews). I found it easy to read, thought-provoking, and, for the most part, reasonable. The author explores the facts as he sees them, tries to get at the truth behind the posturing, and explains why he has travelled the philosophical road from an anti-whaling stance to one that accepts the justification of community-based whaling. His judgement now is that the so-called whaling moratorium should be selectively lifted. This change in philosophy is, of course, a fundamental one, because it embraces the concept that the killing of whales is acceptable in some circumstances. This opens Pandora's box; a dead whale is a dead whale, whoever kills it, and there is no indisputable answer to the

question of which communities around the world should be allowed to hunt whales. An example of the current confusion of the collective conscience is the position of the United States, Stoett's *bête noire*. The US government fights tooth and nail to prevent any Japanese coastal communities, which have a long tradition of whaling, from harvesting the diminutive and common minke whale. Yet at the same time, it robustly defends the right of its own citizens to kill significant numbers of the bowhead whale, a much rarer and globally threatened species. Hardly a surprise, then, that the Japanese and other pro-whaling governments claim that they are the victims of double standards, hypocrisy, and cultural imperialism on the part of the US government and the environmental groups (mostly from white, English-speaking, westernised countries) that take a similar position.

One's opinion of the success of Stoett's book is likely to depend on how you view it. As a thoughtful and provocative essay, it is a stimulating read. After two decades closely associated with whales and the IWC, I found much of interest and some new insights. As a source of reference, however, the book fails spectacularly. I found myself laughing out loud at some of the many howling errors; the fact that the author clearly never asked someone familiar with whales or whaling to check the text is extraordinary. The range and scale of the mistakes is so bewildering that I could not even guess as to where the (mis)information originated. It varied from small but important details like mixing the names of the two principal groups of whales (page 110) (baleen whales are *Mysticetes* and toothed whales are *Odontocetes*, not vice versa), through saying that the great whales migrate to the tropics to follow food (page 32) (those baleen whales that migrate to the tropics famously do so away from food, and effectively fast during the winter), to stating that one of the largest threats belugas face is pollution in the Baltic Sea (page 39) (belugas do not occur in or near the Baltic). He further states that minke whales, like gray whales, have recovered from being perilously close to extinction (page 131) (minke whales are recent targets of the whalers and have not been heavily depleted in any part of their range), that the Portuguese are still whaling in the Azores region (page 69) (they stopped more than a decade before this book was published), and that a commercial beluga fishery has never been established (page 39) (there have been at least two this century — in Hudson's Bay and Svalbard — besides massive kills by British commercial whalers in the nineteenth century). The list is almost endless. Such errors in the subject matter with which I was familiar completely undermined my faith in the material with which I was not, and a naive reader would be hopelessly misled by this nonsense.

Would I buy this book? Despite its problems, I would; few other texts deal with this intriguing subject. Would I recommend it, for example as a student text? For its provocative and reasoned discussion of whaling politics, again perhaps yes, but only after ensuring that the students

had access to good reference texts on whales and whaling, and then awarding them marks for every mistake they found. At the outset, Stoett aimed to provide the reader with 'an entertaining and informative journey through the intertwined processes that resulted in the present condition of whales and whaling.' He has surely succeeded in this, but the entertainment is not entirely derived in the way that he may have anticipated. (A.R. Martin, NERC Sea Mammal Research Unit, Gatty Marine Laboratory, University of St Andrews, St Andrews, Fife KY16 8LB.)

CREATING REGIMES: ARCTIC ACCORDS AND INTERNATIONAL GOVERNANCE. Oran Young. 1998. Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press. xii + 230 p, illustrated, hard cover. ISBN 0-8014-3437-8. £27.50.

Oran Young has a distinguished record in the field of international relations and polar research. His research within regime analysis is rightly praised for its theoretical rigour and conceptual thoroughness. His latest contribution continues this fine tradition and is explicitly concerned with the creation and coordination of the Arctic Environmental Protection Strategy (AEPS) and the Barents Euro-Arctic region (BEAR). Both these proposals were intended to improve ecological, political, and cultural relations in the Arctic. Using these as case studies, Young suggests that regime formation can be analysed via three distinct phases: agenda formation, negotiation, and, finally, operationalisation.

Young's explicit theoretical concern is with 'regime stories,' and this account suggests that the creation and operationalisation of particular regimes such as BEAR need to be considered carefully by scholars of international relations. In particular, he suggests that regimes should be analysed in careful stages so that the various negotiating and operational contexts are identified for careful scrutiny. In his study of BEAR, for example, Young provides a careful and considered account of how a personal proposal by the former Norwegian foreign minister (and later an EU Bosnian negotiator with Lord Owen) Thorvald Stoltenburg became transformed into a substantial exercise in multi-national diplomacy. Moreover, Young is careful in this contribution to locate these stories about regimes at a variety of political and geographical scales ranging from the global significance of the Arctic to the complex interplay of states, indigenous peoples' movements, and NGOs.

This is undoubtedly a very interesting account of Arctic accords and international regime formation. It is also extremely timely given the ending of the Cold War and the numerous attempts to improve relations over disputed regions such as the Barents Sea and the Northwest Passage. However, there are a number of points that this reviewer would have liked to have seen developed a little further. The first, and perhaps unsurprisingly for a geographical reviewer, is the delimitation of an Arctic region. The construction of a particular geographical region is not a natural process, but rather is shaped by particular social and political criteria. Whilst it has been common to note

that the ending of the Cold War has meant that new issues such as cultural survival and environmental protection have enjoyed a higher political profile, there has been comparatively little reflection on the political and geographical consequences of defining the Arctic either by physical boundaries such as oceans and seas or by sectorial boundaries. The map of the Arctic region provided at the beginning of the book is interesting precisely because there are various boundaries displayed on the illustration, including climatological, glacial, political, and biogeographical. Both these initiatives (AEPS and BEAR) apply to different geographical areas, and it would have been interesting to have read a little more about the geographical processes of region formation in this part of the world, that is, what areas are included and excluded and why?

The second major area of concern was with Young's interest in regime stories. A concern for the practices of narration and story-telling are mentioned in passing, but could have been developed further. Scholars such as Hayden White have developed the notion that narrative is an important part in the history of philosophy. Narratives are considered performative in the sense that they help to create a particular emplotment of events in a structured, often sequential, fashion. This then, in turn, can help bring issues such as representation and interpretation to the fore. One of the striking features of Young's account is that it reads like a good story in the sense that it is carefully structured and well organised. One interesting feature of this analysis could have been to think about who is constructing and narrating these particular regime stories. At first glance, it would appear to be Young, who has collected an impressive number of oral and written sources. However, what is interesting is whether there were other stories about these initiatives (AEPS and BEAR) that were marginalised, neglected, or simply forgotten. As a reviewer, I may well be over-stating the significance of story-telling with regards to regime formation, but it does seem pertinent given the tenor of the analysis. Regime analysis is ultimately a very powerful ordering strategy, and in this context the production of particular (even hegemonic) understandings is worthy of further investigation.

The final area of further investigation concerns these two Arctic initiatives as examples of 'soft law,' that is, non-legally binding. As a non-legal specialist, this raised in my mind the implicit importance of trust within these two enterprises. Nicholas Renegger has recently argued that trust is one of the key issues in contemporary world politics, especially with reference to not only treaty compliance but also with a range of more formal and informal arrangements, such as financial regulation (Renegger 1997). One of the striking aspects of these Arctic initiatives is that they have emerged at a time when negotiators and interested parties have had to collaborate in a very different context to the immediate post-war period. With the legacy of the Cold War, the issue of building relations based on trust in Arctic affairs in the early 1990s must have been an