

index the latter do not. Jung, admittedly, is cited in the text; a page is devoted to his views along with those of Erikson and Freud (a page between them, that is, not one each). Even if you happen to think that much of Jung is mystical nonsense it is the sort of nonsense that you cannot reasonably leave out of consideration in an attempt to understand the experience of being middle-aged, if only because of the influence his ideas have had on later researchers.

Perhaps it is in conformity with the emphasis on images, but a chapter on menopause, which concentrates almost exclusively on the potential for continuing sexual attractiveness and enjoyment, seems rather unbalanced, particularly when it excludes any consideration of the depression that a fair proportion of women report feeling at this stage. After all, this appears to be one of the experiences of middle age which many people do have to survive. And a chapter on 'male menopause' which does not examine the often complex aetiology of impotence is inadequate when aimed at promoting understanding.

The authors are amusing and justifiably sceptical about the various 'awareness' movements that have grown up in the past couple of decades, but they do not really attempt to explain what needs in the middle-aged individual they may be seeking to meet, or why this particular form of provision has come to the fore recently – reference to Jung may have helped to throw some light on this.

In sending the book the Reviews Editor commented that he thought it raised some important issues. Indeed it does: but is it sufficient in a book aimed at the popular market and with presumably some practical intent (*pace* 'understanding' and 'survival') simply to raise issues without exploring their implications? Neugarten's views on the significance of the changes in the way time is perceived are important, as are Jacques' views on death and Freud's concept of '*torschlusspanik*': they are all mentioned but in much the same tone as Ettie Rout's reflections on corsets and views from the *Sun's* 'Likeliest Letters' page.

Perhaps I expected too much of a book that is intended to be essentially light-hearted in its approach, and had it come under a different rubric (and, perhaps, imprint) I might have thoroughly enjoyed it: but I'm not sure – it was a bit like biting into a meringue-textured steak, and that's always likely to be disappointing.

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Joyce Lishman (ed.), *Research Highlights no. 3 – Developing Services for the Elderly*, Department of Social Work, University of Aberdeen 1982, 173 pp., £2.50, ISBN 0 9505999 2 1.

'A series produced for policy makers and practitioners, drawing together research on important topics in the social work services.' For this statement from the cover to be appropriate, I would constructively suggest that a more critical eye be cast over the presentation, readability and balance of the papers

therein. But let me follow Edward de Bono's advice: stop dwelling on 'negative' factors and look instead for 'positive' and 'interest' factors.

The book contains nine contributions covering, amongst others, topics such as Poverty and Income Maintenance, Sheltered Housing and Bereavement. In addition there is an introduction by Rushforth and an excellent summarising editorial by Joyce Lishman. Let me now concentrate on those I found most readable and useful.

Mark Abrams' contribution on 'Lifestyles of the Elderly' is easy to read, and while its scope and content seem rather restricted, it highlights the place of leisure activities in the lives of older people and their propensity to cut down on such activities when economising. Such action is not of course restricted to older people alone, but Abrams illustrates how the poorer retired population, already disadvantaged because of income inequalities, lose out proportionally more. The leisure pleasures amongst the most valued and held on to most tenaciously include; newspapers, magazines, tobacco and alcohol. Perhaps because they are, as Abrams suggests, important props for those experiencing solitary living in poverty? Another valued leisure activity is that of watching television, which makes me wonder if enough thought is being given to the composition of day-time programming. While knocking up and driving voters to the polls one afternoon during a recent election I was intrigued by the depth of knowledge and interest displayed about snooker by many of the older people I accompanied. Hobson's Choice, I wondered, knowing that it was the only adult programme being televised that afternoon? What chances are being missed here in the areas of education and benefits?

Lloyd's contribution, 'Poverty and Income Maintenance', is a good review of an important but sometimes dull topic. While highlighting, as does Abrams, the crucial role of income in the lives of older people, she shifts the focus of attention to the fact that income is only a part of the total poverty experienced by older retired people. This wider poverty, it is suggested, can in part be explained by the social construction of a labour market which prescribes the place of older people within it. The emphasis is on the status and financial rewards accorded to younger, more productive members of the society. In such a context it is no surprise to read that low incomes are the lot of a substantial minority within society, that is, older retired people. Lloyd provides an apt reminder of the need to look beyond the consequences of poverty to its causes. In so doing she gives warning to those practitioners among us to be wary of becoming so embroiled in dealing with the casualties as to ignore consideration of the wider implications and origins of the 'poverty trap'. One of the suggested solutions is that of index linking the incomes of older people, although it is interesting that, elsewhere in the book, the point is made that such a course of action failed to cushion older retired Poles from the consequences of higher food prices. The harsh reality of life for many older people was summed up by the evidence of Wicks who found 'people in this group are amongst the poorest in Britain. Events that most people take in their stride – shoe repairs, the need to buy a new saucepan... can seriously affect life at the margin.'

Shifting emphasis completely, there is a useful summary of theories and work on bereavement by Rochford. His contribution covers not only the main theoretical perspectives but also gives useful information on the setting up and running of a bereavement counselling service.

'Practice in Residential Care' is the title of Barbara Firth's well-structured, readable and up-to-date contribution. There is, however, what I consider a rather questionable faith in the value of adults' experiential knowledge of childhood, as opposed to that of old age, as a basis for creating caring environments. I can think of few if any theories or models of practice in childcare which appear to have benefited from such experience. I would not, however, argue with her criticism of the lack of consistency and uniformity of practice in the assessment process for residential care. Firth also points to the limited role of local authorities in the registration and monitoring of private homes and suggests that they should provide more positive help and ongoing support. A mention of the work of CPA in this neglected area might not have gone amiss.

Some interesting if not surprising tidbits; a DHSS survey found only 5 per cent of officers in charge did *not* have a nursing qualification; sedation might well be less common in part III than in geriatric hospital regimes but is more common than in the community. I was bemused to read the cautionary note, that a greater contraction of the residential sector might mean that, 'only the frailest or most highly dependent would enter care'. Some sceptics might be bold enough to suggest that such is already the case.

Cherry Rowlings' contribution is entitled 'Practice in Field Care' and considers aspects of social work delivery patterns, covered at greater length in her own recent book. Emphasis is laid on the need for skilful assessment by relevant trained professionals. She demonstrates how various professionals have a propensity to identify client needs that fall within the gambit of their own areas of work and expertise. Social workers, for differing reasons, are least accepting of presenting problems, a truth that many clients can vouch for. Cherry Rowlings writes positively of the challenges facing us in our work with and for older people, and of the need to confront the issues rather than be overwhelmed by their apparent enormity.

Among the other contributions are: Wirz on 'Sheltered Housing', Goda on 'Relevant Statistics' and King on 'Review of the Literature and Gaps'. The book ends with an interesting descriptive paper on the care of elderly people in the Western Isles.

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Arthur MacNeill Horton, Jr, *Mental Health Interventions for the Aging*, Praeger, New York, 1982, 198 pp., no price, ISBN 0 03 061 607 7

The striking thing about this book is how similar the issues discussed are to those that might be raised with regard to mental deficiency. For example, it is well known that mental changes in the elderly do not necessarily parallel changes in the brain. Senile histological changes in the brain may not parallel mental changes. On the other hand there may be signs of dementia in life but no sign of senile pathological changes in the brain. The same situation occurs in children, and mental deficiency is often attributed to brain damage without pathological proof. There is evidence that even after known damage there may