Reviews

> Sue Arthur, *Money, Choice and Control: The Financial Circumstances of Early Retirement*, Policy Press, Bristol, 2003, 46 pp., pbk £13.95, ISBN 1 86134 476 7.

The spread of early male retirement over the past 30 years has been analysed and interpreted in many ways. One of the most enduring, yet least plausible, explanations is that 'the retirement decision' is largely triggered by early-exit incentives, and is thus the result of a well-informed rational choice by individuals who prefer leisure to work. The question of how far the individuals who leave work before state pension age are able to exercise control and choice over their future is thus crucial to the modern retirement debate. Supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation, and based upon a sample drawn from the United Kingdom *Family Resources Survey*, this study examines the circumstances and characteristics of people who leave work when aged in their fifties and early sixties. In general, individuals' work histories, employment status and financial circumstances were crucial: those on the lowest pre-retirement incomes had least control over their retirement (they were most likely to have had it forced upon them by an employer), and those on the highest had the most. The latter group tended to enjoy the happiest retirement. Individual work histories, however, were complex and varied. As a result, the sample of early retirees formed a very heterogeneous group; this made generalisation difficult.

Yet the brevity of this report also makes its analysis very general and offers only a summary of the key variables that determine retirement. Though written in an admirably lucid style, its conclusions are unsurprising – such as the observation that those who relied heavily on state benefits in retirement had the greatest financial concerns. Contrary to rational choice theory, individuals possessed relatively poor knowledge of their likely future pension income: the better-off who were able to exert control over the timing of their exit from work tended to make decisions for personal or familial reasons, rather than for financial ones. In general, choices were very restricted.

This study is very much of its kind – a funded project, a relatively small sample, a deliberately restricted analytical focus that is confined to the responses made by individuals in the sample, and conveying its message with brevity. As such, it displays the strengths and weaknesses of this particular genre. The long history of research into retirement is not referred to (indeed the bibliography is thin). Nor is the socio-economic and labour market context or the crucial role of employers. Intriguing methodological problems remain unexplored. For example, the research interviews with respondents were conducted at different time intervals after cessation of work; yet it is well known that such varying intervals can influence individual responses, particularly the ways in which subjects rationalise the inevitable. The policy recommendations that result from this study are also

unsurprising: that there should be employment policies 'that allow people to retire at a time and in a way that suits their circumstances'. The real policy challenge is how exactly this can be done, given the great variation in early retirees' circumstances.

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   Sheila M. Peace and Caroline Holland (eds), *Inclusive Housing in an Ageing Society: Innovative Approaches*, Policy Press, Bristol, 2001, 272 pp., pbk £19.99, ISBN 1 86134 263 2.

This valuable and highly topical book brings together work from a variety of disciplines – architecture, social science and housing studies – in an attempt to give an overview of some of the responses to meet the housing needs of an ageing society. It is refreshing to see this combination of different viewpoints in one volume. The book was generated by a one-day conference and many, although not all, of the chapters were written by contributors to the conference. There are two parts to the book. The first, entitled 'Policy and technology debates' (Chapters 2–6), draws together current debates about design and design regulation for later life with a discussion about the role of new technologies. The second part, 'New lives for old?' (Chapters 7–10), addresses some of the issues identified by researchers investigating models of housing that have applied both accessibility and social inclusion principles to promote independent living. The editors' introductory chapter sets the demographic and social context for the book. The concluding chapter draws together the themes explored in preceding chapters and considers how choices for later life can be expanded.

   In Part One, Julienne Hanson (Chapter 2: 'From special needs to lifestyle choices') presents a well-informed discussion of architectural discrimination. She argues for a shift away from the micro approaches to housing for later life that characterise British housing provision – where older people are directed to 'special housing' or provided with equipment or adaptations to enable them to stay put – towards more macro, inclusive approaches. Macro approaches take a number of forms: mainstream housing is designed according to universal criteria which makes it accessible to people with a range of lifestyle choices and needs; segregated communities, purpose-built for older people; or all-age communities where boundaries between different types of housing (and care) are not perceptible. Mary Kelly (Chapter 3: 'Lifetime homes') provides an introduction to the role of different government bodies in promoting design standards that make housing more accessible. Jo Milner and Ruth Madigan (Chapter 4: 'The politics of accessible housing in the UK') review current building regulation and the responses to regulation from different stake holders, and concludes that inclusive design *can* be legislated for. This is perhaps an arguable point. The remaining two chapters in Part One address the implications of new technologies for housing design and their potential for enhancing physical independence and reducing isolation.

In Part Two, several different models of housing for later life are examined. Chapter 7 ('Integrated segregation?') considers three examples of different housing settings: remodelled high-rise housing, sheltered housing, and care housing for people with dementia. In Chapter 8, Maria Brenton describes older people's co-housing communities – which have yet to be established in the UK. Judith Phillips *et al.* provide an authoritative account and critique of the development of retirement communities in Britain. Finally Leonie Kellaher (Chapter 10: 'Shaping everyday life') reviews evidence, drawn in the main from two major research projects regarding older people's relationship with the built environment, on how the environment helps to shape older people's sense of identity.

There is some disjointedness to this book because the papers have been compiled following a conference. A wider discussion of the role and operation of housing markets and how they shape the housing choices for older home-owners would, for example, have been a welcome addition. The public and not-for-profit sectors are more likely than the private sector to embrace concepts of inclusiveness and to consider the needs of people other than the young and fit. Will the same choices be open to older home-owners? How is the market responding to their needs? Although there is some discussion of dementia, it is limited to the potential role of technology, and more could have been said about inclusive housing responses for older people with dementing illnesses or other mental health problems. In a book that addresses inclusive housing options, more should have been included about the housing needs of older people from black and minority ethnic communities. That said, it would be impossible to cover all topics and this collection provides an informative and well-constructed account of many of the key issues. This is a highly useful and accessible book, and will be of considerable interest to policy makers, practitioners and students. It should be read in tandem with *Housing & Home in Late Life* (Heywood *et al.* 2002), which offers a detailed theoretical counterpoint to this text.

Reference

Heywood, F., Oldman, C. and Means, R. 2002. *Housing and Home in Later Life*. Open University Press, Buckingham.

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Chris Phillipson, Graham Allen and David Morgan, *Social Networks and Social Exclusion: Sociological and Policy Perspectives*, Ashgate, Aldershot, Hampshire, 2004, 276 pp., hbk £49.95, ISBN 0 7546 3429 9.

This book is a collection of papers presented at a seminar series entitled *Social Networks and Social Exclusion: Conceptual and Public Policy Issues* that was funded by the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and organised by the authors of the present volume together with Ray Pahl, Clare Wenger and Perri 6. It

comprises an introduction by the editors and 12 papers. The editors themselves describe the topic areas covered by the book as 'an overview of the social network literature; … a review of the range of social phenomena which social networks seek to explain; examples of quantitative and qualitative studies using a broad network approach; [and] a discussion of the implications for social and public policy of a network perspective'. Your reviewer interpreted this as a prospectus of a collection which was worthy but uninspiring and notable for the absence of papers that deal directly with 'social networks and social exclusion'. The good news is that the collection is much, much better than this, even if inevitably the 12 contributions are not of the same quality, nor do they all have equal relevance to the theme. That said, none of the contributions is unworthy of inclusion, and at least two, by Dale Southerton and Marilyn Taylor, are first class. They have convinced me that we need a book-length treatment of the relation between social networks and social exclusion because of the importance of the issues surrounding this relation for both public social policy and social theory.

Theoretically the concept of a network mediates between the pairs of contrasting or polar types set up by 19th-century social theorists, associated with past and present in which the past is characterised by small all-inclusive societies with little internal structural differentiation and hence little individuation, dense networks of relationships and a strong moral consciousness characterised by collectivist values. If a community is a set of persons who share something in common, then groups may be classified according to how much they share, the limiting case being the total community where all members share everything and are bound to each other by strong moral ties and where mutual trust is high. The past society is not an association of individuals but a single group. With increasing structural differentiation, societies split into sub-groups that simultaneously include their members and exclude their non-members and have strong internal bonds whose strength is proportionate to the degree of closure of their boundaries. When these groups in turn dissolve we would appear to arrive at the logical opposite of the ideal type of past societies, a society where all the positive aspects of past societies are negated, that is, no society at all.

How then are modern societies to be understood? One possible answer is as processes rather than as structures, but processes which involve the creation and destruction of structures, the growth and decline of common consciousness leading to group formation on the one hand, and on the other, the elaboration of social networks along which flow information, obligation and trust which would once have been shared by members of cohesive groups. But in modern societies group boundaries are not absolute, and the strong ties within groups are supplemented by weak ties outside them, and indeed the viability of the group may depend not on its integration with the surrounding society but on its members' inter-connection with it.

This sort of distinction is vital in understanding the social exclusion suffered by older people for whom peer grouping may be highly functional, but not if it involves the atrophy of ties to younger people, relationships with whom constitute the social capital required for survival. In addition to a very useful review of social networks and support in later life by Chris Phillipson, the only other contribution specifically concerned with old age is that by Thomas Scharf and Allison E. Smith.

They point out three ways in which social exclusion of older people differs from exclusion in the population at large: they are not excluded by the labour market; the poverty generated by their absence from the market tends to be permanent and not temporary; and they tend in a variety of ways to be highly dependent upon their immediate neighbourhood. In their research on older people in deprived areas in three English cities they distinguished five types of elderly exclusion: from material resources, from social relations, from civic activities, from use of services and from the neighbourhood. They found a clustering of the different forms of deprivation: 'In particular there was a strong relationship between exclusion from social relationships and exclusion from material resources confirming the way in which poverty and deprivation can combine to restrict participation in a range of informal social relationships' (p. 178). *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose.*

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Anneli Anttonen, John Baldock and Jorma Sipila (eds), *The Young, the Old and the State: Social Care Systems in Five Industrial Nations*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, 2003, 206 pp., hbk $80.00 or £49.95, ISBN 1 8406 4628 4.

This book constitutes an ambitious attempt to portray the welfare mixes in five key industrial nations (Finland, Germany, Japan, the United Kingdom and the United States), and to explain their sources and the ways in which they are expressed in the care of children and older people. The book has seven chapters and begins with an introduction on the importance of social care and the methodology of comparative research. Social care is defined as 'giving informal or professional attention to whole persons who need help in their everyday lives' (p. 7). The following five chapters focus on the five countries, each providing a full and fascinating account of the historical, economic and political origins of childcare and care for older people. We learn, for instance, how the development of Finnish care institutions was strongly influenced by international standards and by the increasing number of women taking work outside the home. Welfare in Germany, however, has been characterised by more continuity from the time of Bismarck to the present day. The Japanese case is more of a welfare-mix approach: on the one hand, people tend to live in three-generational family units and the norm is that women should care for both their parents and parents-in-law; on the other hand, the large majority of women also participate in the labour force.

Although many readers may be familiar with welfarist policies in the United Kingdom, John Baldock still provides a scholarly and extraordinarily fresh perspective. He shows how the roots of British welfare lie in a history of class-based administration and in values which are inseparable from Britain's political and cultural history. The chapter on the United States indicates a largely market-driven system of social care, heavily supported by voluntary and denominational

provision. The final chapter should be of particular interest to scholars and academics: it attempts to embed the understanding of how care for children and older persons is provided in these five nations in a theoretical account of the developmental trajectories of social care systems.

In sum this publication has much to offer as a comparative account of social care services for children and older people in advanced industrial nations. It proposes that there are common pressures in all industrial nations which are driving their welfare systems toward similar forms of organisation and structure but, at the same time, that these trends are mediated by important differences in culture and history. This book provides a comprehensive undergraduate introduction to the diverse empirical realities of the generational aspects of social care. Its brief and concise chapters enable the reader to understand the normative and moral qualities of welfare systems in diverse geographical settings. They succeed in developing, and reaffirming, the importance of a distinctive analysis of social care welfare in a rapidly changing contemporary context. The focus on the key industrial nations sheds particular light on the comparative welfare-state literature, and on some of the difficulties of typologies of the internal logic of welfare states in diverse geographical settings.

On the back cover, the editors note that *The Young, the Old and the State* will be warmly welcomed by academics and researchers in social and public policy, health and social care and welfare economics. They also claim that it will be of interest to policymakers and NGOs involved in welfare and social care provision and that it is a useful source for students on undergraduate and graduate programmes. Though I agree with both assertions, I have two caveats. First, with the exception of Baldock, the authors give little attention to the inter-relation between social policy and social relations. As Fiona Williams (1994: 50) pointed out, 'social relations, not only of class but of gender and "race" – not to mention age, disability and sexuality … underpin welfare policies, their outcomes, the organisation of labour within the welfare state, the diversity of services, political pressures and ideologies, and patterns of consumption'. I feel that the papers (especially the concluding chapter) could have given more attention to this matter. The second problem, of course, is the price of the book. At \$80.00 or £49.95, it is surely out of reach of the undergraduate student, as well as of scholars from low- and middle-income countries. This is lamentable as the publication is one of the best attempts at understanding why current patterns of social care differ between and within countries, and what the consequences of these variations might be.

Reference

Williams, Fiona 1994. Social relations, welfare and the post-Fordist debate. In Burrows, R. and Loader, B. (eds), *Towards a Post-Fordist Welfare State*. Routledge, London.

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Lars Andersson (ed.), *Cultural Gerontology*, Auburn House, Westport, Connecticut, 2002, 232 pp., hbk $65.95, ISBN 0 86569 327 7.

Two major themes dominate this collection of papers from the 3rd *International Symposium on Cultural Gerontology* held in Visby, Sweden in 2001: the significance of the 'cultural turn' in the social sciences, and the status of the body in the emerging cultural gerontology. Unlike many of the other research fields in the social sciences, the influence of post-positivist philosophies has come late to the field of mainstream social gerontology. This is not to say that there has been little engagement with 'theory'. The ideas of Talcott Parsons, feminism and political economy have all been reflected in the work of many social gerontologists, but the impact of post-structuralist and post-modern approaches has, with a few notable exceptions, been limited. Some might see this as a positive achievement, ensuring that social gerontology remains a grounded and ultimately pragmatic field of study. Others point out that by ignoring the insights from the 'cultural turn' we miss some of the most significant changes relevant to ageing in contemporary society. One such development is the growing significance of representations of the body and the emergence of what Bryan Turner has called the 'somatic society'. Ageing and old age can no longer be restricted to a category defined by medicine and social policy. The notion that the concerns of the ageing body are mainly about illness and disability underplays the cultural significance of looking old and the strategies employed to avoid this status. In a similar fashion, the growing significance of identity work in individual biographical narratives extends the possibilities of later life beyond the dependent formulas sometimes implied by the state pension system.

In drawing our attention to the significance of culture in understanding later life, this volume positively redresses the imbalance between social policy and structural dependency that is implicit in much mainstream social gerontology. This is not to say that all the authors in the volume would see their work in this way, indeed some might balk at such a depiction. Nevertheless the editors have brought together in this book some timely contributions on what social gerontologists should be studying. In a short review it is impossible to deal with all chapters fairly and I will not attempt to cover everything that sparked my interest. David Gaunt's interesting account of the struggle for better pensions undertaken by Swedish pensioners against the wishes of the Social Democrats certainly made me reflect on some of the assumptions about the Scandinavian welfare state. Equally, Svein Olav Daatland and Hans-Joachim von Kondratowitz make many important points regarding the nature and utilisation of gerontological knowledge in their chapters.

Concentrating on the themes of culture and the body, we find that considerable work needs to be done and that significant work has been done. Chris Phillipson, in his chapter, raises the question of the impact of globalisation on citizenship given that nationality has been at the core of the construction of the state pensioner. A world in which mobility is a reality calls for the emergence of transnational arrangements for the funding and organisation of later life. That this could be both a positive and a negative development is acknowledged. For

every success of the European Union in outlawing age discrimination by individual nation states, there is the desire of the World Bank and the World Trade Organisation to change the way later life is 'funded'. Added to this must be an acceptance that simple concepts of identity and belonging have also been transformed – to the point that diversity and difference are necessary starting points for social gerontology. Andrew Blaikie certainly makes this point in his chapter on ageing sub-cultures, a much neglected area but one of increasing importance.

The importance of diversity and difference can also be seen in much of the work on the body that appears in this volume. Five chapters deal with this issue and raise the crucial importance of embodiment to the experience of old age as well as ageing. This may seem obvious to readers of *Ageing & Society*, after all old age would seem to be defined by a body in decline. The cultures of ageing, however, are not the same as the body in decline though they are always connected to it. Gender also plays a key role in this difference. Chris Gilleard (with whose work I collaborate) points out the importance of ageing to both body-work and body-talk for women of all ages. The gradual increase of what could be described as the 'public' gaze over women's bodies during the 20th century has not only increased the significance of understanding ageing as a cultural phenomenon, it has also changed our notion of what ageing actually is, and when it turns into 'old age'. Many of the chapters deal with the significance of this 'aged body'. Julia Twigg, writing about the body-work of bathing dependent older people, draws our attention to the importance of the body in the intimate and socially-charged setting of personal care. Bathing, in allowing access to the private sphere of one's body, involves issues of intimacy, power and sexuality, topics usually glossed over in discussions of formal care but which relate to the absent presence of the 'aged' body. It is difficult to provide more than a flavour of the breadth of the contributions gathered in this volume. They have the potential to spark further debate, not only about the importance of the cultural turn for gerontology, but also for those aware of the significance of ageing for understanding modern culture.

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Jean-Philippe Viriot Durandal, *Le Pouvoir Gris: Sociologie des Groupes de Pression de Retraités [Grey Power: The Sociology of Retired People's Pressure Groups]*, Presses Universitaires de France, Le lien social, Paris, 2003, 514 pp., €30, ISBN 2 13 052571 7.

The increased time that French senior citizens spend in retirement has, as elsewhere in post-industrial societies, changed the pattern of the lifecourse. On demographic criteria alone, the electoral importance of senior citizens is growing. Higher proportions of them are appearing on electoral registers and using their votes. But does this 'grey power' represent a force to be reckoned with, and does it carry real weight on the political scene? Jean-Philippe Viriot Durandal's work on this question is developed within two contextual frameworks – social

gerontology and the politics of lobbying. The author stresses that this is a new field of inquiry in France, as age effects in political behaviour have previously been treated only as a sub-category of voting behaviour. The analysis is pursued in a detailed and clear manner, using up-to-date sources from the author's unpublished thesis. The different sections of the book can each be read independently, but there is a certain amount of repetition.[1] The second and longest section of the book re-examines pensions reforms, longevity, and sex and social class differentials in life expectancy. The breadth of the analysis is indicative of the difficulties of nomenclature: 'senior citizens', 'older people', 'retired people' and so on compete with each other as terms to define the subject population. As far back as 1962, the Laroque report, which constitutes the pillar of social policy on ageing in France, remarked how the term 'older people' covered such a diverse category of the population that its significance was limited. How is it possible to define a pressure group in terms of 'retired persons' when the individuals belonging to it do not share common social, economic or political characteristics? In this sense the choice of title of the book does not convey very well the central ideas of the analysis. Organised groups of retired people in fact have little political influence. Much more important is the diversity of political beliefs and values found among them.

It could be that one of the weaknesses of pressure groups for older people lies in their origins. Jean-Philippe Viriot Durandal shows that although senior citizen groups created to promote better pensions were independent of those bodies that implemented social policy, they were at the same time linked to State measures concerning older people. In this respect France resembles other countries, and the development of pressure groups concerning issues on old age in the USA is comprehensively covered. The author notes that the creation of welfare states and the development of social policies for old age have imposed an arbitrary demarcation of life stages that have almost certainly led to a situation whereby pressure groups are influenced by the structure of retirement systems.

In France, the appointment in 1982 of a Minister for Older People and the subsequent formation of the *National Committee for Retired People and Older Persons* confirmed that the State partially recognised the existence of gerontological interest groups. The weakening of the structure of the social protection system at the end of the 1980s and beginning of the 1990s ushered in a new era of pressure groups, the objective of which was to re-orientate the logic of budgetary constraints. These groups drew upon the generation of young retired people who were by then more demanding in their political goals. In fact, this trend is part of the general increase in the proportion of middle-class older people whose mode of political action differs from traditional working-class unions.

Jean-Philippe Viriot Durandal devotes much of his analysis to the future for pressure groups of older people. He notes that their emergence is a recent phenomenon, that they are few, and perhaps most importantly that they will soon have to adapt to the aspirations of the new generation of baby-boomers who are about to retire. Will the future bring about a renewal of pressure groups for older people, or will they become weaker? Retired people during the 1990s straddled two dominant cohorts, a conservative generation born at the beginning of the 20th century, and a more culturally-liberal generation born during the 1940s.

According to some analysts, the baby-boomer generation has acquired, or even perhaps seized, more than their fair share of material and other resources, such as high salaries and job positions, political power and influence. If this is so, what will this politically-active generation do when they find themselves excluded from the labour market with a loss of a large part of their social significance? The author addresses the question of whether they will fight to remain in the work force or seek to raise their profile in voluntary activities.

At the heart of this debate lies pension reforms and the basis of inter-generational relations. The commonly-held assumption that ageing is associated with resistance to change, whereas young people are open and progressive, is rarely found to be true. Older people who have left the public sphere of production mostly react in the same way as younger individuals: that is to say, as citizens and as parents. For example, despite the problem of unemployment weighing heavily on people of working age, older people feel as concerned about its consequences as younger people. The results of the first round of the 2002 French presidential election showed clearly that what divided the population was not age groups but social exclusion. The claim put forward in some studies that social-class divisions have been replaced by the creation of divisive age groups is difficult to believe. The political inclinations of retired people have little in common with their age. They are more influenced by how much they have been politically involved over the lifecourse. The baby-boomer generation were more politically active than previous generations, so it is reasonable to assume that they can use this experience to form a collective identity in their old age and find expression through pressure groups. In fact, the key historical points that mark and define a generation are not the only determinants of the degree of political consciousness and activity. There is such a wide diversity of social, economic and cultural groups today that the baby-boomers cannot easily be consolidated into a single collective identity with a strong political influence.

Following the promotion of early retirement during the 1980s, the 1990s was characterised by company down-sizing and long-term unemployment among people aged 50 and above, and this situation still exists today. Age discrimination in the work place has little in common with belonging to a particular generation and much more to do with strong social inequalities in accessing resources. From this standpoint, the necessary conditions for grey power movements to be effective, such as unity and a strong organisational structure, are not in place. How will future generations of older people overcome this heterogeneity?

Looking at the experiences of other countries, notably the USA and Britain, it could be pointed out that despite having evolved in numbers and experience, pressure groups of retired people have not had as much political influence as one would expect. Jean-Philippe Viriot Durandal stresses that these organisations not only fulfil the role of pressure groups representing senior citizens and the electorate, but are actively engaged in day-to-day issues of people's lives as users and consumers. The real question is whether such a diverse group as 'retired people' needs to be represented at all. Would their interests not be better served as citizens, users and consumers? Moreover, the more organised pressure groups of retired people are mainly linked to and organised around occupational groups. Whatever the case, given the complexity of the French pension system, with its

corporate and sectional structure, it is not hard to see why pressure groups acting in the interests of retired people still find it difficult to increase their influence.

NOTE

1 Useful details about the stages of this research are given in the Appendix. These include: the building of the theoretical base, how it was undertaken, and the reproduction of a questionnaire employed during a demonstration of retired people that took place on 6th June 1996 – a date which, according to the author, should mark a turning point in the development of French pressure groups of retired people.

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Audrey S. Weiner and Judah L. Ronch, *Cultural Change in Long-term Care*, Haworth, New York, 2004, 449 pp., pbk $39.95, ISBN 07890 2110 2.

Julie Barton, Marita Grudzen and Ron Zielske, *Vital Connections in Long-term Care: Spiritual Resources for Staff and Residents*, Health Professions Press, Baltimore, 2003, 217 pp., pbk £23.95, ISBN 1 878812 79 3.

One of these two American books on nursing homes is very long and relatively dense and the other quite short and simple. Both are almost exclusively concerned with the American experience. With both of them I sometimes felt like an outsider in need of a good interpreter. This was not just because of the language but also because of the concepts. Some of the models referred to and the terminology were unfamiliar. In both cases the references (and in the case of the Barton *et al.* the resource references) were almost exclusively American. The starting point for both books is that conditions in nursing homes have to change. As Bruce Vladeck starkly puts it in *Cultural Change in Long-term Care*, 'Nursing homes are occupied largely by people who, if they could choose, would choose not to be there; staffed by employees of whom many will leave at the first opportunity; and financed primarily by public officials who resent every penny and feel trapped, without alternatives' (p. 3).

In *Culture Change in Long-term Care*, Weiner and Ronch have assembled diverse authors, many of whom describe their own nursing homes. The book is in six sections and has 30 chapters. The six sections are: an introduction to culture and values in long-term care; models of change; case studies on implementing change; case studies on culture change briefs; an international perspective (Australia, Switzerland and Canada); and a final section 'Is change realistic?' Although virtually all the experiences come from the United States, I am sure that

others will find something of value. But it is a bit like looking for a nugget of gold and it is difficult to maintain one's enthusiasm to read the book from cover to cover. Dipping into it would probably be a better approach. The chapters are of variable quality and it would have been helpful to have had an outside perspective on some of the nursing homes which are described. Self-evaluations need to be balanced by a more robust viewpoint.

Vital Connections in Long-term Care is written by three authors who pay ful-some praise to each other in the preface. The blurb on the cover of the book states: 'that spirituality is an integral component of the total well being of older adults is being increasingly recognized. Now staff in long-term care settings can see the compelling reasons for integrating spiritual care into daily care and realistic ways of putting it into practice'. They assert that, although everyone is spiritual, not everyone has a religious belief. Spirituality can include the specific religious practice of a specific group or denomination but can include all that creates meaning in life. The authors state that, 'This book is intended to assist staff in understanding the spiritual nature of all human beings, especially in caring for older adults, and to assist staff in exploring the spiritual dimension of their work, thus enhancing the total well-being of nursing facility residents' (p. xi). This very practical book is written for professionals such as nursing staff and social workers. The hope is that they will be able to 'transform residential care facilities into sacred places'.

The chapters cover some very important themes including the individuality of the residents and staff, creating a caring community for residents, staff and their families, communications, attitudes and values about intimacy and sexuality, 'the long good-bye' especially for people with dementia, rituals with food, the arts, self-care, pain management, and death and dying. I liked the format of the chapters which all start with the objectives and the topic, and all include a dis-cussion, exercises and recommended reading and resources. Reading about the experiences of countries other than one's own is always valuable and many of the problems illustrated in both these books are the same across the world.

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Patricia A. Kolb, *Caring for our Elders: Multicultural Experiences with Nursing Home Placement*, Columbia University Press, New York, 2003, 191 pp., hbk $52.50, ISBN 0 231 11458 3, pbk $22.50, ISBN 0 231 11459 1.

Culture shapes behaviour; however, culture itself is malleable, constantly yielding to society, the sculptor of its ultimate form. In this well-researched and indexed volume, author Patricia Kolb aptly illustrates the press of societal forces as a catalyst for change in the way members of microcultural groups within the United States provide extended care for frail older adults. Based on information obtained during a series of semi-structured interviews, Kolb chronicles and describes the experiences of 75 African Americans, Afro-Caribbean, Jewish, Latina/Latino nursing home residents, their relatives, and friends who served as informal

care-givers, before and during nursing home placement. These informants represent, for the most part, the first cohort in their respective groups to use nursing home placement as a resource to fulfill culturally-valued care-giving responsibilities that traditionally have been provided at home, in the community and by relatives and friends. The central theme of this book is an in-depth exploration of a significant, but unsung, cultural evolution that involves an increasing number of older adults for whom such an option previously was culturally antithetical.

Kolb describes how the 'gerontological explosion' (p. 7) in the United States converges with other societal forces, such as paid employment for women, high divorce rates that contribute to women working outside the home, and other economic considerations that disproportionately and negatively affect women from racially, ethnically and culturally-diverse backgrounds. These societal forces have combined to produce an important cultural reshaping for a growing number of older adults regarding nursing home placement. For researchers and others interested in demographic detail about older adults in the United States, Kolb has condensed current census data into easily digestible, bulleted lists (pp. 8–9). Increased longevity and chronic disability go hand-in-hand, contributing to a generalised greater need for nursing-home care. The unstated implication is that older members of racial ethnic, culturally-diverse groups are at greater risk than the broader population from chronic disability stemming from the leading causes of nursing-home placement: stroke and cognitive impairment (pp. 26 and 68). Kolb, therefore, rightly assesses the importance of her research to a general understanding of issues about ageing, as well as an understanding of the impact of ageing on diverse groups of older adults and their families.

Kolb fully describes the motivations, many of which are culturally determined, that drive family care-giving behaviour (pp. 29–32). Care-giving values and practices are products of socialisation regarding role expectations between younger and older members of society. Many racially, ethnically and culturally diverse groups have at the core of their cultural orientation a generalised value that gives pre-eminence to the welfare of the group over individual wellbeing. In some groups, especially Latina/Latino individuals, this value manifests itself as filial piety, and in regard to care-giving, an abiding sense of responsibility to provide care for infirm older family members (p. 7). Others approach care-giving from the perspective of mutuality, with each generation taking care of the needs of the other (p. 29). Kolb found this to be a strong motivator among the African-American informants. Other factors, including gender, marital status, and other variables are associated with care-giving and receiving, both before – and significantly after – nursing-home placement.

Kolb adapted Drachman and Ryan's stage-of-migration framework as an organising metaphor for the events that preceded placement, precipitated placement, and occurred during placement among the informants for her study. Accordingly, the pre-migration stage corresponds to the residents' earlier lives, the departure and transit stages correspond to the changes in health status necessitating nursing-home placement, and the resettlement stage corresponds to adjustment to institutional care-giving. Equally important for our understanding of individuals and groups among these new nursing-home residents is the knowledge of each resident's previous immigration and migration experiences

(p. 47). Overall, Kolb's informants were satisfied consumers of nursing-home care. Undoubtedly, their positive experience with institutionalised care is a tribute to the study's chosen facility, its administrators and staff. There were, however, issues of concern that may be instructive for others who are striving to be culturally sensitive to the needs of a diverse populace. For example, the language barrier was a concern of Latina/o caregivers, highlighting the need for bilingual staff for residents and their family members who speak Spanish or limited amounts of English. African American and Afro-Caribbean care-givers wanted Protestant religious services and appropriate hair-care services for their relatives. Other care-givers spoke of the importance of ethnic foods. Kolb acknowledged that these are universal concerns in many of the nation's nursing homes (p. 119).

Replete with abundant citations and sometimes tedious, statistics-filled prose, particularly in Chapter 1, the book resounds with the voices of informants from diverse cultural backgrounds. In the ethnographic tradition, Kolb quotes her informants liberally and to good advantage, providing readers with a grounding for a massive amount of scholarly detail. Like a choir, the informants' voices blend into a harmonious whole as they recount their unique experiences as care-givers and as the vanguard of a new group of nursing-home consumers. Humanisation of the socio-cultural evolution being enacted by this volume's informants, along with growing numbers of others, makes important information accessible to those new to the study of gerontology and the literature of social gerontology. Additionally, this volume will be a ready resource for scholars and professionals from multiple disciplines.

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Eileen Shamy, *A Guide to the Spiritual Dimension of Care for People with Alzheimer's Disease and Related Dementias: More than Body, Brain and Breath*, Jessica Kingsley, London, 2003, 224 pp., pbk £16.95, ISBN 1 84310 129 7.

The subject of spirituality and dementia has attracted growing attention in recent years. So far as I can ascertain, this title is Eileen Shamy's second book dealing with predominantly Christian approaches (Everett, 1996). It was first published in 1997 in New Zealand, where the author was a Methodist clergywoman. This British publication has been edited by Albert Jewell and Mannes Tidmarsh (Shamy died before she could see it through the press). It needs to be stated at the outset that for all its virtues this is not a well-organised book, so I have thought it helpful to summarise the main chapters. Chapters 1 and 7 are introductory and post-scriptoral so have been excluded.

Chapter 2, titled 'Understanding Alzheimer's disease and other primary dementias', disappointingly lacks coherence. It encompasses brief descriptions of various dementias, an account of their progression which is indebted to Riesberg's stages theory (of dubious provenance), a glossary of terms such as acalculia, prosopagnosia and agraphia—which few for whom this book is intended (ministry

and lay people) could possibly need, and which in any case the author ignores in the rest of the text—and a moving account of the onset of her mother's dementia, which clearly belongs elsewhere. Chapter 3, 'The spiritual dimension of care', is obviously intended to be at the centre of the book and certainly contains valuable material. The passages that attempt a definition of spirituality, and the stories about persons with dementia and how they have been helped to greater well-being, are relevant and excellently done. But the sections on conserving skills, communication and orientation could have formed part of a chapter on general issues, and the later pages, that give advice to clergy and managers, could have been slotted into later chapters. Chapter 4 on 'Worship' is a very useful practical piece of work, especially if taken with Appendices 3 to 6 which give forms of service for general use, Holy Communion, an Ecumenical Service and Christmas. Examples of people with dementia being denied the Sacrament lead to brief considerations of the nature of personhood and identity. Not everyone concerned with spirituality in its widest sense, however, would accept the generalisation: 'Whereas personhood is given to human beings by God, identity is given by others and the self' (p. 117).

Chapter 5, 'Being present to the person with dementia', is the longest, and in my view the core of the book. Although perhaps not intended as such, it is to all intents and purposes a consideration of communication and related matters and should have come earlier. The author takes us through concepts such as mutuality, acceptance, identity, relationship, orientation (again), affirmation, memory cueing, the use of symbols, touch and humour. There is a discussion of mirroring, which Shamy calls 'mimesis', and a most interesting account of the use of a clown doll to enhance interaction. The chapter is full of examples drawn from her experience, including quoted dialogues, and could be read with profit by anyone whose life is touched by dementia. It ends with a brief section on dying which surely belongs elsewhere. Chapter 6, 'Caring for the care-giver', makes an important contribution to the literature. Shamy takes us through the various burdens care-givers face, most of them familiar but well-rehearsed here with telling examples, and then moves into a neglected area, transitions in care, most notably, from home to institutional care. She emphasises that this change is a difficult adjustment for family members, and provides examples of religious services which could be used to aid the process. The chapter touches on such matters as intergenerational experiences and the spiritual needs of professional care-givers, and is both comprehensive and authoritative.

This book is a kind of hold-all. You can pick out various items of real value, but they are not always brought into relationship with each other in a convenient and meaningful way. What does give the text a certain unity, and causes one to forgive many of its blemishes, is the undoubted sincerity and warmth of the author. The spirit of Eileen Shamy shines out from these pages and carries its own message of passionate concern. One of the book's greatest strengths is its stories, which are unfailingly well-told and apposite. Here is an example:

In my church tradition, 60 or more years ago, little children sang, as the offering was received: Hear the pennies dropping; / Listen while they fall. / Every one for Jesus; / He shall have them all. Recently I used a suitable tape-recording of this little song with a small group of elderly, confused and memory-impaired Methodist men and women. One, who

rarely communicates, stopped, stood up and stated firmly, 'I want to give something to Jesus. What can I give?' Someone else quietly said, 'A penny's not much' and was answered with 'It isn't either. But God is good – we have enough – not much, but enough.' That moment was pure joy. I wonder if the person with dementia has a kind of wisdom from deep within his or her being? From what part does it come? (pp. 105–6).

Shamy widens this out beautifully. One would have welcomed more speculation about the nature of the spirituality uncovered here, how it might be celebrated and encouraged, but for this one must turn to later authors in the field (Goldsmith 2004).

References

Everett, D. 1996. *Forget Me Not: The Spiritual Care of People With Alzheimer's Disease.* Inkwell, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.
Goldsmith, M. 2004. *In a Strange Land: People with Dementia and the Local Church.* 4M Press, Southwell, Nottinghamshire.

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    Lisa Radin and Gary Radin (eds), *What if it's not Alzheimer's?*, Prometheus, New York, 2003, 346 pp., pbk $22, ISBN 1 59102 087 5.

This book is a compilation of chapters by 27 different writers, mainly American and Canadian. It is a brave and vigorous attempt by Lisa and Gary Radin to bring together the complex knowledge and experience relating to frontotemporal dementia (FTD). Although the perspectives of the authors, as medical professionals and paid care workers, have most prominence, those of carers or 'caregivers' are also addressed. The book is undoubtedly a mine of information on dementia with an emphasis on medical matters and a focus on FTD. Part 1, 'A medical focus', opens with a chapter by Martin Rossor (UK), and gives a concise overview of the most common forms of dementia. In clear terms he explains how dementia is a syndrome not a disease and stresses the importance of careful diagnostic investigations. The next nine chapters focus closely on different aspects of FTD but with a strong medical emphasis. Explanations of FTD and its genetics are not for the faint-hearted. However, we soon move to welcome advice on finding the 'right' specialist and medical team. Details of therapeutic interventions (mainly drugs) and approaches to rehabilitation are outlined for speech, occupational and physical therapies. No stone is left unturned, including, for example, the problems of predicting the stages and symptoms of FTD and the medical and scientific benefits of autopsies.

    Having set the scene medically and scientifically on the nature of FTD, Part 2, 'Managing daily care', will be a welcome relief for readers who are carers because it gives clear and comprehensive practical information. Understanding speech,

swallowing and nutrition, mobility and personal care, relationships and general health are all very helpful. Of particular note is the chapter by Lisa Ann Fagan, 'Within these walls', on creating a safe and supportive environment at home. Many strategies are given to reduce stress and maximise safety. Although some attention is given to the altered relationship between the person with FTD and the carer, more could have been given here in view of the profound changes that can take place. The final two parts of the book on 'Care-giver resources' and 'Caring for yourself' have a distinct USA bias, and will be of little practical use to British carers. What is sadly missing from this collection is the perspective of people with frontotemporal dementia themselves. A chapter by the editors on their personal experience of caring could have included such a perspective and this would have made the book more human. Nevertheless, a book specifically addressing the many unique demands and challenges of FTD is welcome and will be a valuable resource.

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Virginia Bell and David Troxel, *The Best Friend's Approach to Alzheimer's Care*, Health Professions Press, Baltimore, 2003, 250 pp., pbk $24.95, ISBN 1 878812 35 1.

This hopeful book is aimed at family carers and professionals alike. It is written with a gentle humorous optimism and from an American perspective. The simple person-centred philosophy is described as 'The best friend's model of care'. Although the focus is on the individual with the disease, the impact on the carer is not ignored. *The Best Friend's* approach aims to improve the quality of life and behaviour of the impaired person, thereby improving the carer's burden. Family carers may find a renewed sense of hope by the 'recasting' of relationships with the impaired person. The authors recommend that carers should 'let go' of the sense of despair or hopelessness and 'recast' the person as a potential friend. This will enable a carer to explore their pain and focus on the value of the present.

The essence of the care plan is friendship which involves sharing time, feelings, memories, experiences, respect, understanding, affection and support. Friends can sense each other's moods, listen and be flexible. With this approach, care-givers will be able to develop the 'knack' of responding to any situation or challenging behaviour. There are also genuine case studies, biographies and situations to illustrate the care model in practice. The authors believe that dwelling on the 'tragic' side of the illness can lead to the victimisation of the ill person, low standards of care or mistreatment. The experience of having Alzheimer's disease is described and how to make an assessment of the person's personal history, abilities and personal strengths as the disease progresses.

There are many books on person-centred care, but *The Best Friend's Guide to Alzheimer's Disease* is innovative and refreshing due to the relaxed and natural 'hands on' approach to the care models. Both families and professional care workers may appreciate the valuable suggestions and simple techniques that can

turn a negative caring experience into a positive preparation exercise. Unfortunately the comprehensive American appendix would be of little use in the UK. It is difficult to criticise this book given its selfless approach, but the life stories can be rather self-indulgent and can sound insincere. Many exercises involve discussion groups, and therefore I am not sure if they would suit a person who was in the moderate or later stages of the disease. However, despite these faults, The *Best Friend's Guide* is an empowering book that proves one can enjoy life after a diagnosis of Alzheimer's disease.

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