

book. To name two more prominent ones: on page 35 Jefferies writes: 'As the twentieth century progressed, the commonly held perception that ocean resources were finite eroded.' He in all likelihood means 'infinite'. Also the claim on page 61 that Japan hunts sei, Bryde and sperm whales in the North Atlantic is incorrect. It should be North Pacific, where Japan has hunted these species under the JARP and JAPRN-II programmes.

How deeply frozen the IWC has become is probably best exemplified by the US/New Zealand spying activities of the Japanese delegation at the 59th meeting of the IWC in 2007, which impacted a vote regarding the lifting of the whaling moratorium (Gallagher, 2017). This once again underlines the need and urgency for a renewal of our thinking of marine mammals. Jefferies' proposal is a much-needed and crucially important step in that direction. I would therefore like to see this

book or a summary of its main points made widely available to the members and observers of the IWC. (Nikolas Sellheim, Polar Cooperation Research Centre, Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies, Kobe University, 2-1 Rokkodai-cho, Kobe 657-8501, Japan (nikolas.sellheim@people.kobe-u.ac.jp))

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Imagining the supernatural north. Eleanor Rosamund Barraclough, Danielle Marie Cudmore and Stefan Donecker (editors). 2016. Edmonton: The University of Alberta Press. xxiii + 328 p, softcover. ISBN 978-1-77212-267-1. CA\$29.95.

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In 1993, Professor Bernd Henningsen wrote:

Cardinal points are all a matter of perspective. Standing on the North Pole, everything else is south. Standing on the South Pole, everything else is north (Henningsen, 1993, p. 4).

These few words perfectly summarise the discussion surrounding imaginations of the north and the Arctic: it is truly relative and dependent on the time and space specific narratives have been created in.

The present volume engages in the study on the cultural construction and representation of 'the north' – a key element in the understanding of narratives circulating in the 'non-north' about the 'north'. But the editors have not focused on merely a central European and rather contemporary conception of the north (such as in Hecker-Stampehl & Kliemann-Geisinger, 2009), but in Part I, *Ancient roots*, have included chapters which present captivating insight into Jewish and ancient Greek lore and traces on how 'the north' is understood and embedded into the cultural construct of these ancient societies (see Varis' and Votsis' chapters, respectively). Part II, *From the Middle Ages to the early modern period*, focusses on races, such as pygmei and anthropagi, that were believed to have been created in the ancient world. Simek shows how prevailing understandings on the existence of these races were adopted in the early Middle Ages by map makers and writers about the north, yet without, unsurprisingly, having any empirical ground for their existence. Simek's brief description of medieval maps of the world and Scandinavia, much more elaborated upon in, for example, Simek (1991), and the reflection of this understanding of northern races and monsters indeed makes even contemporary common discourses of the north and its peoples, either as the antidote to medieval images or as reproducers, much better understandable. Barraclough, on the other hand, lays out how in Norse (Icelandic) society of the Middle Ages the somewhat realistic perception of Greenland had shifted to include the supernatural after Viking societal collapse on the island. Once again, we gain insight into geographical and environmental conditions charged with

narratives and imagination. In fact, Viking voyages are at the core of Barraclough's monograph that her chapter is based on (Barraclough, 2016). The Middle Ages are furthermore touched upon in Walter's chapter on the then contemporary understandings of witchcraft inspired by the north wind *Septentrio* and understandings of the female body. While being a short chapter, the reader starts to understand the disturbing logic of inquisition worldview. In spite of this, Kepler's *Somnium* paints a rather 'good' picture of a witch, located in Iceland, which, as Donecker shows, is rather a culmination of Middle Age perceptions on the supernatural north – most notably inspired by Olaus Magnus – than corresponding to Iceland-specific narratives.

With this chapter the book leaves the Middle Ages and enters Part III, *The 19th century*, the era of Enlightenment and Romanticism. Byrne enables the reader to understand the discursive link between Gaelic/Celtic peoples and northern peoples such as the Finns and the Sámi as applied in Great Britain. Moreover, McCorristine adds another dimension to the emerging modern scientific method by analysing the role of clairvoyance in the search for the lost Franklin mission, conducted by 'young and naive' women dealing with a geographical region contextualised with masculinity – an issue which adds wonderfully to Adriana Craciun's analysis of Arctic explorations (Craciun, 2016). Michaels shows how the travel account by Austrian travel writer Ida Pfeiffer was an important contribution to breaking with the stereotypical and supernatural connotations with Iceland of the mid-19th century. Her article in this book should be read in conjunction with Guðmundur Hálfðanarson's *Iceland perceived: Nordic, European or a colonial other?* (Hálfðanarson, 2014), which looks at the post-colonial dimension of travel accounts such as Pfeiffer's. The north, it seems, had therefore left its supernatural 'other' realm by the 19th century. This, of course, is a purely Eurocentric, non-northern perspective. Habulinec shows how also within the north 'otherness' was created. By referencing the rich oral history of Greenlandic Inuit as recorded by Knud Rasmussen and Hinrich Rink it becomes clear that similar processes were prevalent in contemporary Inuit society and used narratives followed the same logic as in ancient Greek or Biblical myths. This, I dare to say, is a truly understudied phenomenon and serves as an inspiration for further comparative research.

In Part IV we enter *Contemporary perspectives* or, as the subtitle suggests, the *Desire for a supernatural north*. Walter, for instance, shows how during the Soviet period the 'north' remained a 'blissfully cloudy realm of tantalizing possibility, a home for the literally exiled but incorrigibly exuberant artistic imagination' (p. 215). This is furthermore elaborated upon in

Cudmore's chapter on Phillip Pullman's *The golden compass* in which the 1996 book and its sequel *Upon a time in the north* are analysed as regards narratives of the supernatural as well as nature/environmentalism, unveiling differences in the way Pullman presents the north literally. Much to my delight, also subcultures are tackled in this engaging volume. The reader thus learns of the influence of northern mythology on the 'Otherkin' community, an esoteric movement not identifying itself as fully human (Johnston), as well as in extreme heavy metal subcultures (Leichsenring), an issue which I have also tackled in *Polar Record* (Sellheim, 2016). The last chapter (Hill) discusses the emergence and role of shamanism in Arctic indigenous societies. It shows how the supernatural has played an integral part of the worldview and cultural expression of northern peoples. I wonder, however, if this chapter is best situated in Part IV as I personally miss the link to contemporary Arctic societies. After all, Hill refers to shamanistic practices and expressions in the past tense.

This is somewhat minor though. Because in conclusion, this book is not only diverse and engaging, it also sheds light on the normative role of 'the north' in time and space as well as within different cultural contexts. There are many issues the volume does not cover – how could it? – but it certainly inspires for more research in past and present understandings, as well as reflections of these understandings, of northernness and Arcticness (Kelman, forthcoming). I therefore applaud the editors for having compiled a captivating volume of northern research which I wholeheartedly recommend for scholars of Scandinavian and Arctic studies, literary studies or cultural studies in general. And of course, I encourage also others

to read this book in order to better understand what 'the north' is (not)! (Nikolas Sellheim, Polar Cooperation Research Centre, Graduate School of International Cooperation Studies, Kobe University, 2-1 Rokkodai-cho, Kobe 657-8501, Japan (nikolas.sellheim@people.kobe-u.ac.jp)).

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The scramble for the poles. The geopolitics of the Arctic and Antarctic. Klaus Dodds and Mark Nuttall. 2016. Cambridge: Polity Press. xv + 212 p, illustrated, softcover. ISBN 978-0-7456-5245-0. \$24.95. doi:[10.1017/S0032247417000420](https://doi.org/10.1017/S0032247417000420)

Upon having first laid eyes on this book, I thought I would deal with a book somewhere along the lines of a BBC documentary rather than a scholarly volume. After all, the title is quite lurid. But it becomes clear already in the *Preface* that the authors do not wish to produce a volume of provocative content. Rather, they analyse how indeed scrambles are an ongoing feature in the polar regions, but they 'use these terms guardedly but do so because they are commonplace in media, academic and political literatures, and reportage' (p. xiii). And it becomes clear that they do not use the term as equal to sabre rattling and a rush for polar resources. Instead, the authors wish to 'reflect somewhat critically on the nature of this discourse and what lies behind it and in front of it' (p. 21).

In the first chapter of the book, *Scrambling for the extraordinary*, the authors thus set the stage for the more theoretical analyses to come. Here they set out more clearly their concepts of 'scramble' and 'scrambling' and present how differently the (Ant)Arctic, its boundaries, resources and peoples can be perceived. For the trained Arctic (or polar) scholar there is not too much new information in this chapter as it essentially reproduces findings that have been produced elsewhere over recent years. This being said, it is always good to revisit these different perspectives as a means to be able to understand the different interests, scrambles, in and of the polar regions.

But the book is not an account to revisit already existing literature. Instead, the authors have produced a study on power-

geometries, in which the polar regions are perceived through six different lenses or, as the authors call them, drivers for scrambles and scrambling: globalisation, securitisation, polarisation, legalisation, perturbation and amplification. In the second chapter, *Making and remaking the polar regions*, the reader is taken through a rather broad analysis of how these drivers define and redefine our understandings of the Arctic and Antarctic. The critical approach, particularly as regards the notion of perturbation, is something which I find surprisingly little considered in the literature on the polar regions and I therefore applaud the authors for having included this criteria for their purposes. Indeed, I would like to see more research done in this regard.

Chapter 3, *Under snow and ice*, is a particularly intriguing one. For here the authors approach geopolitics not through a horizontal lens, but through a vertical, a volumetric one. They explore the relevance of what is indeed under the ice for the advancement of science, on the one hand, but on the other to demonstrate the inherent importance of the depths of polar regions during the Cold War as well as in contemporary times. The authors remind us of how the depth or the volume of the polar regions has always contributed to the reason why human presence exists there in the first place. After all, '[s]now, ice and rock encourages, facilitates, prevents and frustrates human projects, including those eager to colonize, exploit and nationalize the Polar Regions' (p. 86).

Governing the Arctic and the Antarctic constitutes the fourth chapter of this volume. The scholar of the Arctic and the Antarctic that has focused on governance issues throughout his or her career will not find too much new information in this chapter. The authors link different elements of governance in the polar regions with the way they have been 'globalised', a process which is of tremendous relevance for current and future