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Reviews

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Daniel F. Detzner, *Elder Voices: South East Asian Families in the United States*, Altamira, Walnut Creek, California, 2004, 240 pp., pbk $26.95, ISBN 0 7591 0577 4.

Older migrants have only recently begun to swim into the focus of social gerontology. Migration studies have traditionally been about men of working age, and social gerontology has concentrated on larger native populations. Migrant elders, whether they have aged in a foreign place or migrated late in life, are still a very small minority, both among migrant groups and among the old. The conceptual challenges of theorising this wholly new social phenomenon (one that is often alien to the mind set of researchers) and the practical problems of measurement (current statistical definitions make it more or less impossible to document late-life population movements). This, combined with the challenges facing service providers and younger minority ethnic generations, means that any contribution to the literature is very welcome.

Elder Voices is particularly important because it deals with the special case of forced late-life migration. Detzner and his associates collected 40 life (family) histories from older refugees, 10 each (5 men and 5 women) from Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam and the Lao Hmong who fought for the Americans in the Vietnam War. For these older men and women, years of war against French imperial forces, the United States invasion and the Pol Pot regime were followed by time spent in refugee camps on the Thai border and entry to a new life in the USA. Detzner assures us that elders who had been severely traumatised by their experiences were excluded from the sample on ethical grounds, but the quotations offered present something of the horror of experiences leading up to migration to Minnesota in the cold, northern USA. Since the focus is on family rather than just individuals, the life histories are supplemented by data from two sets of focus groups with mid-life and teenage migrants. These groups were designed to produce data for courses for parents and adolescents faced with new pressures from American mainstream culture.

The book has a methodological appendix which is strong on the theoretical framework but less so on the details of data collection and analysis. The overall framework of the research relied on symbolic interactionism and lifecourse theory, and the emphasis was on the individual rather than the society. This is unfortunate, given that so many of the problems recounted arise from the US labour market, local housing problems and the absence or failure of policies for the successful resettlement of refugees. Many theoretical approaches are usefully discussed but the analysis is mainly informed by the dichotomy between the family and the individual, an understanding of the importance of multiple identities (leading to advocacy of biculturalism), and the concept of filial piety. Filial piety migrates badly. For those displaced geographically, psychologically, socially and economically, the bolsters of filial piety are greatly weakened. Elders worry about whether it will survive long enough for their sons (in reality daughters-in-law) to take care of them, and younger generations are destabilised by the strains of life in America and the rise of individualism. Even on home territory it seems likely that globalisation is going to lead to huge care deficits in countries which have relied on filial piety in the past.

In this book, theory has not served the author well. The theoretical model of the family is too narrow, being dominated by a vertical American three-generation model. Migrants are theorised as needing to make up deficits, even though resiliency is mentioned. South East Asian parental behaviour based on respect and distance is particularly seen as detrimental to family adjustment. The author has also spent years in community work and participant observation: this experience provides the best research insights, which are presented in the final chapter. The author notes the much greater difficulty of formulating policies for families as opposed to polices for individuals and brings in the structural constraints on successful migration that are absent from earlier chapters. He also has a well-argued section on the necessity of building human capital and the importance of collective action. The fieldwork dates from 1989–90 when the majority of participants had not been in the US for long. A return to the field would be extremely valuable, but even without that, this book provides a vital base line for studying life following enforced migration at a late age.

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Tim Bergling, *Reeling in the Years: Gay Men's Perspectives on Age and Ageism*, Harrington Park Press, Binghamton, New York, 2004, 272 pp., hbk $34.95, ISBN 1 56023 370 2; pbk $19.95, ISBN 1 56023 371 0.

J. Michael Cruz, *Sociological Analysis of Aging: The Gay Male Perspective*, Harrington Park Press, Binghamton, New York, 2003, 114 pp., hbk $39.95, ISBN 1 56023 453 9; pbk $17.95, ISBN 1 56023 454 7.

Gilbert Herdt and Brian de Vries (eds), *Gay and Lesbian Aging: Research and Future Directions*, Springer Publishing Company, New York, 2003, 320 pp., hbk $49.95, ISBN 0 8261 2234 5.

Despite an enormous academic and policy-oriented interest in the ageing process, little has been written on how social differences impinge upon it. Thus, for example, the dilemmas of older lesbians and gays have been little discussed. Few researchers have actually ever looked at this field, even though pioneering studies were initiated some 30 years ago by Douglas Kimmel (1978), Raymond Berger (1982) and Jeffrey Weeks (published in 1991), all of whom interviewed 'older gay men' during the late 1970s. This is odd, not least because there has been a massive flourishing of lesbian, gay and 'queer' studies over the past two decades, but also because there is a pressing need to examine the homophobia and hetero-normativity that still invade the life of older generations of lesbians and gays, whether in residential care, in local communities, or in direct contact with welfare workers. Rarely, I suspect, can the issue of gayness be raised – instead a heterosexuality will be presumed that confounds their 'problems'.

These three new books aim to stimulate debate, provide findings, and structure this new field (a 'queer gerontology' if you like) in very different ways. Bergling provides a series of first-hand accounts on age and ageism from young and older gays alike – it is perhaps the liveliest, most accessible and readable of the books, complete with a sprinkling of cartoons. Cruz's study reads (and looks) like a doctoral thesis's account of a questionnaire survey of 125 gay men in Texas (along with 20 in-depth interviews). It comes complete with 'literature review', 'methodology', findings' and 'discussion'. The third book for review, by Herdt and Vries, both leaders in their fields, presents the papers from a conference at San Francisco State University in 2001, and tries to establish a research agenda for the 21st century. All three books have interesting things to say, but overall have limitations. They are all based on the US; they mainly highlight the white experience; they often take ageing as starting at 50 or even 40 years-of-age (which may be true but not usually the topic of such books); and two of them again neglect women. That said, they present a great deal of interest.

The critical side of these studies is summed up by Cruz when he suggests that, 'All mainstream gerontological literature has a heterosexist slant' (p. 11). Unlike a new and more in-your-face group of 'out' younger gays who will not tolerate homophobia, older gay men have faced negativism all their lives, and now it follows them into old age. Cruz's study examines gay men as they deal with health, housing, employment and inter-personal relationships. Key issues are the ideas of 'successful ageing', healthy and productive ageing and 'growing old gracefully' (p. 80). Earlier studies, such as Berger's, have found this but Cruz is more sceptical. In fact, he finds it is correlated to successful 'coming out' and positive self-esteem: without this, ageing may not be positive for gay men. Controversies are left more to *Reeling in the Years*, which as a journalistic and popular book, includes more polemical topics such as the ways older men might be sexually attracted to younger men and how younger and older men cope with this (often the younger men seem cruel and the older men mean).

A thesis of 'accelerated ageing' emerges in these books (Herdt and Vries: 20), the belief that gay men and lesbian women enter middle age and old age earlier than others. In the gay world, there are many jokes about being old when you are 30 years-old or even 25! It is a young person's world. And indeed, partly through these studies, such ideas can be reinforced – at times these studies imply that anyone beyond their teens is near old age.

These books have a strong North American influence – along with a social psychological bias to the question of 'what is good ageing'. But what struck me is the way in which, once the ghetto of lesbian and gay studies is entered, the big issues that preoccupy much writing on ageing are by-passed. There is little discussion, for instance, on the poverty of older gays and lesbians, yet poverty is a hallmark for many who age. There is some discussion of health care needs, though mainly around HIV and AIDS – neither Alzheimer's or Parkinson's diseases are mentioned. Nursing homes are raised, but whether gays and lesbians should have their own facilities is not scrutinised even though there are such homes in the United States. The idea that people of pensionable age are now set to increase is not raised, and indeed the problematic status of demographic trends, the structured dependency of ageing in the past, the representations of age, and the mobility of age – none are related to gay and lesbian contexts. There is a chapter on gay sex in bathhouses, which shows that older gay men were rejected from a young, trendy facility but accepted in a small, seedy establishment. This account seems oddly misplaced, and perpetuates a preoccupation with the sexuality of the gay life. Whilst we certainly need research on the impact of homophobia on gay ageing, what is surely also needed is a turn away from the centrality of the gay life in ageing, and to link gay people into the wider social issues that confront all people. These books provide useful starting points for a field of inquiry that will surely grow during the coming years.

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Miriam Bernard, Bernadette Bartlam, Simon Biggs and Julius Sim, *New Lifestyles in Old Age*, Policy, Bristol, Avon, 2004, 71 pp., pbk £14.99, ISBN 1 86134 620 4.

This book reports a three-year study of a purpose-built retirement village, Berryhill, in Stoke-on-Trent. It reflects the current social policy interest in retirement communities and aims to 'draw out the wider lessons for those who might be considering developing similar schemes' (p. 1). The report mentions research on similar communities in North America, and contrasts their experience with that of northern continental Europe, where 'there has been a greater interest in the role of self-directed communities and continued collective participation' (p. 2). Brief reference is made to negative critiques of these communities as potential 'age-ghettoes', which are juxtaposed with the finding that they contribute to older people's wellbeing, health and security. While studies of North American communities reveal them to be rather exclusive enclaves of middle-class, well-off and healthy older people, the 160–75 residents of Berryhill, by contrast, mirror the social composition of its immediate hinterland, a deprived, working class area. With an average age of 75/76 years, but spanning 40 years of age, the residents make up several generations and two-thirds are women. Many moved to the village for health reasons, and one-third of them receive support from the 38 members of staff. The study focuses on the impact of this form of living on the residents' wellbeing, their perceived health status, the relationship of the Berryhill setting to ageing identities, and stakeholders' perspectives on life in the village.

What makes Berryhill a retirement 'village', rather than no more than a three-storey block of flats with support staff, appears to be not just its adoption of the continental design of covered internal 'streets' but the availability of various amenities and activities and a culture of participation. A social club, a programme of activities, trips and adventure holidays, a monthly news-sheet and in-house television service, a hairdresser, gym, library, shop, restaurant and bar on-site, are all features that distinguish Berryhill from most forms of accommodation for older people. The study found evidence of high levels of satisfaction among residents with these amenities, and the opportunities for involvement, even if inevitably the level was highly variable. The local connections of most residents appeared to remain strong in terms of family support and friendship networks. The size and design of the village and the wide age range and health status of residents meant, however, that not everyone's needs were met and a few were lonely.

The report concludes that a retirement village does not have to aim at a middle class clientele to work well and that it offers clear benefits in terms of enhanced self-esteem and feelings of safety, sociability and autonomy. Positive age-identities, health improvements and activities, with older people functioning 'as their own resource', are clear strengths of a model that fosters a process of 'optimal ageing'. The researchers also draw attention to possible tensions in meeting the needs of a wide span of ages. They highlight the challenge of promoting the village's attractions to a younger element when it is perceived as being 'exclusively for old people' and its population is growing older. They also foresee difficulties in maintaining current levels of social activity without specific staff training.

This valuable study is timely given the trend towards villages of this kind, but the report shows up the different styles and approaches of its several authors. The empirical chapters were found irksome in following the 'wave one', 'wave two'; and 'wave three' responses. To give a picture of trend, the researchers needed to step back from these figures and focus on the key messages. The 'wider lessons' are also to my mind more valuable than micro-observations on whether people believed that they 'looked younger'. The authors state specifically that the study was not designed to make direct comparisons with other forms of later-life accommodation and care. A new study is underway with this as its focus. I repeatedly sought such comparisons to assess the study's conclusions, and so await the next study with interest. One compelling question the report touches upon only lightly is that of scale. The economics of a large development on the continental model would clearly favour a wider range of amenities than are available to people in standard care-homes – but what is the social impact of such a large scheme? Attempts have been made at Berryhill to involve residents at 'street level' in decision-making, nor has the enclosed world of the village cut people off from their outside networks. There are, however, further questions of scale that will be addressed more directly in the next study.

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David A. Wise (ed.), *Perspectives on the Economics of Aging: A National Bureau of Economic Research Conference Report*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2004, 392 pp., Cloth $75.00, ISBN 0 226 90305 2.

This is the ninth book in a series of National Bureau volumes on the economics of ageing published over the last 15 years. It follows *The Economics of Aging*, *Issues in the Economics of Aging*, *Topics in the Economics of Aging*, *Studies in the Economics of Aging*, *Advances in the Economics of Aging*, *Inquiries into the Economics of Aging*, *Frontiers in the Economics of Aging* and *Themes in the Economics of Aging*. If the series extends further, it might be sensible to explore whether an economics of ageing journal is a possible alternative to another volume. The book is indeed similar to a journal, in bringing together diverse papers connected only by their (broad) field. They provide an excellent snapshot of the current agenda of applied micro-economic research into ageing, primarily in the United States, but also in Britain. The introduction has a useful summary of the papers, but does little to synthesise the findings or to draw out the policy implications.

Within the broad scope of the economics of ageing, several key themes emerge: What has been happening to mortality? What are the levels, and patterns, of wealth accumulation for retirement? What are the links between health and socio-economic status? These questions are relevant for policy-makers having to face up to the implications of ageing populations, and on each, the papers have very interesting findings, only a sample of which can be mentioned.

Mortality rates in most developed countries have been declining continuously and steadily for a century. But the paper by David Cutler and Ellen Meara shows that, whereas mortality reductions during the first half of the 20th century were largely among infants (and linked to nutrition and public health measures), now they are increasingly concentrated among the old, and driven by changes in high-tech medical treatment (the 'medicalisation' of death). As governments are increasingly aware, this has fiscal implications for spending on medical treatment and on pensions.

In the United States and the United Kingdom, there has been a shift in pension provision from employer-managed defined-benefit plans to individual, defined-contribution pensions. The paper by James Poterba, Steven Venti and David Wise shows that, in the USA, this shift has been accompanied by a substantial increase in pension wealth. This appears to be very different from the large savings gap reported by the UK Pensions Commission and, if so, raises the question of why the experience of the two countries is so different. An interesting comparison of wealth accumulation in the US and UK by James Banks, Richard Blundell and Jim Smith, highlights higher levels of housing wealth at younger ages in the UK, a finding which is attributed to higher levels of house price volatility. People want to acquire housing assets at a young age to insure themselves against future house price increases. So, is housing a substitute pension? The answer from Steven Venti and David Wise is a clear 'no'. In the US, people do not withdraw equity from their houses except in extreme circumstances (a spouse dying or moving into a nursing home). Wealth in housing is saved for a rainy day, not for general consumption in retirement. The paper concludes that there will be little demand for equity-release schemes, although further work needs to be done on whether improvement in the products might tempt more people into the market.

Finally, two papers try to unravel the complex relationship between health and socio-economic status. One paper examines a 'natural' experiment, the exogenous increase in household wealth in the form of old age pensions awarded to black South Africans towards the end of apartheid. This is shown to have had a positive effect on the health of the other people living in households where incomes are pooled. The second uses panel data on 'the elderly' to test the effect of innovations in health on wealth and *vice versa*. It rejects the hypothesis of a causal link between socio-economic status and mental health, but establishes relationships for mortality and accidents.

The real value of this book – and the National Bureau series – is in making available the very latest research on the economics of ageing. As the few examples I have mentioned show, the papers provide a wealth of facts, figures and important findings, and all are presented in a manner that is clear and accessible to policy-makers as well as academics. In a growing area of research, a tenth volume (or a journal) not only seems very likely, but will also be welcome.

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Malcolm J. Fisk, *Social Alarms to Telecare: Older People's Services in Transition*, Policy Press, Bristol, 2003, 304 pp., pbk £25.00, ISBN 1 86134 506 2.

Malcolm Fisk has a reputation for writing in a way that intelligently links gerontological theory and practice, and this book exemplifies his skills. The first four chapters provide a theoretical basis and historical account of the widespread adoption of 'social alarms'. This is important because, as Fisk points out, the lack of a critical theoretical perspective makes it difficult to evaluate the importance of social alarms and new technologies for older people within contemporary society. The middle six chapters review the development and use of social alarms in the UK, Ireland, North America and elsewhere. The final four chapters outline new developments in the field and conclude with a discussion of the prospects and some pitfalls.

The underlying perspective of the book is uncompromising in its assertion that the older person should come first. This is most evident in its virulent criticism of anything that smacks of a patronising attitude in social care, especially if social alarms are construed in terms of 'how older people should be cared for and less to responding to user views and needs' (p. 44). It is also evident in his critique of some mainstream theories in social gerontology, such as Cumming and Henry's disengagement theory, and the apparently malign effect that these have when translated into housing provision and care practice. Their combined theoretical and practical weight, it is argued, have contributed to society's exclusionary processes: 'the continued existence of such separate provision, together with somewhat rigid frameworks of associated care and support provision … militates against the development of more flexible forms of support' (p. 26).

The central issue of the book then becomes whether social alarms, and the more recent developments in smart technologies, are a force that contributes to the continued marginalisation of older people, or whether they are something that could contribute towards wellbeing, empowerment and social inclusion? The review of social alarms country by country, rather than thematically, resembles a 1970s geography textbook. Nonetheless, some interesting themes emerge. The initial value of social alarms was in enabling responses to emergencies. As they became better understood and more integrated in the care spectrum, however, a wider role in supporting independent living and providing psychological reassurance emerged. Several constraints operate in the markets for social alarms and related technologies. For instance, the role of 'governments and statutory agencies' is considered by Fisk to be 'essential if healthcare and social welfare agendas using such technologies are to be effectively pursued' (p. 177).

There are variations among countries in the scale of provision, in the role of the public and commercial sectors, and in the types of provider agencies and their orientation towards housing, health or social care. Fisk points to the interesting 'anomalies' of England and Wales and the Republic of Ireland, where particular historical circumstances have moulded services for older people. In England and Wales, for example, the long association between sheltered housing and alarm systems has resulted in a 'property rather than person-based perspective' (p. 245), which has limited the establishment of the wider social welfare role of social alarms found in other parts of the world. Technology and policy imperatives are now pushing the technology into more convergent paths and towards integration with mainstream services.

The emerging technologies discussed in the final chapters most whet Fisk's appetite: smart homes, telecare, telemedicine, fall detection, and lifestyle monitoring. The technologies underlying these are able to incorporate the existing social alarm functionality, but offer much more besides. In particular, they may enhance personal autonomy through control over the environment, improve access to information, afford older people greater control over their lives, improve inter-personal communications and extend service options. While Fisk recognises real dangers, such as the lack of ethical frameworks and structures to allow meaningful dialogue between stakeholders, he makes a strong case in favour of the new technologies: they could help to 'liberate people from ageist and oppressive regimes' and 'play a part in counterbalancing the forces of ageism and social exclusion' (p. 181). Whether Fisk's belief that new technologies are (at least potentially) a force for good remains contentious; the current debate tends to be polarised between 'panaceaists' and 'big brotherists'. But whatever the reader's perspective, the book is a mine of useful information and will stimulate comment and theoretical discussion.

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Trudie Knijn and Aafke Komter (eds), *Solidarity Between the Sexes and the Generations: Transformations in Europe*, Edward Elgar, Northampton, Massachusetts, 2004, 256 pp., hbk $90.00, ISBN 1 84376 358 3.

There is increasing recognition of the need to link inequalities between men and women to the nature of solidaristic relationships between the generations, and to assess how these two relationships are linked to differing welfare regimes across European countries. This edited book addresses this aim, by examining how socio-economic, cultural and political transformations in western welfare states since the 1970s have affected patterns of solidarity both between men and women and between generations. The chapters are written by prominent European social policy analysts, and have been developed from papers presented at a European colloquium.

Several of the chapters illustrate how transformations in family solidarity and in welfare states are interdependent and influence each other. The collectively organised macro-solidarity of welfare state provisions, relating to pensions and provision for childcare and eldercare, are shown to be interdependent with the micro-solidarity of family care-giving. A key thread is how the horizontal axis of gender relations is linked to the vertical axis of generational relationships at both the micro-level of informal care and the macro-level of the welfare state.

A recurrent concern is to what extent care has been 'defamilised', with the state, especially in the Nordic countries, taking over many aspects of care for children, both to encourage women to have children and to increase women's labour force participation. In southern European countries, by contrast, a familistic ideology remains strong and there is limited state provision of childcare (or the care of older people). The recent trend across Europe has been for cuts in social expenditure, especially childcare and eldercare, and therefore a greater burden on the family. This has fallen disproportionately on women, potentially increasing inequality between women and men in terms of caring and constraints on employment participation.

The chapters primarily focus on how transformations in social policy and increases in women's participation in paid employment have influenced child bearing and caring for children, rather than their influence on care for older people. Thus the book is less likely to be of interest to readers of *Ageing & Society* than to those whose prime interest is in family social policy or gender relations across Europe. Some chapters take a theoretical approach, while others build on empirical studies in one or more European society. Jane Lewis provides an excellent analysis of the ways in which many states have moved to an 'individualised-adult worker' model, and the implications this has for women in terms of childcare and their inability to accumulate an adequate pension in many countries. Ilona Ostner considers the very low birth rates in many European countries and the policies that encourage child bearing. She provides an insightful discussion of why women have children, and to what extent children have changed from being 'private goods' to 'public goods'.

Several chapters address whether the welfare state and its caring provisions substitute for family solidarity (*i.e.* family care-giving). The 'substitution' and 'complementary' hypotheses are compared. Greater support for the complementarity of the welfare state and family support is found in European countries with a high level of state support. Constanza Tobio examines the two theses in a comparison of Spain and France. In Spain, where there is a limited welfare state, she shows that family care, especially care by grandparents for grandchildren to enable mothers to work, substitutes for the lack of state provision. Grandmothers are more likely to perform the role of substitute mothers among the lower socio-economic groups, potentially exacerbating social inequalities. Similarly, adult children are expected to provide support for ageing parents because of the low state provision, but where children are unavailable this results in a precarious position for frail Spanish older people.

Fiona Williams examines the growth of migrant domestic labourers who provide both childcare and eldercare, especially in southern Europe. She provides a penetrating analysis of the global care-chain that supports women's paid employment, and brings out its interfaces with different welfare regimes and policies. This analysis illustrates the ways in which one group of women (more educated and well-paid women) are dependent for their childcare on the domestic labour of poor migrant women. The emphasis in this chapter is on migrant women providing childcare, rather than care for frail older parents.

This edited collection will be of particular value to those interested in comparative European social policy, and the ways in which different welfare state arrangements impact on women's roles in the labour market, in childbearing and rearing, and women's availability to provide informal care to frail older people. It provides, however, relatively little sustained analysis of the impact of ageing, pensions or care provision for older people on gender or generational inequality across European societies.

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Sara Arber, Kate Davidson and Jay Ginn (eds), *Gender and Ageing: Changing Roles and Relationships*, Open University Press, Maidenhead, Berkshire, 2003, 213 pp., hbk £50.00, ISBN 0 335 21320 0, pbk £16.99, ISBN 0 335 21319 7.

In 1995, Sara Arber and Jay Ginn published a collection of essays under the title *Connecting Gender and Ageing: A Sociological Approach* (Open University Press). As the authors state in their excellent introduction to this new collection, *Gender and Ageing* builds on the arguments of this previous volume. It has 12 mainly original chapters that collectively advance our knowledge of the processes that link issues of ageing and gender in the early part of the 21st century. The book's strengths lie particularly in its focus on gender identities (and not just gender differences), and in its concern for exploring how the extensive transformations in family relationships of the last 30 years or so now pattern people's experiences of later life.

It also differs from many other texts in being as concerned with men's experiences as women's, and in highlighting the impact of old age on the nature of masculine identities as well as feminine ones.

This theme is developed by Toni Calasanti in the first substantive chapter. Her focus is on the relationship between care work and masculinities. From a feminist perspective, she reviews the provision of spousal care, the different strategies that men use in negotiating care-giving, the different support that they receive in these tasks, and the impact that being providers of care has on their identities. In considering these issues, Calasanti's stimulating chapter develops and extends previous debates about the gendered character of familial care. Issues of gender identity are also central to the chapters by Merryn Gott and Sharron Hinchliff and by Klas Borell and Sofie Ghazanfareeon. The first is concerned with sexual relationships and activities in later life, and how their forms and meaning are both gendered and dynamic over the lifecourse. It contains interesting material on women's developed control of their own sexual pleasure in later life, and the greater freedom they experienced in not feeling as obligated to prioritise their husbands' 'needs' above their own desires. Some of the issues raised in this chapter resonate with those considered by Hislop and Arber in an interesting chapter on sleep in later life.

As well as being concerned with gender identities, the chapter by Borell and Ghazanfareeon connects well with several others in its exploration of the impact that recent demographic shifts in partnership formation and dissolution have had on people's later life experiences. Their focus is on older Swedish adults who are 'living apart together' (LAT), a pattern which is most prevalent among the 'young old'. While LAT relationships in later life are as diverse as in early life phases, the data that Borell and Ghazanfareeon present suggest that it is older women who are the driving force behind these arrangements. Certainly the women in the sample were clearer than men about the benefits of not sharing a home, *e.g.* the security of having a home of one's own in the context of new partnerships, and the reduced obligation to provide domestic and care work for the partner. This form of living enables the desired level of intimacy without undermining autonomy. Other chapters are also concerned with the ways in which recent demographic change has had an impact on the gendered experience of old age. These include Jenny de Jong Gierveld's analysis of social networks and social wellbeing among a Dutch sample, and Debora Price and Jay Ginn's study of the impact of different partnership histories on pension provision. Arber *et al.* examine material wellbeing and social embeddedness, and Davidson *et al.* the social worlds of older men; both build on a concern for changed gender relations that result from new partnering and living arrangements.

Overall, this is an important book that succeeds in meeting its aims. While space does not allow for the chapters to be considered in detail, collectively the volume contains a stimulating, well-integrated and accessible set of essays. The editors are to be congratulated on bringing together papers which extend our knowledge of the nature of gender identities in later life and, in particular, on the ways in which gendered personal histories influence and shape older people's current experiences. The book is strongly recommended, both for researchers with an interest in ageing and gender, and for students taking undergraduate or postgraduate courses in gerontology and the sociology of ageing.

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Ruth B. Purtilo and Henk A. M. J. ten Have (eds), *Ethical Foundations of Palliative Care for Alzheimer Disease*, Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 2004, 368 pp., hbk $49.95, ISBN 0 8018 7870 5.

Alzheimer's disease (AD) is a progressive degenerative disease and a terminal illness. While the disease includes a physical process, its manifestations extend to the mental, psychological and spiritual wellbeing of the individual who suffers the disease. It is an all-consuming illness. Its onset is subtle, yet ominous, and marked by features that might be masked for a while; its consequences are blatantly marked by the threat and reality of affecting the wellbeing of individuals, partners, families, communities and societies as a whole.

It is appropriate that modern biomedical science seeks an effective treatment or preventive measure for AD. Until that happens, it is essential that persons with AD receive care that is just, appropriate and timely. The reality of dying and dementia are embodied in the sufferers of Alzheimer's disease. Along with those who love them and provide care for them, they are at risk of experiencing powerlessness, isolation and neglect. Already the number of people with AD in North America and Europe is in the millions, and it is projected to increase two or three times in the next decades. As population growth declines in developed and developing countries, the burden of providing care will increase.

In their edited collection, Purtilo and ten Have present the work of 22 authors who explore, identify and address issues and concerns associated with AD. The very basis of western medical ethics is challenged by the changing person who loses cognitive function, an ingredient necessary for participation in decision-making and care-planning. The purpose of the book is to provide a resource for those who are gaining awareness and addressing the challenges imposed on individuals, families and society by the presence of AD, those who are re-examining basic ethical principles in the context of AD, and those who are working to create a just allocation of resources for people experiencing the devastating disease process. The book's goal is to provoke thought and reflection regarding AD. The authors (physicians, nurses, a physical therapist, a dentist, and scholars in bioethics, philosophy and law) participated in a dialogue over three years, after which they submitted articles for peer-review before inclusion in this important text. The authors' expertise is manifest as they wrestle with the issues and provide information, guidance, challenges and questions.

The book has six parts. Part I presents basic societal, pathological and clinical issues using the words of people with AD, their care-givers and those who understand the societal burden, changing demographics and descriptions or pictures of brain pathology that correlate with manifestations of the changes over time in persons with AD. Part II critiques contemporary palliative care. While data are lacking in this field, there is a great need to extend the philosophy and the services of palliative care to those who are exposed to the vortex of degeneration that characterises AD. Part III focuses on the patient, and traces the origins of modern medical ethics and palliative care to the late 1960s, a time of moral discomfort about technological advances that contributed to cures and the prolongation of life but ignored people whose disease was irreversible, who did not wish for a prolonged life and who wanted to die comfortably. In that context, the patient and his or her family became the unit of care, altering the autonomy of the patient, a matter of importance in providing care for persons with AD.

Part IV considers clinical ethical issues (competency, advance directives and the therapeutic relationship), focuses on patients and care-givers, and examines decision-making, changing cognitive function, dignity, autonomy, pain management and euthanasia. Part V advocates a palliative model of care that ensures respect, autonomy, quality of life and the dignity of persons with AD. Such a model requires organisational change, more education of health care professionals, and a just allocation of societal resources. To that end, two appendices are included: one lists the ethical principles for palliative care for persons with AD, the other a framework for a course on palliative care for persons with AD. Part VI sets out the questions to be asked about research in the field, and reviews the literature on the experiences of primary care-givers and decisions about drug therapy. It also considers the ethical challenges facing research on and with people with dementia.

A short book review cannot do justice to the magnitude and worth of this book. The purpose and goals of the authors have been achieved. This work is relevant to the myriad of professional and non-professional care providers, to ethicists, lawyers, policy makers, and administrators who care for people with AD. It is also of value to the sufferers, their families and friends. It is foundational to the worlds of geriatric medicine, palliative care and ethics, all of which are challenged to revisit and revise their philosophies and perspectives so as to include people who are losing cognitive function and experiencing a terminal illness. It is a resource for care providers, educators and policy makers, and a vision of respect and dignity for people who are too often at risk of being isolated and forgotten. It is a compendium of hope.

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Rick J. Scheidt and Paul G. Windley (eds), *Physical Environments and Aging: Critical Contributions of M. Powell Lawton to Theory and Practice*, Haworth, New York, 2003, 155 pp., pbk $29.95, ISBN 0 78900 2007 6.

It was a privilege to undertake this review because it enabled me to reflect on the work of M. Powell Lawton, whom I first met in 1980, and who sadly died in 2003. His modesty and humane approach overshadowed his wealth of experience and gave confidence to newcomers, such as myself, in the field of environment and ageing (see Lawton 1987). The reflections in this review are few, however, compared with those of the contributors to this collection, which offers both informative discussion of the diversity of Powell Lawton's work and original research influenced by his ideas.

In considering a body of work, two things are particularly important. First, Lawton was both a practitioner and a researcher. He was a clinical psychologist who worked for the Veterans' Administration and in hospital settings before moving, in 1963, to the Philadelphia Geriatric Center, where he later became the Director of some 60 staff in the Polisher Research Institute. Second, the influence of his work was both multi-professional and multi-disciplinary. The authors of this collection are from architecture, planning, technology, family studies and human services, and draw on the disciplines of psychology, anthropology, sociology and human geography. This range is fundamental to the dilemmas that Benyamin Schwarz's chapter outlines, in his account of Lawton being faced by research that was (and is) both basic and applied, theoretical and empirical, and where person and environment constantly interact.

Powell Lawton was a founding father of environment and ageing research. Weisman and Moore's chapter helps us to assess the underlying philosophical premises from which he worked. Lawton, they state, believed that 'the right to a decent environment was an inalienable right and required no empirical justification' (p. 25). Guided by this belief, he recognised that whilst person-environment (P-E) interaction could be studied separately (from P or E), there might be greater value in taking a holistic approach which viewed the P-E system as inseparable. As a consequence, there was a need to encompass both objective and subjective understandings of environment, blending quantitative and qualitative research methodologies and the triangulation of different forms of data. Learning about the psychological wellbeing of older people in different situations and settings was fundamental to this research. Consequently, as Weisman and Moore show, Lawton and his colleagues contributed to methodological developments which ranged from the development of original quantitative measurements, such as the Philadelphia Geriatric Center Affect Rating Scale (Lawton *et al.* 1996), to recognising the value of detailed ethnography.

Lawton also saw the person-environment system as fundamental to defining quality of life. For him, environment encompassed various levels, from individual to societal, and from the physical through the social to community. This view was reflected in his methodology and underpinned his theoretical work. The 'environmental docility hypothesis', which suggested that the more competent the person, the less dependent they would be on environmental circumstances, was developed into the ecological theory of ageing and the competence-press model (Lawton and Nahemow 1973). Later work concerning environmental pro-activity involved the environmental adaptations that reinforced control and autonomy.

A concern with P-E interaction led to links between research and practice. In this book, several chapters consider the direct impact of Lawton's research on practice and the development of new thinking. Calkins, for example, addresses the development of principles in the design of long-term care settings for older people with dementia, and examines orientation, accessibility, personalisation, and safety; whilst Regnier looks at the consultation of older people in post-occupancy evaluations of new housing. Lawton's view that community planning supports residential living is developed by Scheidt and Norris-Baker; whilst Pynoos and co-authors demonstrate his understanding of the importance of home modification in enabling older people to adapt successfully to their environment as their functional abilities change, thereby maintaining their participation in P-E interaction. In his discussion of adaptation, Lawton was able to show that home modification features were not reported in American housing condition surveys. Pynoos *et al.* consider how these data might assist in understanding the relationship between personal assistance and self-maintenance. Koncelik conceptualises the micro-environment as a context which links personal space and artefacts with interior design and architecture, and discusses its potential for influencing product design.

Lawton's work and encouragement has led others, both in the USA and beyond, to explore further. Habib Chaudhury, for example, tells us how he was inspired to develop place-therapy for older people with dementia. In this, the importance of temporality is recognised when encouraging people to recall their experiences in the context of place. Frank Oswald and colleagues from the German Centre for Research on Ageing in Heidelberg describe their development of the Housing-Related Control Beliefs Questionnaire, which explores the way in which older people possess a sense of control in their housing and how they may maintain an enabling environment.

I recommend this book to several groups of readers. For those new to the field of environment and ageing, it provides a clear record of the work of one man, who, along with colleagues, gave us a wealth of theoretical, methodological, practical, and professional literature. This legacy is underpinned by a quality that engages with both basic and applied research. The authors should be congratulated for providing not just a valediction, but more, an informative, refreshing and stimulating tribute. This is the opposite of a cold textbook, a collection of developmental and interesting writing by friends with a purpose that goes well beyond the sentimental.

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