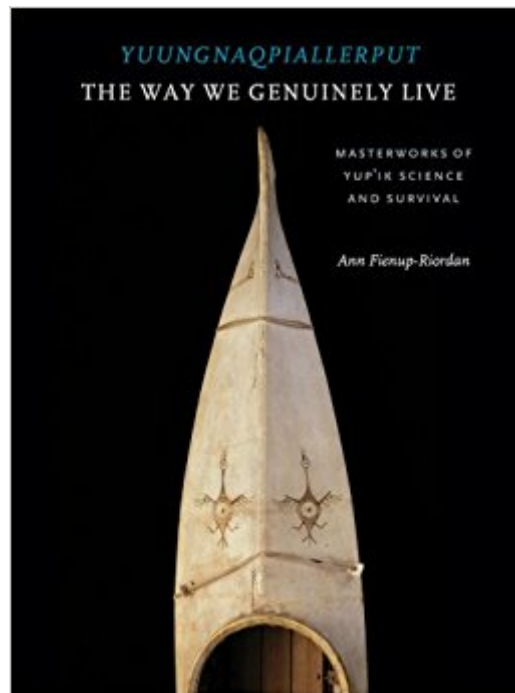




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Yuungnaqpiallerput / The Way We Genuinely Live: Masterworks Of Yup'ik Science And Survival



Synopsis

Honorable mention for the Victor Turner Award for Ethnographic Writing from the Society for Humanistic Anthropology
Honorable mention for the 2008 William Mills Prize for Non-Fiction Polar Books
Survival in the harsh subarctic environment requires great resourcefulness and ingenuity. The Yup'ik people of southwest Alaska meet the challenge by using traditional technology and by following a philosophy that recognizes the personhood of all living things and the environment. Their use of nature's resources is a testament to the mutual respect and generosity that exists between humans and the animals, plants, land, and sea that sustain them. Wastefulness being disrespectful, Yup'ik elders made use of every last scrap from hunts and harvests: seal guts became warm, waterproof, and breathable parkas; the skins of fish were fashioned into waterproof mittens, while their heads and entrails were stored in naturally refrigerated pits as insurance against future famine. Dried grasses became anything from insulating socks to bedding to sled rope, or even goggles to protect against snow blindness; rancid seal oil mixed with tundra moss became "Yup'ik epoxy" for caulking and gluing; and driving snow was manipulated to provide a defense against its own dangers. Although tools have changed, Yup'ik people today continue to engage in many traditional harvesting activities, using these new means to accomplish distinctly Yup'ik ends. In *Yuungnaqpiallerput / The Way We Genuinely Live*, Yup'ik elders examine tools and daily-use items, explaining how they were made and for what purpose. Just as Western science relies on the testing of hypotheses, Yup'ik science developed its technologies through systematic trial and error, yielding ingenious and effective solutions to life's challenges. The elders also delve beyond the practical aspects of these artifacts to elucidate the ways in which their creation and use are part of Yup'ik cosmology and traditional spiritual values. Every item carries special significance, and the actions associated with each should be undertaken with awareness and deliberation, for nothing goes unnoticed by the consciousness of the surrounding universe. Ann Fienup-Riordan explores these manifestations of Yup'ik technology by following the seasonal cycle of harvests and ceremonial renewals, a journey revealing the beauty of these artifacts that extends beyond the aesthetic surface to connect with the living pulse of the universe.

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Customer Reviews

"This book brilliantly accomplishes the mission of faithfully portraying the Yup'ik concept of science, or technology as a way of making prayer. Fienup-Riordan's eloquent publication is a meaningful source for interpretation of material culture, whether for the study of contemporary groups or for the reconstruction of life ways and beliefs of past hunter-gatherers." *Arctic Anthropology* "Every Native Studies scholar should read every work published by Ann Fienup-Riordan. She is the best contemporary Arctic ethnographer, and among the best anthropologists in the world. [This book] sets an excellent example for the rest of us working within the field of Native Studies." *The Canadian Journal of Native Studies* "These two publications, *Paitarkiutenka* and *Yuungnaqpiallerput*, are fitting companions, bringing to life the deep and ancient connections between the Yupik people and their ancestral homeland." *Pacific Northwest Quarterly* "This book belongs on a shelf with the classics of Alaskan anthropology. It will be an indispensable reference to all people interested in northern societies and material culture - from future generations of Yup'ik harvesters and craftsmen, to museum curators and archaeologists who wish to better understand the remarkable objects in their care." *Alaska History*

Ann Fienup-Riordan is the author of numerous books on the Native peoples of Alaska, including *Yup'ik Elders at the Ethnologisches Museum Berlin: Fieldwork Turned on Its Head*; *The Living Tradition of Yup'ik Masks*; *Agayuliyararput / Our Way of Making Prayer*; *Freeze Frame: Alaska Eskimos in the Movies*; *Eskimo Essays: Yup'ik Lives and How We See Them*; and *Wise Words of the Yup'ik People: We Talk to You because We Love You*. She lives in Anchorage.

This is a book that needed to be written. The failure of the Western world to understand the depth and complexity of Yupik technology is only over shadowed by the failure of many young Yupiks to

understand the survival technology of the previous generations. The coasts and rivers of the Bering Sea contain some the richest food resources in the worlds. The number of species of sea mammals, land mammals large, small, and water fowl, salt and fresh water fishes is incredible. You add to this huge amounts of berries and greens and what is necessary to survival is the technology to capture, process and store for long periods the wild foods that are so abundant during such short periods. The hunting equipment, clothing, preservation methods, storage containers were so successful that from the middle of October to the end of March was a time of creation. Food gathering became secondary at this time. This was a time of great religious celebrations, creation of great art and all the necessary tools that made their lives possible. Music, literature, graphic arts, and the technology of survival in the great Bering Sea littoral were all fused together in great celebrations of life. It was the time of giving thanks to the souls of our beloved dead and of the souls of the souls of the animals and things that made our life possible in those days. Here in this text are a collection of observations of elders of this technology in use and often how it is still used in slightly different forms. Who would have thought a seal gut raincoat as great technology and yet I wore one as a youth that made my life bearable in the cold damp falls of the Yukon-Kuskokwim Delta. It was the difference between life and death from exposure. My still hangs in my closet replaced by Halley-Hansen gear. As I examined it with the knowledge of this text I could see its remarkable construction. Fine water proof stitches partially hidden and over a strand of crash to keep from tearing. I can remember my father-in-law mentioning how often that the village used to run out of shot gun shells in the spring, but it didn't matter that much to him because his throwing stick and duck spear brought down geese without much more trouble. He thought that the geese and eider ducks preferred to be taken by duck spears instead of noisy shot gun shells. Understanding Yupik technology gave our family confidence in their own identity. All young people can benefit in reading this book. Marie Meade, Ann Fienup-Riordan and others have put the Yupik technology in the sunlight for all to understand, use and adapt to the modern world. Richard E. Wisecarver

excellent reference book I would recommend this to anyone, good book the whole collection is worthwhile every glad the time was taken to produce this and include the elders

One of the most complete looks at Inuit life ever! Great detail and photographs. Shows every aspect of the traditional Inuit lifestyle now disappearing.

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