

HANSEN, Keld, 2008 *Nuussuarmiut - Hunting Families on the Big Headland. Demography, Subsistence and Material Culture in Nuussuaq, Upernavik, Northwest Greenland*, Copenhagen, Meddelelser om Grønland, Man and Society, 35, 239 pages.

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Volume 34, Number 1, 2010

Les Inuit et le changement climatique  
The Inuit and Climate Change

URI: <https://id.erudit.org/iderudit/045412ar>

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.7202/045412ar>

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Publisher(s)

Association Inuksiutiit Katimajit Inc.  
Centre interuniversitaire d'études et de recherches autochtones (CIÉRA)

ISSN

0701-1008 (print)

1708-5268 (digital)

[Explore this journal](#)

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Cite this review

Gadoua, M.-P. (2010). Review of [HANSEN, Keld, 2008 *Nuussuarmiut - Hunting Families on the Big Headland. Demography, Subsistence and Material Culture in Nuussuaq, Upernavik, Northwest Greenland*, Copenhagen, Meddelelser om Grønland, Man and Society, 35, 239 pages.] *Études/Inuit/Studies*, 34(1), 173–176.  
<https://doi.org/10.7202/045412ar>

et pas seulement celui-ci, élude une donnée fondamentale, à savoir que la photographie de l'autre implique la participation de l'autre. Si ces images sont destinées à revenir à leurs communautés d'origine, ainsi que le dit l'auteur dans le dernier chapitre, «pour les réinscrire dans leur contexte culturel» ou afin qu'elles «déclenchent une sorte de revitalisation culturelle» (p. 182), il faudrait les envisager sous l'angle non de l'imposition d'un pouvoir abstrait, mais sous celui d'un échange, inégal certes, mais librement consenti, entre le photographe et ceux qui ont accepté de lui livrer leur image.

Le lecteur, finalement, n'aura pas la réponse à la question de savoir pourquoi, en réalité, le Grand Nord a suscité une telle fascination. Mais il sourira à ce paradoxe optimiste que constitue le fait de restituer aux communautés, «pour revitaliser leur culture», des images prises dans l'urgence, devant ce qu'on croyait être l'imminence de leur disparition. L'histoire est toujours ironique.

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HANSEN, Keld

2008 *Nuussuarmiut - Hunting Families on the Big Headland. Demography, Subsistence and Material Culture in Nuussuaq, Upernavik, Northwest Greenland*, Copenhagen, Meddelelser om Grønland, Man and Society, 35, 239 pages.

The author Keld Hansen is a museum curator and editor of the journal *Gronland*. At the time he wrote this book, he was employed by the Viking Ship Museum in Roskilde (1988-2003). Prior to that, he worked at the Greenland National Museum (1984-88) and the National Museum in Copenhagen (1964-1976). This publication stems from his earliest appointment in Copenhagen, during which he conducted ethnological fieldwork among the Nuussuarmiut in Upernavik District on the northwest coast of Greenland. The book features the material culture of this community, focusing on their subsistence strategies, and presents demographic information as it pertains to the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Hansen spent one year (from summer 1966 to fall 1967) working at the Upernavik Museum and learning about the material culture of the local communities. During the summer of 1967, he also conducted archaeological excavations in the region. The book under review is mostly about his ethnological fieldwork, which he conducted among 18 families from Nuussuaq between October 1967 and November 1968. Hansen was invited as an apprentice hunter in the community and learned how to make and use their hunting technology. Consequently, the book is mainly about material culture, and presents complete descriptions and detailed drawings of tools and hunting equipment, along with explanations on how to use them in a technological and social context.

Throughout the chapters, Hansen also adds various hunting statistics and demographic data in order to situate his field notes in a wider temporal framework. Hansen's goal is to assess the community's adaptation to the arrival of European materials, technology, and ways of life, and to explore the negotiation of their ancestral traditions with these "modern" elements.

The book is divided into 12 chapters and five appendices. The introduction presents the fieldwork context and methods used to gather the data. Chapter One features Upernavik District, its geographic location, and the history of the various people who lived there (the local communities, the Norse, the Dutch, the English, and the Scottish). He discusses the relationships between the local communities of Upernavik and the Europeans, focusing mostly on their trading dynamics. Some statistics about population, hunting, and climate are presented for various periods of the 20th century. Chapter Two is about the Nuussuaq community itself, one of about a dozen settlements in Upernavik. Hansen presents a short history of the settlement (established in 1923), as well as population and hunting statistics and information about the local climate. Chapter Three explores the ecosystem in the surrounding area, with an emphasis on game animals, based on the knowledge and observation of local hunters. For each species, Hansen comments on their place in the diet of the Nuussuarmiut, their social value (for the hunters' prestige), their role in trading relationships with Europeans, along with the animals' behavioural and biological patterns, and the harvesting methods and technology. Hansen provides a comparative list of Greenlandic, Danish, and English names for all the game animals, emphasising the differences between Greenlandic and European classifications of species. Additional information is given about the most useful local plants, with elaborate drawings by the author. Chapter Four describes the annual cycle of the Nuussuarmiut. Every month of the year is reviewed in terms of climatic and ice conditions, daily activities in the settlement, and hunting activities and their outcomes.

Chapter Five is about materials and tools, and briefly discusses the choice and distribution of materials in manufacturing the most common tools. The following chapter is about transportation. Hansen discusses the manufacture, design, and use of the sledge, the umiaq, the kayak, motorboats, and their respective equipment (harpoons and firearms). It is the central and most elaborate chapter, illustrated with several meticulous and precise drawings of the objects. Hansen provides fine-grained descriptions of the tools and equipment, their various purposes, and the logic behind their particular designs, based on the hunters' knowledge and his own experience. He also discusses the articulation of traditional tools and techniques with modern (European) elements—especially the harpoon-rifle and kayak-motorboat duos. This demonstrates the author's general thesis: the Nuussuarmiut did not adopt the European way of life uncritically; instead, they selected and integrated parts of it into their persisting ancestral traditions.

Chapter Seven discusses the various clothing traditions that vary by gender, season, and activity. Again, it contains a discussion about the articulation of traditional materials and sewing techniques with modern elements (the former being usually preferred over the latter). Chapter Eight describes the major hunting activities in

Nuussuaq: *uttoq* hunting (basking seal on sea ice), hunting from the ice edge, hunting from kayak and motorboat, and seal netting. Hansen also discusses fishing and bear hunting as a prestigious activity and its social value in the community, and he presents some elders' accounts of hunting techniques that have gone out of use. The next chapter is about women's work and equipment. It is much less elaborate than the chapters about hunting. Nevertheless, it covers the preparation of skins for cloth making and the women's equipment for these activities. It also describes the fine embroidery techniques for festival clothing. Chapter Ten looks at housing and is mostly based on history and population statistics. The last chapter presents activities that occupy both children and adults in the community, such as sports, games, and other pastimes, along with details about the toys and equipment required for these activities.

In his short conclusion, Hansen reviews the articulation between ancestral traditions and European influences throughout the 20th century. Finally, five appendices follow the conclusion. The first appendix gives examples of hunting trips, along with sketches from the author's diary, photographs, maps, and graphs showing the outcome of the hunting expeditions. The second presents accounts of polar bear hunts narrated by local hunters and commented on by the author. The third appendix briefly describes two examples of walrus attacks on kayak hunters, and the fourth one is about the (rare) phenomenon of women as hunters. The last section is a complete list of Greenlandic words used in the book, with Danish and English translations.

Even though the title refers to demography, the book's main focus is on the material culture of the Nuussuarmiut and the hunting techniques observed during the time of study. References to demography, made through selected statistics, are inserted. By presenting these statistics, the author aims to build a comparison between the time of study (1967-68) and earlier/later periods in the 20th century. Unfortunately, these data sets are rather irregular. For example, population data for Upernavik District are available only for 1977, 1987, and 1997 (pp. 37-39), exports and imports only for 1915 and 1916 (p. 43), returns for netting in the region only for 1799-1780 and 1807-1808 (p. 146), content of caches of polar bear hunters only for 1915 and 1920 (p. 146), number of polar bears shot in the district only for 1958 and 1967 (p. 147), accidental deaths only from 1850 to 1900 (p. 151), number of game animals killed at Nuussuaq only from 1922-23 to 1932 (p. 152), and so on. These statistics do not provide the "long-term ethnographic study" promised in the foreword (p. 7). Rather, they are more like glimpses of an unequal selection of years before and after the study period. In addition, these statistics are inserted rather hither and thither, affecting the pace of the reading of the author's field notes. I would have preferred to see one or more chapters entirely devoted to these statistics, thus enabling the author to comment on them more efficiently and cohesively.

This being said, the major strength of the book is the author's field notes. Hansen had a unique opportunity to participate in hunts, travels, and toolmaking for an entire year. With his perspective as a museum curator, he noted highly specific details about the design and use of many tools and hunting equipment. This information is rarely equalled in the literature on Arctic material culture. His drawings of tools, hunting equipment, and means of transportation are remarkable, as are the lists of words in

Greenlandic (often accompanied by Danish and English translations) for every element of this material culture. The comparisons he draws between previous and subsequent years are not uninteresting, but they were not necessary to make this book a success. This publication is relevant for questions pertaining to material and social adjustments in times of contact between different cultures (Greenlanders and Europeans), and for questions about the design and use of tools and equipment of Arctic hunters. For these reasons, I strongly recommend it to all Arctic anthropologists and archaeologists.

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JACOBSON, Anna  
2009 *Elnguq: An Eskimo Girl's Childhood in the Alaska Wilderness*, Anchorage, Publication Consultants, 128 pages

This recent translation of a 1990 Yup'ik-language novel—"the only full-length work of creative writing published in Yup'ik"—offers a wider English-speaking audience access to Anna Jacobson's beautifully narrated account of a childhood spent in Southwestern Alaska in the mid-twentieth century. The original was a product of the Alaska Native Language Center, and the English edition, unlike most translations, enhances the source text by cross-referencing its pages with the Yup'ik original. In this way, it enables students of the Yup'ik language to make use of the translation as a gloss while working through the original text. Yet like the Nunavik novel *Sanaaq*, which also had origins in the requirements of language-learners, *Elnguq* proves to be not only useful to a variety of readers, but also capable of delighting its audience artistically.

In the opening lines, the readers are welcomed into the world of the novel via the flickering understanding of a young child:

It was at that time, it is said, that she became aware of the bright beautiful world. Because she didn't know anything yet and didn't even know that she was a human being, she did not observe very much. But, there was a certain something that was sitting beside her, watching her. And because she did not look around, evidently she did not see anything else before she ceased being aware.

Thus we are invited to see the world through the eyes of Elnguq, the title character; we accompany her out of her babyhood (where she is guarded by the family dog, Pili), and follow her step by step as she gradually discovers the place and family into which she has been born. This childhood perspective—so skilfully crafted by the author—is highly appropriate for an English-speaking readership composed primarily of people