

may have access to it. Systems of classification are always intriguing (well, at least to anthropologists), so it should be noted that the sections defined above do overlap. For instance, any of the items in “Arts and Crafts” could have been included in one of the other classifications. The English language phrase “arts and crafts,” as currently used, does not really suit the representation of the material culture of other, less compartmentalized societies. The suggestion in the introduction to “Arts and Crafts,” that many objects depicted have been superseded by manufactured goods and are now made to preserve these traditional skills, does not entirely resolve this issue.

For the casual reader, this book will provide many insights into bush knowledge, all beautifully illustrated. From a more academic view, it could be recommended as background for students who are starting to read in the fur trade post journals, or to persons interested in “cultural resource inventory” studies (in which Aboriginal traditional territory is surveyed for indications of land use). Mr. Garvin shows a certain interest in the deterioration of structures and trails, which is particularly useful for the latter group. I can also see *Carving Faces, Carving Lives* serving as the inspiration for similar projects in the classroom, so I have ordered a copy for a friend who teaches Dene language and culture classes in a northern community. Well done, Mr. Garvin!

*Theresa A. Ferguson*  
Anthropology  
Athabasca University  
10733 150 Street  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada  
T5P 1R4  
*theresaf@athabascau.ca*

**ALASKA NATIVE ART: TRADITION-INNOVATION-CONTINUITY.** By SUSAN W. FAIR for the Alaska State Council on the Arts. Edited by JEAN BLODGETT. Fairbanks: University of Alaska Press, 2006. ISBN 13: 978-1-889963-79-2. xxxi + 280 p., maps, b&w and colour illus., notes, bib., index. Hardbound. US\$65.00.

I had the pleasure of personally knowing and working in Alaska with the late Dr. Susan W. Fair, author of *Alaska Native Art: Tradition-Innovation-Continuity*. While reading this book, I felt Susie’s profound passion for Native arts and her sensitivity towards its makers come alive through her comprehensive documentation of 20th-century Alaska Native art. This groundbreaking work covers a broad range of issues surrounding the cultural transmission, production, consumption, and exhibition of Alaska Native art, all revolving around the theme of tradition. Chapters cover the scope of arts made by Eskimo and Indian groups within the state, art-making practices, exhibiting of Native art, the relationship between place and object, modes of passing on tradition, and the celebration

of Native artists as creative individuals who have inherited generations of cultural heritage.

This book, based on Susie’s 30 years of working with Alaska Native arts in various capacities from appraiser to curator, as well as on her dissertation in Folklore at University of Pennsylvania, reflects her expertise and her vast knowledge of the subject matter. In fact, the manuscript left at the time of the author’s passing in 2003 included over 700 pages of text and some 600 photos. The editor, Jean Blodgett, expertly reduced it by more than half, to a length more appropriate for a general readership. It was no small feat to edit that monumental amount of text into a book that still reads with a sense of continuity and completeness and retains the author’s original voice.

It is clear that Susie (and Blodgett) put a lot of thought into the organization of text, theme, and illustrations. In addition to a stimulating text that reflects the author’s sophisticated understanding of Native approaches to art making, the book has a bibliography that will serve as a rich reference source for anyone wishing to dig deeper into specifics of Alaska Native arts, artists, histories, and culture. The only thing that seems to be missing from this book is an index of its illustrations.

*Alaska Native Art* is written in a style that is accessible to a wide audience, but does not downplay the critical issues surrounding the production and display of Alaska Native art. I imagine this book will be equally well received by Native artists and its academic readership, although I would most recommend this book to those who simply have an appreciation for Alaska Native arts. For those readers who are intimate with the subject matter, the many black-and-white and color illustrations will serve as a warm reminder of people, places, and the host of associations connected to pieces of art. But for the vast majority of readers, the thoughtful selection of historic and present-day images, along with their highly informative captions, will bring the world of Alaska Native art alive.

It is nearly impossible to operate successfully within Alaska’s Native art and heritage industry without cultivating a sensitive understanding of Native values of balance and reciprocity, which Susie clearly accomplished over her years of working within Alaska Native communities. Each major cultural group in Alaska is fairly represented (perhaps with a little natural bias towards people and places where Susie had spent more time as evidenced by the narrative examples woven throughout the body of the text). She is careful not to extol one type of artist over another, giving equal representation to the continuum of individuals who all fit within the general category of Alaska Native artist.

The author also balances Native and Western systems of analysis, producing a cross-cultural view of Native art. While *Alaska Native Art* certainly falls within a large (and very popular) category of books written about non-Western arts by Western authors trained in the academy, Susie consciously juxtaposes her voice with the voices of non-Native consumers of Native art and the voices of Native

artists. The result is a delightful, many-voiced text that invites and challenges readers, whether they are Native or non-Native, to consider alternative ways of looking at Alaska Native art. As an academic of Alaska Native descent, I often find myself disappointed with non-Native authors attempting to “speak for” Native people, but this book does not leave me with that feeling. When Susie cannot directly quote the artists themselves, she presents Native viewpoints in a manner that demonstrates a respectful awareness of her position as someone who facilitates the public dissemination of Alaska Native arts while straddling the positions of both teacher and student.

Although the book contains some formal analysis of art objects, as well as plenty of ethnographic examples detailing their production, consumption, and circulation, it is unusual in the sense that it is neither a purely art-historical nor an anthropological/folkloristic reading of non-Western art. The author is equally comfortable buttressing quotes from scholarly sources with those of Native culture bearers. She writes, “Native art should not be separated from context, intention, and story—the ‘environment of significance’ as folklorist Henry Glassie (1989:17) has phrased it. [Respected elder] Ester Littlefield restates the same thesis: the creative mind and, therefore, the nature of Native art, is imbedded in the natural world” (p. 217). These quotes reflect Susie’s approach to Native arts: she values a culturally grounded interpretation of non-Western arts over one that looks at form without attention to function. Although the author demonstrates a love of materials and a strong command of the technical vocabulary of the art historian, this book will not satisfy readers uninterested in a culturally based examination of Alaska Native arts.

*Alaska Native Art* is a truly seminal publication. As the editor remarks, “When Susan Fair began working on this book in the mid-1990s, it would have been the first publication that dealt with all the Native arts and cultures of Alaska” (p. xxii). A decade later, it is still the only book that tackles the broad scope of 20th century Alaska Native arts. Perhaps because of its ambitious nature, this book could be criticized for its somewhat broad generalizations about Alaska Native worldviews, or for the limited sample of artists whose comments are shared compared to the scope of arts presented. Still, Susie paints an overview of Alaska Native art that is sensitive to the heterogeneity of Alaska Native artists’ individual lives and experiences of tradition over a backdrop of changing times. It is a beautiful testament to Susie’s own legacy as champion of Alaska Native arts and artists.

Alexis Celeste Bunten  
Department of Anthropology  
University of California at Berkeley  
9652 Lucerne Avenue  
Culver City, California, USA  
90232  
abunten@berkeley.edu

L’ÂME DE LA TERRE: PARCOURS D’UN GÉOGRAPHE. By LOUIS-EDMOND HAMELIN. Québec: Éditions MultiMondes, 2006. ISBN-13: 978-2-89544-087-1. x + 246 p., b&w illus., index. Cdn\$34.95.

This latest book by Louis-Edmond Hamelin is neither specifically an autobiography nor reflections on the science of geography, yet it contains both, along with some “philosophical” reflections. Except for his early years growing up in St. Didace and his schooling in Berthierville, Joliette, and then Laval, the autobiographical and reflective aspects largely relate to his public life, including his tenure as rector of the Université du Québec à Trois-Rivières and as a member of various study commissions for the Quebec government.

Hamelin’s early life in rural Quebec was significant: not only does it illuminate his long interest in the land and its forms, but it also underlies the title of the book. As well, his education and academic career reflect the changes that occurred in Quebec from the “rural vocation” to the Quiet Revolution and its consequences. On the other hand, the “philosophical” sections indicate some of the values (such as holism), processes (such as writing), and conceptions that characterized much of his academic and public career.

A number of sections give insight into the author. One of these describes his long-standing interest in language, including the creation of new words, which is reflected in the title of the book itself. In commenting on neology (creation of new words or meaning) and the call to the imagination, he suggests that “elle apporte de profonds plaisirs intellectuels à son auteur” (p. 103). In section 16, he discusses the importance of lexicology in geography, especially in Quebec, as it shows “originalité et autonomie” (p. 105). He notes a series of *québécoisismes* based on “batture.” Indeed as a product of rural Quebec, he became aware that geographic terms such as *chemin du rang* (farm road), *rang* (farms linked by a road), and *concession* (homestead) had no equivalent in France. The next section deals with a system of classification for geography in terms of regions and themes, as well as a system for classifying his own work. This sense of order is also seen in his seminal work, *Nordicité* (1975, 1979), as well as in the outlines of his “occupations” and time spent in each over 60 years.

Hamelin’s humour also comes though in this book. For example, he tells with delight about the confusion when “Louis-E. Hamelin” feminizes to become Mlle. or Mme. Louise Hamelin. His early use of *L’Hexagone* to describe France adds a bit of levity, as does the issue of parking tickets.

Also revealing is the author’s familiarity with other disciplines and activities, including literature. Indeed, in section 18, there is a discussion on literature and writing style, and a suggestion that “les littéraires...demeurent assez indifférents à la géographie, même si les deux Instituts de Montréal et de Québec sont rattachés à des Facultés des lettres” (p. 119). But he sees a linkage between the two, and in the text and footnotes indicates a familiarity with