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Whose Whale is That? Diverting the Commodity Path

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PDF

Type: Conference Paper

Author: Kalland, Arne

Conference: Inequality and the Commons, the Third Biennial Conference of the International Association for the Study of Common Property

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Sector: Fisheries

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Subject(s): whaling
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Abstract: "During the days of industrial whaling whales as commodities--which loosely can be defined as goods and services of exchange value--were thought of in terms of meat and oil, both important products in the past. After World War II whale meat amounted to 47 percent of the animal protein intake of the Japanese--a fact which has led the Japanese to believe that the whales saved them from a major famine--and whale products laid the foundation for large Norwegian shipping enterprises. "The moratorium on commercial whaling imposed by the International Whaling Commission (IWC) from 1987 onwards, has not put an end to whales as a commodity, however.¹ What we have seen during the last two decades is. to use a phrase coined by Appadurai (1986), merely a diversion of a commodity path, e.g. the route a commodity travels from its production through its consumption. We have witnessed an explosion in commodification of whales in the form of so called 'non-' or 'low-consumptive' utilization, which means exploiting whales without killing them. "This paper will seek to explore this diversion of the path by focusing on how a new whale commodity is produced and offered for sale and on how this commodity is consumed. I will end the paper by a discussion on how the raw material for the product, wild whales, are being appropriated by various commercial groups. But before we can enter this discourse, something must be said about the producers of the new commodity and why they take so much interest in whales."

Files in this item

Files	Size	Format	View
Whose_Whale_is_...ing_the_Commodity_Path.pdf	1.873Mb	PDF	View/Open

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