

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.

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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

music or poetry dealing with the North. Moreover, one of the last sections deals with what he terms *transdisciplinarité*, *pluridisciplinarité*, and *interdisciplinarité*. He is aware of the contributions of other fields to the study of geography, or to the study of the North (*nordologie*).

For northern scholars, the most interesting sections relate to the development of the concept of nordicity, a seminal concept in Canadian geography, the establishment of the Centre d'études nordiques (CEN) at Laval, and his interest in the Aboriginal peoples of northern Canada. Nordicity, which comes from an interest in applied geography, from his early studies of the land, from parish *rangs* to more regional and global studies, has linked the physical to the human element in understanding the North. He notes that a speech at McGill by the explorer Stefansson, a trip to James Bay in 1948, the influence of the ethno-botanist Jacques Rousseau, and a Rockefeller grant to study the North, helped inspire his interest in an area largely ignored by southern academics. This in turn resulted in a brief to l'Université Laval, where he began teaching in 1951, in which he suggested a research centre on the North: this, of course, led to the founding in 1961 of CEN, which he directed until 1972. CEN's creation also reflected the involvement of the provincial government of Lesage in Nouveau-Québec, including the influence of René Lévesque.

Another influence on the development of his northern expertise was the European impact, outlined in the earlier sections. Early on, Hamelin was influenced by geographers and other scholars from France in Quebec, especially during and after the Second World War. Their presence led to the québécoisisation of geography. Secondly his own studies at Grenoble "sous l'oeil sévère mais bienveillant du maître Raoul Blanchard" (p. 37) showed him an approach to alpine studies, as well as a world beyond Quebec. Furthermore, constant contact with Europe, from visits to France (his wife's birthplace) and international academic associations, additionally was important in his intellectual development.

The third primary area of interest for northern scholars deals with Hamelin's appreciation of the Aboriginal populations. In one sense this recognition reflects the growing interest in Native groups in Canada, especially in Nouveau-Québec. He outlines a number of steps that led to this interest, which also reflected a more inclusive view of the country.

The book also outlines the growth of geographic studies in Quebec, in which he had a pivotal role: this included the "quatre tours d'angle" and the shift from an East-West to a North-South orientation.

The book has an interesting, if perhaps unusual style. At times, as the introduction indicates (p. 1), Hamelin uses the third person singular to refer to himself, at others the first person. This unusual style is more evident in the 28 short sections of the book, which are grouped in three major parts (*Le Temps des Choses*, *Métiers*, and *Valeurs*). But the sections are in a sense interactive, as the author often refers to a past or future section. In addition, the

index of terms, places, and people refers to the sections rather than the pages. At the end he suggests four major sources about himself. The text concludes with a series of photographs that portray various aspects of Hamelin's life: the farm and family at St. Didace, his contacts with other people dealing with nordicity, contacts with Aboriginals, his conferences, honours, trips, and university work, and his own family. These help the reader understand the author's career, influence, and values.

In brief, if one can enter into Hamelin's love of language, this latest book reveals some of the spirit and mind (*âme*) of a geographer in his intellectual and life journey (*parcours*).

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- HEART OF THE YUKON: A NATURAL AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF THE MAYO AREA. Edited by LYNETTE BLEILER, CHRISTOPHER BURN and MARK O'DONOGHUE. Mayo, Yukon: Village of Mayo, 2006. ISBN 0-9780263-0-6. (Available from Village of Mayo, PO Box 160, Mayo, YT Y0B 1M0; mayo@northwestel.net) 138 p., maps, b&w and colour illus., bib. Softbound. Cdn\$25.00.

This attractively produced popular level book provides a thorough review of the natural and cultural history of the Mayo region in central Yukon Territory. The editors, Lynette Bleiler, Christopher Burn, and Mark O'Donoghue, who are also the book's main contributors, use their intimate knowledge of the region to bring together a vast amount of information of interest to Yukon residents, specifically those from Mayo, and to the region's many scientific researchers, resource managers, conservationists, naturalists, amateur historians, and tourists. The book was produced by the village of Mayo to commemorate its centennial in 2003. Readers will immediately see that this is a book focused almost exclusively on the Mayo area and written primarily for the people of Mayo, or at least for people who have some prior knowledge of the region. It is not a book for those who need more general information on the Yukon or want to read about the history or environments of northern Canada or the circumpolar North as a