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The time allocated to cross the street; the presence (or, rather, absence) of accessible walkways; the portrayal of ‘happy’ and ‘energetic’ elders – all forty-years old – in the media: in *Ending Ageism or How Not to Shoot Old People*, cultural critic and age studies scholar Margaret Morganroth Gullette challenges us to examine these subtle – and less subtle – ways in which ageism penetrates our lives. Gullette examines Western culture in detail, pulling from the nascent field of aging studies, to provide an alluring examination of how culture continues to dehumanize and other older age. *Ending Ageism* is Gullette's third direct examination of ageism in society, following *Aged by Culture* (2004) and *Agewise: Fighting the New Ageism in America* (2011). This is not a surprise, since her entire career has been focused on examining age-related issues, with her work moving with her from mid-life to older age.

The book opens with an introduction to the crone-goddess Senexa, whose motto 'End Ageism' Gullette wants to ring from the heavens. The book is divided into three sections: Introductions (Preface and Chapter 1), five Special Sessions (Chapters 2-6), and Conclusions/Redress (Chapters 7-8). In Chapter 1, Gullette lays the foundations for the rest of the book. She also provides an excellent summary of the age studies movement and the underpinnings of her philosophical approach of aging as a cultural construct. Here, she provides the reader with the basic insights, to grasp the critical and subtle role ageism plays in society and how, consecutively, we are often powerless to push back. I largely disagree with her overall assessment of how gerontological scholars have approached ageism. Clearly, we have worked to address ageism much longer than only starting in the 2010s. Chapter 1 also explains the unique layout of the text: the book is organized as a lecture series. Chapters 2 through 6 provide five ‘special sessions’ on ageism in culture and society, with the readers being the students educated on this issue. Chapters 7 and 8 provide a space for reflection and for articulating ways to move forward.

Chapter 2, where the book's secondary and evocative title (*How Not to Shoot Old People*) comes from, is dedicated to the visual depictions of older adults through art, advertisements and other media. It examines how the visual representation of older adults has shaped our cultural dialogue and vice-versa. For example, why is it we avoid wrinkles in visual art? What is it about the nude, older body that is so provocative compared to a younger body? Chapter 3 focuses on our intergenerational connections. It mainly stresses how we must work to alter the perception that younger generations have of older age. Chapter 4 is dedicated to how people and cultures (don't) understand our relationship with labor, identity, and the environment – particularly how changing demographics, and our lack of attention to

them, will result in wide-gaps in our agricultural supply chains. Unique to this volume is Chapter 5, which provides an innovative analysis of how Alzheimer's Disease has been legalized and has become the ultimate defense strategy of individuals in their old age – whether they have the condition or not. Gullette argues that dementia has become an 'out' for past misdeeds. An individual claiming dementia is viewed as untouchable, regardless of when their actions occurred. Chapter 6 aptly reconnects two distinct topics: it pairs how we talk about older adults in terms of death/dying and our preferences for a shorter life span with less 'superfluous' dependency, with our reluctance to embrace euthanasia as a viable medical treatment. Beyond the topics discussed, the chapters also touch on how our perceptions of aging and aging bodies are shaped throughout our lives from high school (Chapter 4), to college (Chapter 3), to mid-life (Chapter 2) and even into older adulthood (Chapter 5 and 6).

The concluding section of the book first provides, in Chapter 7, a discussion of how many of the aforementioned ageist attitudes are internalized and how we – even those of us with anti-ageism approaches – may find ourselves engaging in ageist tropes. Chapter 8 aims to tie the book together, connecting what may have seemed like loose threads. It ends, in an epilogue, with a “*Declaration of Grievances*,” modeled after the Declaration of Rights and Sentiments, as a starting point for our demands on ending ageism, and as a call for others to contribute.

Overall, *Ending Ageism* feels rushed, unfinished, and the message feels muddled. While following a unique structure – one that inevitably leads the book to provide nine weeks of course content – the reliance on hypothetical discussions and artificially constructed situations, distracts from the overall argument. In a similar vein, the mixture of facts, opinions and hypotheticals, makes it challenging to discern what is objective and subjective. I imagine those who come to Gullette through *Ending Ageism* will not necessarily be disappointed. The book is enlightening in multiple aspects, with Chapter 5, “*The Alzheimer’s Defense*” (“*Faking Bad*” in *International Atrocity Trials*”), being particularly noteworthy. However, for those who have followed her trajectory since she first named ageism in her work, *Ending Ageism* may be a letdown. In some ways, it does not seem to be the next step in the intellectual development of the field of age studies but rather a repetition or reflection of where the field stands. Perhaps, however, that is exactly the point. Two connected statements bookend the text. First, “Everyone should be concerned about ending ageism” (4), and second “The End of Ageism is the goal. It is not close” (192). Of course, we are invited to ask: if we should all be concerned, why are we not even close to our goal? It is this ambivalence I believe *Ending Ageism* is trying to address more so than anything else. Yet, in trying to be a book, anyone can relate to, I fear it has become one that is difficult to relate to for many who are already concerned. Readers of Gullette will find this book a noteworthy – but not necessary – review of her philosophical approach to anti-ageism and the cultural development of ageism. Graduate students and researchers in Cultural Studies will find it interesting, due to the inclusion of social media in an ageist society. I would recommend that those in the visual arts (Chapter 2), law (Chapter 5), higher education (Chapter 3), and gerontological fields (Chapters 5 and 6) consider adopting chapters and sections of the book. In the future, I hope that Gullette will continue to critique our age-based cultural systems, but will also move the field ahead in a cohesive manner. Unfortunately, much of the book seems to be regurgitated ideas, albeit with new examples, that echo her previous volumes.

References

- Gullette, Margaret Morganroth. 2004. *Aged by Culture*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Gullette, Margaret Morganroth. 2011. *Agewise: Fighting the New Ageism in America*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.