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Mike Fox and Lesley Wilson, *Counselling Older People with Alcohol Problems*, Jessica Kingsley Publishers, London, 2011, 208 pp., pbk £19.99, ISBN 13: 978 1 84905 117 0.

Counselling older people with alcohol problems is a timely addition to the literature as there is growing awareness of alcohol problems among older people and those who are ageing. Indeed a recent report by the Royal College of Psychiatrists (2011) highlights growing numbers of older people seeking help for alcohol problems and the necessity to understand and address their specific needs. Against this backdrop *Counselling Older People with Alcohol Problems* sets out to provide a practice-based discussion and guide for those providing counselling for older people in this situation. The authors clearly possess considerable experience in this area which adds a depth and richness to the book, while the writing style is straightforward and has a strong practical feel, making the book accessible to a wide range of audiences. Interesting case studies are used to illustrate key points throughout the book. Following a brief introduction to the key issues and underlying theoretical approach, the main part of the book is structured to follow the potential pathway of someone receiving counselling for alcohol problems. Chapters follow the journey from 'First Session/Assessment' through to 'Endings', so that the book provides practical knowledge and skills that could be usefully implemented in practice by counsellors and other practitioners working with an older person with alcohol problems.

Producing this book may have also challenged the authors, who sought both to underline the uniqueness of individuals and stresses the need for practitioners to recognise this, while at the same time presenting specific issues relevant for older people as a group. I think the book is more successful at addressing the first point, and therefore much of the discussion is relevant when working with people of any age. Where issues specific to older people are highlighted, they are often briefly dealt with and, in the first two-thirds of the book, are rather sparse. In the latter part of the book, chapters about specific issues such as dementia and depression for older people are addressed in a useful and relevant manner.

One thing that is not clear from reading this book is its target audience. It is possibly not theoretical enough to enhance the skills of an already experienced counsellor but, on the other hand, it may be too specifically focused on counselling to provide useful information for other practitioners. It would be an excellent text for students of counselling with an interest in alcohol problems, or for a counsellor looking to branch into the alcohol field. The book does provide useful practical examples for anyone working with people with alcohol problems more generally who within their practice might encounter older people.

## Reference

Royal College of Psychiatrists 2011. *Our Invisible Addicts*. College Report CR165, Royal College of Psychiatrists, London.

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Sally Chivers, *The Silvering Screen: Old Age and Disability in Cinema*, University of Toronto Press, Toronto, 2011, 240 pp., hbk \$55.00, ISBN 13: 978 0 8020 4079 5.

The title of Sally Chivers' valuable book needs a little explanation. 'Old age' and 'disability' are not two separate and twinned subjects or concepts in this book. Rather, the subject of the book is old age in cinema: disability, or to be more precise disability studies, is the lens through which old age is studied. This is an important juxtaposition, and one that is being increasingly debated in ageing studies. But it is also a complicated one, and Chivers is clearly aware of some of the risks of inappropriate conflation which her project runs: 'how does one talk,' she asks, 'about old age as disability without vilifying either?' (p. 23). She answers her own question in a detailed theoretical chapter which surveys relevant critical developments in recent disability studies, and also makes a convincing case for the value of bringing the rigour of its critical theory to bear on the subject of ageing in the movies. And while the primary audience for the book will be academics and students in film and cultural studies, this theoretical chapter should be of interest to a wide range of researchers into social ageing, whether they are concerned with film or not. It raises a number of provocative questions about the way in which broader analyses of the social construction of ageing might be framed. Particularly interesting is the way in which Chivers draws upon Robert McRuer's Crip Theory to suggest how 'thinking from the politicized, critical place of disability' (p. 23) can be applied to age studies in order to critique cultural norms of youth, attractiveness and hetero-ability.

There are few better places to watch these cultural norms in action than mainstream Hollywood cinema – and it is Hollywood films in particular which comprise the main subject of the book. The film industry has long fetishised youth, but Chivers' point of entry is the observation that during the past 20 years or so there has been a raft of films in which ageing has been an important theme. She is sceptical whether many of these films are likely to, or would ever want to challenge, critique or change common societal prejudices about or attitudes towards growing old, but this is not really the main point: the book goes beyond handing out rewards or punishments for efficacy in changing public perceptions. What it does, with care and thoughtfulness, is offer a detailed analysis of a series of film texts in ways that suggest how their projections of old age can help us to understand more fully our own responses to and constructions of ageing.