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Harry R. Moody and Jennifer R. Sasser, *Aging Concepts and Controversies*, seventh edition, Sage, Thousand Oaks, California, 2012, 576 pp., pbk US \$108.00, ISBN: 978-1-4522-0309-6.

It is refreshing to come across a textbook which explicitly sets out to 'encourage a style of teaching and learning that goes beyond conveying the facts and methods' (p. xx), and one which is structured and written around many of the controversies within the field of ageing studies. This is the seventh edition of a textbook initially published in 1994 which has obviously been revised, refined and updated over the years. The authors are highly respected gerontologists with a wealth of teaching experience and their fresh and enthusiastic style permeates the book. Harry Moody and Jennifer Sasser aim to provide students with the information required to weigh up arguments, critically assess them and then arrive at their own, carefully argued, interpretation and judgements – the type of outcomes that we would all like to achieve through our teaching.

The material is clearly laid out with both a brief and more detailed contents page at the beginning, which helpfully orientates the reader. The book is organised around the three basic concepts of the lifecourse, health care and socio-economic trends. Each of these concepts are introduced and explained. A wide range of material is presented in an accessible format, providing breadth rather than depth in these overview chapters. More detailed and in-depth research is presented in the following 'controversy' chapters. In these sections, with titles posed as questions such as 'Does Old Age Have Meaning?', 'Should Older People Be Protected from Bad Choices?' and 'Is Retirement Obsolete?', the key concepts are initially framed and the current research in the area outlined. Each controversy is put into focus with arguments and counter-arguments developed through a diverse series of readings drawn from sources that include textbooks, peer-reviewed journals, magazines, policy institutes and opinion pieces. Simone de Beauvoir, Erik Erikson, Meredith Minkler and David Ekerdt are among the authors of the 53 readings collected for this textbook – which gives some flavour of the diversity of the readings and quality of the scholarship. These collected readings give the reader a substantial basis from which to explore the controversies, develop their own opinions and arguments, and in the case of students, produce well-argued essays. Each chapter also contains a focus on practice and the future, and ends with questions to stimulate writing, reflection and debate.

For audiences outside the United States of America (USA), a considerable limitation is the predominant focus on US data, research and lived experience, although many of the concepts and principles are universal to ageing studies. This limitation is probably greatest for the sections on health care and social security, although the level of detail provided about these systems in the USA provides useful comparison with systems elsewhere. Moreover, while the detail may differ, many of the key issues, such as how to pay for an ageing population and how to provide health and social care,

are relevant to all. Each chapter contains a brief ‘global perspective’ which showcases an ageing issue from outside the USA. Of the 12 topics covered, only two relate to non-industrialised countries, and more examples about ageing in middle-income and developing nations would broaden the scope of the book.

This book is primarily aimed at gerontology students and academics and its merits are: accessible and clear organisation of a large amount of material; the collection of high-quality readings; and clear guidance for further reading and access to electronic resources. In the open access student site, the Web-based resources and short video links were particularly useful and I would certainly encourage my students to explore these in their assignment preparation. The link for teachers does not appear to work outside the Americas. There is also a useful section on carrying out library research for gerontology assignments which directs students to useful materials, again focused on the USA, but containing some of the key handbooks on ageing.

Framing the controversies through this wide-ranging collection of readings was a particularly useful way to convey the ways in which the study of ageing is subject to interpretation and revision, and the diverse sources and styles of writing successfully capture the reader’s attention. This book would be a useful addition to a course reading list, although because of its US focus, is unlikely to be a primary reading elsewhere. However, it provides teachers and students with both a perspective and material with which to stimulate debate and discussion in the classroom, which is perhaps ultimately the mark of success for this book.

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Ted Anton, *The Longevity Seekers: Science, Business, and the Fountain of Youth*, University of Chicago Press, Chicago, 2013, 240 pp., hbk US \$26.00, ISBN: 13:978-0-226-02093-8.

Stories of centenarians, and even super-centenarians, people aged 110 years or more, are frequently in the media today, but the general public are somewhat divided on whether this is a good thing for society. The recent Pew Research Centre study (2013) reported that while two-thirds of survey recipients thought most people would want to live ‘decades longer’, 56% thought they personally would not. Fear of dependence in very old age was, of course, a major reason for this attitude to increasing longevity. Yet regardless of general attitudes, longevity research actively continues in many centres across the world, and the so-called ‘silver tsunami’ of an ageing world is a demographic destiny we want to prepare for.

Ted Anton’s new book provides some insight into this interesting scientific and social endeavour. Anton, a history professor at DePaul University in Chicago, has written a social history of the scientific search for longevity genes. As a non-biologist, he was fascinated by the idea of understanding and