

and inequalities in terms of social class, sex and ethnicity. Chapter Seven comprises an outline of developments in intergenerational relationships during the last century, suggesting that the extent of change may have been exaggerated. Attention is given to the effects of demographic change and global migration on communities and relationships, and the chapter concludes with thoughts on the future of intergenerational ties. Chapter Eight begins with a review of issues arising from constructions of late old age, moving on to discuss the increased medicalisation of this period of life, to the detriment of sociological perspectives. The funding disparity between health and social care is highlighted, with an outline of the resulting problems for the latter.

The final part of the book sets out new ways of thinking about later life, presenting possibilities for realising the potential of an ageing society. First, there is a focus in Chapter Nine on the positive changes that might be made by institutions to adapt to the ageing population. For example, ideas are presented as to how higher education institutions could facilitate greater participation amongst older people and provide professional development opportunities for those working with this group. This section could have been usefully expanded to tackle the potentially more challenging issue of adapting health and social care institutions in response to the changing demographic. However, the focus on education is in keeping with Phillipson's emphasis on the possibilities rather than the difficulties of an ageing society. Finally, Chapter Ten argues that the potential of the ageing population may be recognised and valued through the acknowledgement of developing solidarity across different groups and generations, countering the increasing fragmentation inherent in modern society.

The book fully delivers on its aims, and presents a comprehensive yet accessible outline of key theories and debates in the field. Phillipson provides a refreshingly positive outlook on ageing which notably focuses on realising the potential of an ageing society rather than portraying ageing as a problem. Overall, this is a highly readable publication which gives a useful overview of key debates in ageing from their origins to the present day, and thus will appeal to new students and experienced researchers alike.

University of Worcester, UK

SARAH MILOSEVIC

doi:10.1017/S0144686X13000664

Ursula M. Staudinger (ed.), *New Images of Age(ing) Photo Contest and Exhibition*, German National Academy of Sciences Leopoldina, Halle, Germany, 2011, 98 pp., pbk €20.95, ISBN: 978-3-8047-2986-5.

This photographic book responds to the impetus—not only in social gerontology, but also in sections of the public sector and in the media—to promote positive attitudes towards older people through offering up for consumption new, less stereotypical images of older people. Images play a role in both shaping and communicating people's perceptions of ageing,

giving a forecast of what is to come as well as a prescription for how we ought to act in later life. However, all too often, visual representations of older people can be categorised along a 'heroes of ageing'/bodily decline binary (Featherstone and Hepworth 1995: 360), where subjects are selected either because they defy social expectations about the activities and abilities of a 'typical' older person or because they conform to a longer-standing stereotype of old age as a time of social isolation, dependency and poor health.

The editor of this collection of amateur and professional photographs, all submitted as part of a photography contest to depict 'life styles and perspectives of aging today as well as in the future', initially appears to have fallen under the spell of this pervasive binary. The first chapter, 'Aging – Old and New', is divided along these very lines whereby the first half is devoted to people 'withdrawing' (the 'old' of the title) while the second half is given over to people 'maintaining youthful interests' (classed here as 'new'). The editor views a transition from withdrawal to continuing activity (in dancing, riding motorcycles, playing Nintendo Wii, and so on) as part of the 'current transformation of what it means to be old'. Such comments ignore the fact that greater longevity does not necessarily correlate with more 'active' years in old age. Thankfully, many of the images presented throughout this collection do not conform to such a simplistic positive ageing discourse, confirming the potential of photography to offer a more nuanced, complex and thought-provoking narrative of ageing than any written polemic could hope to capture and, as such, I would recommend this publication to social science and arts and humanities academics and students with an interest in visual representations of later life.

In the chapter entitled 'Work – Other Activities', the series of images entitled 'Sunset' depicts three older professional clowns who all retrained in later life. This adds a nice touch of ambiguity to some other more conventional portraits of older people volunteering or continuing in their professions. One of the clowns, Gerlind, wears pink slippers and pyjama bottoms accompanied by rollers in her hair, all contrasting rather humorously with her red clown's nose and exaggeratedly rouged cheeks. These humorous/carnavalesque images challenge the stereotype of the grumpy older person or of the older person as the butt, rather than the source, of humour (Richards, Warren and Gott 2012). The contest judges were also impressed, awarding those photos second place in the competition. In third place was the series 'Helga', found in the chapter 'Generations', in which a woman dresses up in her mother's clothes and strikes poses in her mother's bedroom and garden. The incongruity of the younger woman in the older person's attire, along with her very direct gaze into the camera, is unsettling and the viewer is left wondering about the relationship between Helga and her mother. The book is generally short on context, giving only sparse details and commentary about a select few images, which means that the viewer lacks any background knowledge about the image or about the relationship between the photographer and the subject. Contextual information is not always necessary to appreciate

or critique images: indeed sometimes it is useful to let images stand alone so that viewers can freely associate. However, in the case of the less-straightforward photographs, it seems likely that more context would have enhanced viewers' appreciation of the images, as in the series 'Helga'.

For me the stand-out chapter is 'Couples – Intimacy' which includes the first prize-winning photograph. This is an image of a couple standing by their bed holding each other, dressed in their underwear. My personal favourite is a photo entitled 'Kiss' showing a close-up of a couple, with closed eyes, open-mouthed kissing. One partner has her hand on the other's cheek; the other has their arm around their partner's shoulders. This intimate image signifies both love and sexual desire. It is also unclear if the subjects are a man and a woman, or two women. This is the only image in the book which might depict homosexual love or intimacy. Another very noticeable and surprising omission is the lack of an image of a person of colour. The contest organisers may cite the lack of submissions of photos depicting black or minority ethnic people, but if this was the case one feels that more efforts ought to have been made explicitly to solicit contributions from a more diverse range of communities.

References

- Featherstone, M. and Hepworth, M. 2005. Images of ageing: cultural representations of later life. In Johnson, M. (ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Age and Ageing*. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 354–62.
- Richards, N., Warren, L. and Gott, M. 2012. The challenge of creating alternative images of ageing: lessons from a project with older women. *Journal of Aging Studies*, **26**, 1, 65–78.

University of Sheffield, UK

NAOMI RICHARDS

doi:10.1017/S0144686X13000676

Jeannette King, *Discourses of Ageing in Fiction and Feminism: The Invisible Woman*, Palgrave Macmillan, Basingstoke, UK, 2012, 240 pp., hbk £50, ISBN: 978-0-230-29856-9.

It is one of life's ironies that I had just begun reading this book – subtitled 'The Invisible Woman' – in the week Margaret Thatcher died. Discourses and images of ageing were to be found everywhere in the media that week. Margaret Thatcher – invisible woman? Not that week. A proponent of feminism? I don't really think so. Ensnconced in a cottage in remote West Wales, I happily turned to this book seeking a more nuanced and enlightened discussion and debate about representations of older women, and I was not disappointed.

The premise of the book is a deceptively simple one: namely that successive waves of feminism have failed to address the situations of older women and that, instead, we can usefully learn from fiction of the time.