

then perhaps the more squeamish of us may be spared the details of colostomies, incontinence and terminal cancers until we really need to know about these things.

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Meg Montague, *Ageing and Autonomy*, Brotherhood of St Laurence, Fitzroy (Australia), 1982, 198 pp., no price, ISBN 909571 92 9.

This short book is the report of a research project carried out in and by the St Laurence Brotherhood, an Australian religious foundation providing care and accommodation for the elderly in Melbourne. I believe that no organisation in this country provides the same range of accommodation, from Hostels (the Australian equivalent of our Homes and perhaps a more honest name) through flats with varying degrees of supervision to cottages on a managed rural retirement settlement.

The research, carried out by the Brotherhood's own research department, looked at applicants for all three types of accommodation at the point of their application, again two weeks after admission and finally four months after they had taken up residence. It focused on whether, in applying, they sought dependence or independence, on the extent to which they wished to retain or relinquish control over their lives and their participation in everyday affairs, and the degree to which what they were provided with met their needs. Rather than assume meanings for dependence/independence the researchers initially discussed these concepts with elderly residents and allowed meanings to evolve from these conversations.

Because of funding limitations and the need to have findings quickly available to aid policy making the project was a small-scale one, with 40 subjects overall at the outset. The usual type of attitude scale proved very difficult to use with older subjects, so a looser interview format was adopted and the findings were treated qualitatively. This presentation results in a much more graphic picture being presented than might have been gained from an attempt to quantify such small-scale data.

The results are succinctly presented but a summary cannot do justice to their subtlety. In general, hostel applicants wanted a degree of dependence but were offered too much and quickly became socialised to it; people seeking flats wanted independence in their daily living combined with relief from the practical problems of maintaining their own houses; and those going into the settlement wanted autonomy plus physical and long-term security. But this is to leave out of account the bearing on attitudes and expectations of admissions policy, past life experiences, immediate events and family pressures, etc., that all come out in the report.

This is a modest piece of work in the primary sense of the term. It pursues a limited aim imaginatively, it makes specific research-grounded recommendations which it does not seek to generalise, and it sets out clearly issues and

questions which arose in the course of the research but were beyond its scope. It is to be hoped that the book is available in this country if only because it reinforces the view that, in the author's words, 'A very small amount of dependence seems to provide the environment for a considerable degree of independence'.

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Nancy J. Osgood, *Life After Work: Retirement, Leisure, Recreation, and The Elderly*, Praeger, New York, 1982, 367 pp., no price, ISBN 0 03 060437 0.

This book contains a selection of papers presented at a conference at the State University of New York at Cortland, supplemented with other chapters solicited after the conference. It has four sections preceded by a three-chapter 'overview' of the relationships between retirement (as a modern institution) and work, leisure, and the life-cycle developmental approach. The four sections compare the differential experiences of men and women in work and retirement; examine the differential experiences of minorities; compare blue collar, white collar, and professional workers; and survey the elusive issue of preparation for retirement.

The main purpose of the book (and presumably the conference) is to show that retirement 'is not uniform as a process nor in its subsequent effects'. To this end a considerable amount of space is devoted to literature reviews and a certain amount of empirical analysis of the central and controversial relationship between occupation and retirement. In an interesting introductory essay Nancy J. Osgood focuses on the 'monotonous, dull, boring, unfulfilling, tedious, strenuous, and dirty' nature of much of the work in industrial society. Even when work is conventionally considered to be pleasant and rewarding, as in the professions, research into the emerging phenomenon of mid-career change suggests an increasing dissatisfaction with work, a tendency to search for self-identity in leisure. There is thus no doubt that leisure can replace work almost effortlessly as a source of personal satisfaction: as a society we may be coming to have less investment in occupational life (apart, that is, from the money) than an undue fascination with the theory of the Protestant ethic would imply. At the same time the book is sufficiently grounded in harsh economic reality to show how the struggle of minority groups in the United States for even a meagre income precludes the luxury of retirement and transforms the concept of pre-retirement education into a fanciful indulgence. As Alejandro Garcia puts it in his study of work and retirement amongst a sample of elderly Chicanos: 'The issue of the choice to retire or to continue in the labour force is nonexistent'.

The situation is not much better for a large number of women. Their position in the labour market has a tendency to make longevity a mixed blessing. Janice Davidson shows how single women aged sixty-five and over are particularly