HUNTERS, PREDATORS AND PREY
INUIT PERCEPTIONS OF ANIMALS
Frédéric Laugrand & Jarich Oosten

This is a fascinating contribution to the ethnography of the circumpolar North and the growing literature on human-animal relationships. The authors have assembled a rich and authoritative compendium of Inuit knowledge and tradition aimed at the animals that surround them. Perhaps unique to any other collection it takes local animist categories seriously such that Inuit concepts take a position front and centre before European concepts such as 'spirit' or 'soul'.

David G. Anderson, University of Aberdeen

The strength of the text lies in its use of extensive quotes from the Inuit. This allows the Inuit voice to be heard clearly through the discourses of Western thought.

Christopher Trott, University of Manitoba

Inuit hunting traditions are rich in perceptions, practices and stories relating to animals and human beings. The authors examine key figures such as the raven, an animal that has a central place in Inuit culture as a creator and a trickster, and qupiruit, a category consisting of insects and other small life forms. After these non-social and inedible animals, they discuss the dog, the companion of the hunter, and the fellow hunter, the bear, considered to resemble a human being. A discussion of the renewal of whale hunting accompanies the chapters about animals considered 'prey par excellence': the caribou, the seals and the whale, symbol of the whole. By giving precedence to Inuit categories such as ‘inha’ (owner) and ‘tarniq’ (shade) over European concepts such as ‘spirit’ and ‘soul’, the book compares and contrasts human beings and animals to provide a better understanding of human-animal relationships in a hunting society.

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