

Joseph Merrick (the novel was written in the year of Merrick's death at 27). However, Merrick, as it happens, can be used to prove one of Chase's assertions, which is that the association of old age with physical deformity troubled the Victorians. When Merrick was only 19 (1881), he was in Leicester's workhouse with 350 other men, two-thirds of them over the age of 60. Only five others were under 20, one an 'imbecile'. Thrown out of work by the hosiery trade, the 'old' presented the Victorians with a problem akin to the problem of what to do with the feeble of body or mind of any age.

And this is the repeated gist of Chase's excursions through fiction and images and documents: that the Victorians had to develop a 'syntax' for the elderly, which had not been necessary in the previous century. Chase is particularly illuminating when she comes to von Herkomer's paintings (and the paintings of others), notably 'The Last Muster' (1875), an oil image of a group of Chelsea Pensioners, which had started out life as the subject of an engraving in 1871. Although von Herkomer found himself tagged as 'the painter of old men', at which he balked, and which certainly does not do his range justice, what Chase carefully shows us is that he has hit a resonant chord. The Victorian art-watchers saw the painting as breaking new ground. This section of Chase's book is the very best, because it never canters away at any tangents. And even when, elsewhere, she lets her absorption with (say) Trollope confuse the narrative about old age, Chase is persistently engaging.

Faculty of Arts,  
The Open University, UK

BILL GREENWELL

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Dirk Hofäcker, *Older Workers in a Globalizing World: An International Comparison of Retirement and Late-career Patterns in Western Industrialized Countries*, Edward Elgar, Cheltenham, UK, 2010, 336 pp., hbk £79.95, ISBN 13: 978 1 84844 817 9.

Research focusing on the causes and effects of early exit/retirement has mushroomed over the last decades. This research tradition is marked however by different approaches (micro *versus* macro, and actor *versus* structure) anchored in different theoretical propositions such as economics *versus* sociology. Depending on the choice of theoretical approach, research results point in different directions. Whereas economists tend to argue that early exit/retirement is a voluntary, rational and pre-meditated choice of older workers, sociologists tend to conceive of early exit/retirement as an involuntary outcome of exclusionary processes. *Older Workers in a Globalizing World* is a well-written, ambitious and most welcomed book, as it sets out to overcome the dualisms (e.g. freedom *versus* determinism) in the study of early exit/retirement. The book is based on the assumption that forces of globalisation cause early exit/retirement to occur, and the aim of the book is, first, theoretically to integrate complementary (or even contradictory) viewpoints into a comprehensive conceptual framework; second, to analyse empirically macro- and micro-level processes of early exit/retirement in a

comparative perspective, and third to extract political recommendations as to how early exit/retirement can be reversed.

In Chapter 2, the author aims to integrate theories such as supply-side economics (incentives); the sociology of the lifecycle; the welfare regime approach developed by Gøsta Esping-Andersen; and the varieties of capitalism approach. Drawing on these initial ideas Hofäcker develops various taxonomies to illustrate how different welfare regimes adapt to globalisation and how institutions orchestrate 'push and pull' effects, as well as the lifecycle, in four different welfare regimes. Basically, a (bounded) rational choice model with its focus on individual decision-making becomes the core of the theoretical argument (p. 99). The extensive theoretical discussion is boiled down to an analytical model in Chapter 3. The analytical model states that there is a causal link between (a) globalisation, (b) the decision-making of older workers, (c) the labour market behaviour of older workers, and (d) late-career patterns among older workers. It is thus argued that globalisation implies flexibility, which confronts older workers with competitive disadvantages because older workers' skills are absolute, they are costly due to high 'seniority wages' etc., and that this in turn makes older workers decide to leave the labour market. It is furthermore argued that globalisation impacts all countries in a similar way, but that early exit/retirement outcomes are different, as the decision-making of older workers is filtered by country-specific institutions such as pension systems, active labour market policies, life-long learning opportunities, seniority regulations, firm size, etc.

The model thus developed is then pursued as two separate empirical analyses. Chapter 4 employs a macro-perspective. A cross-sectional analysis is conducted including 14 selected OECD (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development) countries, representing four different welfare regimes, on the basis of administrative data. The chapter surveys cross-national variations in institutional regulations, and it is concluded that institutional filters mediate the influence of globalisation, as different patterns of decision-making and labour market behaviour can be observed in the different welfare regimes. In contrast, Chapter 5 applies a micro perspective based on ECHP (European Community Household Panel) data, and four countries are included in the analysis: the Netherlands, Italy, Denmark and the United Kingdom. These four countries represent a Social Democratic public maintenance regime (low exit), a Liberal market-induced maintenance regime (low exit), and two Continental and Southern European (high) exit regimes. It is concluded that factors such as human capital, occupational status, workplace characteristics etc. have an impact on the decision-making processes, and that these factors can help to explain cross-national differences in the early exit pattern. Research results are summarised in Chapter 6, leading to several political recommendations. Hofäcker holds that retrenchment is necessary in order to reverse the early exit/retirement trends, but also that retrenchment alone does not work. Retrenchment must be balanced by more emphasis on investment in older workers' human capital, education and training, more active labour market policies and attempts to raise the consent of all relevant labour market actors.

An impressive workload has been put into this book. Arguments often seem tedious or too easy, however, and the book invites numerous contradictions,

raising critical questions about basic assumptions of the book. First, the book aims to build a bridge between different approaches and theories. This is done, though, in a rather eclectic way. The author does not succeed in developing a well-organised and logically coherent theoretical framework integrating individual and structural components and approaches. Actor-based rational choice arguments remain predominant, and empirically the macro and micro analysis are not integrated. Second, the author focuses exclusively on the disadvantages of older workers, and seems to forget that older workers also have competitive advantages that fit nicely into a more flexible world. Social gerontology points to the older workers' experience of life, that they are knowledgeable and have a good overview concerning their jobs. Further, they are stable, loyal, conscientious and responsible; they are good at creating a good work environment and they can pass on the firm's culture to younger generations; they are self-dependent, professional, quality-conscious and have a large network etc., etc. It is thus not self-evident that older workers objectively should be less attractive than younger workers. Third, the causal link between globalisation and exit/retirement is never demonstrated empirically, just assumed, and other competing hypotheses are neglected: for example, age discrimination, which has increased over the last decades, while distributional conflict has assumed an age dimension in addition to issues of class and gender. Fourth, a basic assumption is that behaviour is an outcome of older workers' decisions. But this basic assumption can be questioned, as older workers' motivation and complex decision-making is never analysed empirically. It seems as though the author makes deductions from behaviour to actual decision-making. Fifth, conclusions do not always mirror the empirical analysis. In an analysis of the Danish flexicurity model for instance, it is forgotten that older workers are excluded from active labour market measures. In the conclusion the author thus holds that the high numbers of unemployed people returning to employment in Denmark appear to suggest that active policy measures support older workers' return to the active labour force (p. 268).

This said, the book contains many interesting empirical research results, highlighting regime- and country-specific differences in institutional configurations affecting early exit/retirement. As such, the book can be recommended to all with an interest in the issue of older workers in a globalised world.

Aalborg University, Denmark

PER H. JENSEN

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Danielle Quinodoz (translated by David Alcorn), *Growing Old: A Journey of Self-discovery*, Routledge, Hove, UK, 2010, 232 pp., pbk £14.99, ISBN 13: 978 0 415 54566 2.

*Growing Old: A Journey of Self-discovery* arose from the personal experiences of the author, Danielle Quinodoz, whilst working with older people as a psychoanalyst practising in a private clinic in Geneva. She proposes that growing old lends us an opportunity for discovery and advocates the benefits of reconstructing memories as the end of life approaches. The 14 chapters use examples from fictional literature and the arts, and anecdotes from patients' analysis to illustrate points