

REVIEWS



Atiqput: Inuit Oral History and Project Naming. Compiled and edited by Carol Payne, Beth Greenhorn, Deborah Kigjugalik, and Christina Williamson. Foreword by Jimmy Manning. Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2022. 243 pages. \$45.95 cloth; \$36.76 e-book.

Atiqput: Inuit Oral History and Project Naming tells the story of the creation of a collective work celebrating Inuit culture and histories through dialogue between oral tradition and photographs. This photographic history project titled Project Naming began in the 1980s, when students of Inuit college Nunavut Sivuniksavut interviewed their elders to acquire knowledge about the historical photographs of Inuit housed in the Library and Archives of Canada. The volume is a product of these conversations between Inuit (Nunavut) and the contribution of southern partners (Ottawa) over the span of several years. The editors of the volume come from different backgrounds including art history, archival work, anthropology, and history. The key goal of the project is to identify *atiqput* ("our names") as translated by elder Piita Irniq, referring to people and place names; *atiqput* depicts the centrality of names and naming practices in Inuit contexts and "restories the colonial historical record" (9). Inuit names maintain Inuit lifeways and tie individuals to their ancestors, their culture, and a key belief: "three essential parts made a human in the Inuit view: body, soul and name" (11). Naming traditions are attached to land, language, and sacred histories, and express themselves in all relations. This volume "names" the peoples, places, and histories in photographs that reside in the archives of Canada.

Paralleling its collective and interdisciplinary nature, the writers of the book range from Inuit elders to students, artists, educators, and researchers. This volume documents the collective collaboration and positionality of the contributors as highly crucial. Most of the photographs are by non-Inuit southerners with an ethnographic and institutional lens thus situated as visual recorders, part of a long history based on appropriation and exploitation of Inuit land and resources. Project Naming transforms the outsiders' look into Inuit lifeways and brings these visual sources to Inuit eyes. As a book of connections, *Atiqput* creates an exchange between Inuit knowledge and academic scholarship while centering on voices of Inuit elders and youth. Furthermore, as the first book-length project about Project Naming, this edited volume contributes to the broader literature about reframing settler archives through redefining photographs, histories, and relations. What distinguishes *Atiqput* from other works on Inuit history projects that similarly center elder's life experiences (such as Nunavut Arctic College's *Interviewing Inuit Elders* series, the volume *Uqalurait: An Oral History of Nunavut*, and the Igloolik Oral History Project) is *Atiqput's* strong focus on photographs and naming practices in Inuit contexts.

Atiqput: Inuit Oral History and Project Naming is divided into three parts, each consisting of essays accompanied by brief introductions and photographs. The first section begins by chronicling the evolution of Project Naming at Nunavut Sivuniksavut with its Inuit-centered pedagogy and the dialogue created between the elders and students through the project. The students talk about the importance of knowing Inuktitut, an Inuit language, in their communication with elders and how this trans-generational exchange strengthened their sense of Inuit identity. Given the limited availability of educational materials from Inuit perspectives, these encounters became important initiatives for supporting the education of youth, creating a sense of pride in them. The interviews reveal how personal identity is constructed with the relations as elders describe the people in the photos with their relational positions in community. This project has also strengthened community relations and storytelling practices by sharing the stories that accompany the photographs, referring to the clothes, relatives, gestures, and the location of the people in the visuals. The photo essay by Inuk artist Barry Pottle, accompanied by a conversation, demonstrates the complex histories associated with the archival images. His work is based on “Eskimo disc numbers” and shows the dehumanizing effect of numbering Inuit to keep track of members of the community.

The book emphasizes Inuit orality and oral forms, which have performative, dynamic, and relational aspects that make the form still relevant and dominant in Native contexts. These contexts are diverse and shaped by the collective history and culture of the specific Native nation. In the middle section, elders reflect on Project Naming, their photographs accompanied by stories; these conversations mainly take place at the “kitchen tables” (94) of the elders, which serve as sites for teaching and learning. As the elders identify their family and friends in the photographs, they share, too, stories about residential schools, relocation, and the importance of namesakes, traditional clothing practices, and Inuit *qaujimajatuqangit* principles (traditional Inuit knowledge). One of the elders, Pita Irniq, elaborates on the healing effect of these photographs and coming “home” with them. The personal accounts collected in *Atiqput* indigenize the photo archives and show the repercussions of the federal policies for Inuit. It is a story of struggle, survival, and adaptation of a community showing future generations how their ancestors survived with the strength of Inuit ways.

The final section of the book, “Extending Project Naming,” contextualizes Project Naming with reference to other partnering projects such as Views from the North, which contributes to Nunavut Sivuniksavut students’ photo-based interviews with elders. This section shows how these conversations “have continued, grown, and taken many forms” (144), evolving from an institutional collaboration between Nunavut Sivuniksavut and the Library and Archives of Canada with a focus on extensive implications of the volume. Along with the interviews, the book constructs a narrative guiding the reader in the field of photography through references to famous philosophers such as Roland Barthes, but at the same time, it raises questions based on Inuit experiences of photography. The volume concludes with a detailed glossary of Inuit terms and place names, which is useful for non-Inuktitut speakers and future generations of Inuktitut learners.

Atiqput: Inuit Oral History and Project Naming carries the oral histories to a larger audience, functioning as a recorder of the histories of the community and contributing to cultural preservation and revitalization. This book is a valuable source for scholars of Native studies, anthropology, archival practice, political science, photography, and memory studies. What is most important, it may inspire people to tell their nation's story in alternative ways.

Dilan Erteber
University of Arizona