

Book reviews

Challenges of an Aging Society. Ethical Dilemmas, Political Issues

Edited by: Rachel A. Pruchino and Michael A. Smyer

John Hopkins Press, 2007. ISBN: 978-0-8018-8648-5. \$49.95

This book is well edited and presented, which makes reading it quite straightforward, even while taking on at times some complex issues. It explores the dilemmas raised in a format that is divided into four parts, each part containing a selection of essays relevant to that section's title. Each contributor explores his title usually in isolation but occasionally with response to a previous author. Each essay is extraordinarily well referenced, which gives the reader ample opportunity to further explore the subject matter if inclined to do so. The majority of pertinent ethical dilemmas are addressed in the first two sections where the issues around end of life decision making, family responsibility, and cultural diversity are explored. These sections are the most relevant to our readership but are often framed within the context of an American society, which at times seem quite divorced from our own. The last two sections focus more on the development of policies and the associated politics relevant to the older generation which, it is proposed, will ultimately impact on the security of their future. As this is an American book, these two parts therefore deal with aspects of political and social projection which are not so relevant or interesting to an UK audience. Unless one has a particular interest in American Health Care Policy for the older adult, I would not recommend investing in this book but certainly some of the ethical essays are well written and more relevant to our population, so it may be a volume to borrow from the library for that purpose.

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Love Stories of Later Life: A Narrative Approach to Understanding Romance

Amanda Smith Barusch

Oxford University Press, 2008, ISBN: 978-0195314045, £13.99 (\$24.95US), 240 pp

Love Stories of Later Life: A Narrative Approach to Understanding Romance is a qualitative study employing in-depth interviews and an open-ended survey distributed on the Internet. Barusch (a professor of social work) focused her study on four research questions. They include, but are not limited to

1. How do older adults describe and experience romantic love?
2. How do gender, culture and age influence the lived experience of romantic love?
3. Is it possible to fall in love at advanced ages? If so, how do adults describe this experience? Do their descriptions differ from those offered by younger people?
4. How do older adults interpret their lived experiences of romance? (see page 185).

Barusch writes with two different 'voices' for two different audiences. First, she writes for academic gerontologists who have an interest in the study of late relationships. Second, she writes for elders who desire to gain insight into romantic and sexual relationships in later life. She hopes that this audience will gain strength and insight by reading her book.

First, as an academic gerontologist, I was disappointed in the lack of the author's effort to link her visionary findings to current gerontological theory. Important theoretical implications exist for the author's findings. However, getting students to link her findings to theory will be an excellent classroom assignment. Academically, new and profound insights are offered.

Second, as a person subjected to the ageing process, the book is delightful, hopeful and inspiring.

It is rare for an author to successfully address two such diverse audiences. I encourage both academic and public libraries to adopt this fine work.

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Parkinson's Disease in the Older Adult

Edited by Jeremy Playfer

Radcliffe, ISBN: 9781846191145, 2008, £61.75, 432 pp

I became increasingly aware of how little I know about the subject of Parkinson's disease as I flicked through the chapters of this book. Each page and chapter is full of knowledge and information that should enhance any