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Book Reviews in the Journal of Applied Gerontology¹

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L.A. Pastalan & M.E. Cowart. *Lifestyles and Housing of Older Adults: The Florida Experience.* New York: Haworth Press. 1989. 114 pp. \$22.95.

One of the genuinely mysterious aspects of public life in the 1980s has been the collapse of public policy and scientific dialogue on the question of the housing needs and opportunities for older people. With all of the recent emphasis on independent living and home-delivered services, the neglect of housing and residential issues in the aging literature on policy and practice has been particularly mind-boggling. Throughout the lean years, a number of stalwart scholars including several whose work is included in this small volume of essays continued to work and to wonder on this important topic.

Joyce Parr, Sara Green and Corrine Behncke present research data gathered in a series of five studies in the early 1980s. Generally, their samples were skewed toward middle and upper-income elderly housing consumers, target populations not much examined in the aging literature, but whose specialized housing needs also need consideration. Anyone undertaking development of housing for the elderly would do well to look closely at the Parr-Green-Behncke approach as presented here because they have gathered detailed and fascinating information on the housing preferences of older people.

A chapter by M. Powell Lawton lays out the Lawton-Nehemow ecological model of “environmental press” and identifies three functions of residential environments – maintenance, stimulation and support. These ideas appear to have substantial practical significance for those working with older people in various residential environments. However, this essay doesn’t go beyond calling for a recognition of the importance of these factors.

A chapter by Mary Ellen Early provides a useful review of federal housing programs and other options for financing housing for the elderly. The discussions of tax exempt bonds and syndication struck this reviewer as particularly useful introductions to these complex and arcane topics.

Judith A.S. Altholtz approaches living environments from a psychosocial perspective through an examination of autonomy and its relationship to competence. In this chapter she proposes a “continuum of competence.” Aside from the obvious connection with the threadbare but still useful concept of a “continuum of care” the reviewer was not entirely clear on what she means by this and what purposes such an approach would serve.

¹ These reviews appeared in the Journal of Applied Gerontology, Vol. 10. No. 2, June, 1991. 236-240.

J. Pomeroy Carter presents the only case study in the book on the special housing/community environment of Advent Christian Village, in operation for over 70 years. John M. McRae introduces what might be called a vocabulary of design concepts applicable to housing for the elderly. The concepts are presented largely without examples or discussions of implications or applications.

Pastalan closes the volume with a too brief introduction to “ecogenic” (Greek, he says for family-environment) housing. It is an altogether interesting idea but there is little more than a synopsis here.

One other issue: Is this a hardback book? Or is it a bound journal issue? My best guess would be to call it a “jook”! For certain, it is one of many volumes issued by the publisher first as a special issue of a journal (in this case, Volume 5, Number 1 of *The Journal of housing for the Elderly*). The special issue, in turn, is based on papers presented at a prior Conference for Creative Living Environments for Elderly Lifestyles in Florida (all except for one paper, apparently, which thanks the readers in the introduction for attending a conference in Taiwan!) and immediately assigned an ISBN and reissued in hardback as a book.

As a jook, this particular volume shows other signs of hastiness in preparations and careless editing. An interesting essay overviewing “challenges and opportunities” by Joan Quinn and Cheryl Whitman was put in the middle, when it might have served more effectively as either an introduction or conclusion. Other signs of undue haste in editing: Some of the chapters have abstracts while others do not; some references are numbered while others are not, and so on.

A certain editorial sloppiness notwithstanding, this is an interesting volume full of useful information on housing for the aged. Let’s hope it is also the start of a trend toward greater attention to this important topic.

Brief Reviews

J. L. Teitelman and I.A. Parham (Compilers) *Fundamentals of Geriatrics for Health Professionals: An Annotated Bibliography*. Westport, CT: Greenwood Press. 1990. 255 pp. \$45.

This is the 11th in a series of bibliographies and indexes in gerontology produced by the publisher. Other titles in this series have addressed elder abuse and neglect, retirement, suicide, longevity, federal public policy, European immigrants, health care, law crime, Jewish elderly, and women.

The bibliography is divided into two parts and 12 chapters, with the annotations in each chapter handled by health care professionals. Part 1 addresses eight health care disciplines: dentistry, medicine, pharmacy, physical therapy, podiatry, rehabilitation medicine, nursing and geropsychology. Several other fields with major roles in geriatric health care are not covered (e.g., social work, pastoral

counseling, psychiatry and others.) Part 2 is a rather curious combination of ethnic and minority issues, older women, medical ethics and new reimbursement systems.

It will be of greatest use to professionals in the health care disciplines who are just being introduced to the specialized geriatric literature and to specialists in one field interested in locating materials in another.

G. A. Hughston, V. A. Christopherson & M. J. Bonjean (Eds.) *Aging and Family Therapy: Practitioner Perspectives on Golden Pond*. New York: Haworth Press, 1989. 244 pp. \$29.95.

This volume is another jook, an increasingly widespread publishing phenomenon, that was issued simultaneously as Volume 5, Numbers 1 and 2 of the *Journal of Psychotherapy and the Family*. It presents 18 essays on various aspects of the title theme, together with an introduction and conclusion by the editors. Nieto, Coward and Horsley discuss principles of therapeutic intervention with the elderly. Keller and Bromley introduce a "systematic model" of psychotherapy; Hughston and Cooledge call for greater use of the life review methodology by providers; Greene approaches understanding parent-child relationships through the "life systems approach"; Schmall and Pratt examine family caregiving strategies; Schmidt examines reversible mental illnesses among the aged; McQuellon and Reifler examine issues in caring for the depressed elderly and their families. Osgood identifies a systems approach to suicide prevention. Morse considers roles of psychotherapists in family financial counseling and its relationship to independent living of the elderly; Garrison discusses the causes and effects of sexual dysfunction; Hughston and Hughston consider the legal ramifications of elderly cohabitation; Rathbone-McCuan and Hedlund examine alcohol abuse and aging; Christopherson offers the "burden of insight" as a basis for therapeutic intervention; Bonjean deals with psychotherapy with Alzheimer's patients; McCluskey looks at retirement and therapy; and Williams discusses death and bereavement.

R. Disch (Ed.) *Twenty-Five Years of the Life Review: Theoretical and Practical Considerations*. New York: Haworth Press. 1989. 148 pp. \$24.95.

Life Review has become a standard component of the gerontological practice repertory, as well as the basis of a theory of human growth and gerontological program development. This collection of 10 essays explores various implications of the life review and development of the concept since it was first introduced by Robert Butler in 1963. Four chapters in this volume deal with "theory and interpretation" and an additional four deal with diverse applications of the concept, including oral history and community theater projects.

W.M. Clements (Ed). *Religion, Aging and Health: A Global Perspective*. New York: Haworth Press. 1989. 146 pp. \$29.95

This collection of 11 essays, yet another jook, was first published as a special issue of the *Journal of Religion and Aging*, explores the complex relations between religion, well-being and longevity in a largely cross-cultural context. Essays include discussions of Islam, Buddhism, Judaism, Confucianism, Catholicism, Taoism and Shinto, as well as commentaries on life-styles, church conservatism and services and religious factors in aging, health and adjustment from a largely western point of view.