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Book Review

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Anthropologist Ann Fienup-Riordan and Translator Alice Rearden were set on a mission to facilitate cultural knowledge about the Yukon-Kuskokwim delta region in Alaska from its elders to its youngest generation (p.4). Their edited volume, "Do Not Live Without An Elder: The Subsistence Way of Life in Southwest Alaska" (2016), offers stories in both English and in the Central Alaskan Yup'ik language that is learned by children in this community (p.26). What unfolds in these stories are lessons and directions on how to handle risk and continue traditions of Yup'ik society, so that the next generation will preserve their identity and pass on their advice to future generations as well (p.24).

By interviewing a council of six elderly men, who represent their community, on topics that range from hunting, fishing, farming, traveling, harvesting, and adapting to new technology, Fienup-Riordan and Rearden hope their ethnography is also used as an example of how the contemporary world can continue respecting Native American populations and processes upheld by tribal councils in their homeland (p.32). With that in mind, the authors' intended audience is both the youth within the Native Alaska communities and *us*, non-Native people, who stand to benefit from listening to communities different from our own. By reading these six personal tellings of history, gerontologists will learn how they can study the active involvement of the elderly within the communities that they care about. They will also be given a realistic depiction of limited memories, personal conflict and the unresolved tension that remain among people.

One may argue that it might be hard to change and implement policy concerning aging populations by having its' analysts read ethnographic projects that interview six elders at a time. Some may even argue that, however insightful it might be for communities, reading oral histories is a slow process with a small sample size. Other readers will even have their own reservations about how elderly women are not part of the six people selected to share their advice and insight and that the section entitled "All Women" consists of only four sentences in the whole book (p.232). However, I would argue that Fienup-Riordan and Rearden are sensitive to these struggles as they include stories and observations made by these six leaders about other communities where one of the elders expresses, "Since I didn't fully understand what they [people of Yukon and Hooper bay area] said, I don't really want to talk about something that I don't fully understand like you. [laughs]" (p.268). What is insightful about this comment is that the elders are aware of the gaps between generations and people of different cultures (p.336). What leaves me optimistic about the authors' approach is how they capture both the elders' and ethnographers' willingness to overcome communication

barriers in order to keep the context behind these stories from becoming obsolete. Not knowing, and therefore, not psychologically registering, the historical significance behind certain words and rituals will make it difficult for the next generation to decide what everyday practices and habits from their culture they would like to keep, adjust to, or change for the next generation of active listeners (p.334).

In her report of the 2014 Lindau Nobel Laureate Meeting's conference, concerning the topic of Aging, Lorna Stewart included an insightful observation made by a neurologist who was also in attendance. This physician, who focuses on dementia care research, reflected, "We should consider a balance between adding years to life and adding life to years" (Stewart 2014). I agree that it is important to add life to one's years and not just years to one's life (Stewart 2014). I would also argue that preserving stories, oral histories, and ethnographic interviews of elders within one's culture is important for this very same reason. This book serves as a wonderful example of how we can add life to an older adult's years through the act of storytelling because it models how we can provide company and conversation. Furthermore, by keeping their memories alive through storytelling we are not only adding life to their years, we are also adding a renewed sense of life to our years as well. The elders within a community can breathe life into the next generation by providing perspectives enhanced by time, relationship and place.

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