Old Age

As you drive into the bourg by the chateau road, you will see that
the streets are not deserted, but it is mostly old people who are there.
If you should look carefully from your car window, you could even
see huddled figures peering cautiously from doors and windows. In
the first house on the left live the Monnier grandparents, and on the
other side of the alley running straight up the hill to the Renou
grocery store is the tiny wool shop of Mlle. Macé: she sits, seemingly
all day, in the dark interior, knitting. Opposite the entrance of the
road to Chanoiseau, still on the left as you drive into the bourg, old
Mme. Michaud may be taking the sun in her wheelchair, with two or
three dark-veiled nuns hovering over her. Her neighbor Rémy
Bonnerot is sure to be there; though all you may see of him is the
white shock of hair bent closely over the worktable of his harness
shop, his quick, curious glance registering your arrival. The Bonnerot
house is almost on the square, and now you must watch for pedestri-
ans, like old Mme. Forget sweeping the streets with a straw broom as
tall as she is, or her husband, the retired tailor, shuffling up the road
to help his son, the present tailor. Few of these people will fail to note
your arrival, and you will remark that all these people are very old.

In fact, your first impression of the bourg is a true one, for almost
one out of every four inhabitants in the bourg is an old person. Some
of these old people have retired from their farms, like the Monnier
grandparents or Mme. Coulon, who retired to the bourg with her
husband when their oldest son replaced them on their farm. Others
are retired civil servants, like M. Guérin, who used to be one of the
two postmen. But most of the aged people in the bourg are artisans
or storekeepers who have lived there most of their lives. Until 1957,
M. Forget was the tailor in Chanzeaux; then, at the age of seventy-
two, he moved fifty feet down the street and allowed his son to take
over from him. M. Bonnerot across the street has no one to replace
him; when he dies there will no longer be a leather-working shop in
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Chanzeaux. And among the aged in the bourg there is a special category of old spinsters, like Mlle. Macé, who run specialized small shops. The bourg, however, is not typical of the commune as a whole. While the bourg represents only one quarter of the total population of the commune, more than one out of every three inhabitants over sixty lives there. Only the village of Espérance on the national highway has an equally high concentration of old people. Farmers from the western area of the commune retire to Espérance to live beside older artisans who have been there most of their lives.

Distribution of the aged follows roughly the economic status of the different areas in the commune. There are fewer old people on the isolated farms because some, like the Coulons and the Monniers, retire to a larger community. Wine villages also have fewer old people, or rather fewer old men, than is average for the commune. Although one suspects that wine consumption is a factor in the higher deathrate of men, some of the vintners, like Henri Joubert of La Jutière (who at fifty-eight is not dead yet, although he says that his back is so bad he finds working very painful), claim they work harder than either the people of the bourg or the other farmers. Whether this is true or not, hamlets and especially cow villages have almost twice the proportion of old people as the wine villages.

Although old women outnumber old men in the commune as a whole, nowhere is the proportion so dramatic as in the wine villages, where the women over sixty outnumber the men by almost three to one. Only in the hamlets do old men outnumber old women, and the difference there is only slight. The proportion in the bourg is similar to that of the commune as a whole — about four women to three men — but the old women stand out because they are much more active in everyday social activities. The daily round offers unending excuses for gossip — the weekday seven o'clock Mass, lugging water from the town spigots on the church square, buying vegetables or fruit from the traveling merchants. The roly-poly, black-clad figure of grandmother Oliveau crossing the square in the early morning mist after Mass, chirping cheerfully with another widow, is a typical sight on a weekday morning all year around. Widows make up a great part of bourg society. A bride of fifty years ago was likely to be a widow for an average of at least eight years, for she usually married a man four years older than herself and then exceeded his lifespan by four years.² Widowers have no such social grouping, and when the older
men do gather socially, they sit together in the dark, low-ceilinged room of the Société de la Rue Bourgeois.

Whether seated at the tables of the Société or by the fireplaces on the farms, the aged give one the impression of a bedrock of stability in Chanzeaux. Yet the older inhabitants of Chanzeaux are much less likely to have been born in the commune than the generation twenty to forty years younger. A rough comparison shows that less than half of the present inhabitants over sixty were born in Chanzeaux, whereas more than half of those between twenty and sixty were born there. For men this tendency is even more exaggerated. Part of this may be the result of an unusual influx of agricultural workers during the decade before the First World War. Grandfather Guitière came to the commune during this period because of his marriage to a local girl. To help him work his farm he hired for three days a week a young worker from Chemillé, M. Tessier, who settled in the nearby village of Les Touches and several years later also married a local girl. Although it is true that in the bourg older people are more likely to have been born in the commune, even there old M. Forget and his wife are exceptional because they were both born in the commune—and M. Forget can trace his ancestry in the bourg back at least as far as the Vendée war.

M. Forget, like most of the old people, enjoys telling of his youth. A favorite story is his description of sitting at the feet of a very old lady—at least a hundred years old—when he himself was a very young child, and of listening to her tell of her own childhood. At the age of three, during the Vendée war, she had been lifted down from the burning church tower in the Chanzeaux bourg. When the republican troops allowed the women and children to escape, she was one of them. For most of the old men, M. Forget included, the First World War stands out as the most important event in their lives, much more noteworthy than the Second World War. M. Fribault served for fifty-two months of active service on all fronts and came through without a scratch—much to his chagrin since he now receives no pension. Auguste Hérault of Le Plessis was not so lucky; he has scars of shrapnel wounds in his right hand and almost died of the fever that followed; he was saved only because his wife traveled to the hospital and fed him the soup of an unknown fruit after the doctors had given up hope. Today he enjoys discussing de Gaulle's force de frappe and the American military-service laws. The older
women do not speak often of the war, although many had fathers, brothers, or husbands who went to the front. They prefer to reminisce about school experiences. Grandmother Ditière of La Brosse insists that young children today are not taught as well as she was taught seventy years ago; she knew all the place names of the department and her grandchildren do not know even the commune. Or, more often, the old women gossip about everyday incidents.

Although the hardships of the older generation has become legendary, few of the old would want to return to the conditions of the past. Today they eat better, they have radios and newspapers, they can travel greater distances, and they have better medical care. Sixty years ago, Mme. Ditière explains, black bread was a staple in her family's diet; they were lucky to have meat once or twice a month. Now even a family of moderate means can have meat almost once a day. M. Tessier, who is making up for past abstinence, explains that as an agricultural worker he had wine only on special feast days and was lucky if he drank a bottle a year. Moreover, he worked harder. Fifty years ago it took several workers with small scythes a month to harvest a field by hand; now it takes less than a day with a combine.

While most of the old readily accept these changes, some point out that changes in values have accompanied material gains. The virtual revolution in transportation is a most striking example of changing attitudes. M. Tessier says that he was almost twenty when he had his first bicycle and, because he was one of the first to have one, it was made completely of wood, without even rubber tires. To spend Sunday in the bourg was an all-day expedition for him; once in the bourg he had to do his week's business as well as his socializing. The seven cafés were full all day long with men. M. Forget, who was brought up in the bourg, was also one of the first to have a bicycle, but the roads were so bad and the bicycle so uncomfortable that he rarely left town, let alone the commune. His son had a little more freedom and would often make thirty-mile tours with his friends on a Sunday afternoon. There were, he remembers, even groups of young people in Chanzeaux and neighboring communes who formed drama clubs and took turns putting on various plays. His seventeen-year-old daughter, however, has only a bike and is unhappy. All her friends who work with her at the basket factory have mahyettes and think nothing of making a trip to Chemillé or even Chalonnes.
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Besides the motorbikes, there is now a bus to Cholet and Angers which comes into the bourg itself twice a day, not to mention the frequent buses along the national highway that can be flagged down at the Bon René. With such freedom of movement comes independence of spirit. Grandmother Oliveau and her daughter, Mme. Frémondière, both say this change has come only in the last twenty years. Grandmother Oliveau, although born in Chemillé, has lived most of her life in Chanzeaux, and both her daughters married in Chanzeaux. Now Mme. Frémondière’s daughter is engaged to a mechanic in Versailles, and her son commutes to work in a neighboring commune. But both grandmother and mother accept the change: what can they do when confronted by such an advance in transportation?

The myth of the Vendée Rebellion and the prerevolutionary values—the veneration of the local priest and the local chateau owner—have little meaning in this new world. M. Forget still speaks of the rebellion, but he cannot explain its causes and talks only of the beautiful murals and the stained-glass windows in the church that commemorate it. For the nobility he has no love—the people were slaves to the chatelain, whose wife would order stale bread from Forget’s mother in order to feed her animals and then hand out what was left to the poor of the bourg. These old men know little of the rebellion and care little for the nobility they are acquainted with, but they feel an affinity for a pre-Revolution nobility they never knew. As one astute old man explained, the older generation today is closer to the generation of the Vendée Rebellion than the generation after World War II is to its elders. Traditional values no longer have much meaning, and most of the old accept the change as inevitable.

Among traditional values, however, that of family closeness is still emphasized. The aged expect their children to take care of them when they retire. For farmers this means that their children will help to support them if they retire to the bourg or, as is more common, when they retire to a restricted part of the house. André Blond père moved into a separate part of the house when he signed over his lease to his younger son. Even when the family finances are meager, arrangements for the old will be made. The Ditières of La Brosse live with three generations in three rooms, and the grandfather is cared for constantly because he must stay in bed all day long. In the bourg, on
the other hand, one or the other generation usually moves into a separate household. Grandfather Forget and his wife moved from their shop when their son and his family moved in as head tailor.

The old usually accept retirement in family as well as business matters without complaint. Occasionally there are instances of bitterness between generations, and the scandal this causes proves the prevalence of peaceful patterns. When Georges Pinier took over his father's farm, for example, he expected to move into the farmhouse with his wife and three young children, but his mother refused to let the young family have more than one room in which to cook, eat, and sleep. The son took his case to court where, despite the letter of the law, it was ruled that the mother should move out. Even faced with the court's ruling, the mother will not move, and the son does not have the heart to force her. As a result he drives out to the farm from the bourg every morning at five, not to return until after ten in the evening (his wife is quite bitter about this). The Pinier case stands out so sharply because the limits of the family bond are usually accepted without question by the old. Grandfather Guitièrè moved into a separate room when he allowed his son Paul to take over the lease of the farm. Paul, in his turn, has built an addition to the house so that his recently married son will stay on the farm with him. In the meantime grandfather Guitières is free to do as he likes.

Although grandfather Guitières, like many of the old people, is quick to point out that he is free to do as he wishes, he will also admit that he does everything he can to help. On the farm the old men help outside, while the old women help with the housework. André Blond père often helps to pitch manure in the barn, and his wife and maiden sister pick camomile during the summer. The sister, who also lives with the Blond family, does most of the cooking. So does grandfather Tessier, who is unable to help outside and who learned to cook in the army. Mme. Ditière, who at eighty can no longer walk about, spends her time knitting for her grandchildren.

If an old person lives alone or has no children, ties with more distant members of the family often develop. Auguste Hérault has lived alone since his wife's death in 1959, but his daughter, who lives a quarter of a mile away, comes every day to wash his dishes and tidy up. Mme. Diard, on the other hand, had no children; and when she and her husband grew older, Madame asked a niece who lived in Chemillé to move in with them, promising that her family would
inherit the farm. Since then, M. Diard has died and the nephew has taken over the farm, but Mme. Diard has a privileged place by the fire and is surrounded by family.

Sometimes there is no nephew or niece to call upon, and in this case other relationships replace family ties in old age. The Malinges and the Faligands developed such an arrangement; the Malinges were childless and the owners of the farm that M. Faligand farmed. The Malinges celebrated the Faligand children's feast days, and the two families would often spend Sunday together. A similar relationship grew up between the Bertrands and the Mérists, who also happened to be childless and landlords of the Bertrands. Charles Mér, sixty years the senior of Georges Bertrand, insists that Georges call him by his first name. One of the Sage brothers, who is deaf and earns something of a living by pedaling a cart to collect rabbitskins and other odds and ends, has no family; so his neighbor, Mme. Emile Boutin, sometimes invites him in for a glass of beer and cookies, talking with him in a special sign language that they have made up, or simply shouting in his ear. A 1963 survey of Chanzeaux by the group Economie et Humanisme shows that no one in the commune of Chanzeaux is alone in his old age; all are in contact with children or neighbors. The results of the survey would not surprise the Chanzeans, for family and quasi-family bonds are expected.

Yet forces are now developing that may break down such bonds, not the least of which is the revolution of transportation in the last twenty years, as the example of the different generations of the Oliveau family has shown. Two other major developments have been old-age homes (maisons de retraite) and social-security pensions. Traditionally homes for the aged were confined to larger cities, such as Angers and Cholet, and to communities where there were religious orders to run the establishment, as in Gonnord and Salle de Vihiers. Today, in the vicinity of Chanzeaux, there are old-age homes in Angers, Chemillé, Gonnord, La Jumellière, and Rochefort. Of the homes in Angers and Chemillé, the old people of Chanzeaux know little. The old-age home in Gonnord, however, has a bad reputation because it is a hospital where both the old and the sick are taken. Since there is no longer even a resident doctor, each patient must have a private doctor from a neighboring commune. In La Jumellière each old person has a separate room, and again he must have his own doctor.
The old-age home in Rochefort, on the other hand, may be a sign of the future. Even though the building was not quite finished, the home opened at the end of the summer of 1964 and the first inhabitants were received. The communes of Rochefort, Denée, Beaulieu, and Saint-Aubin joined together in financing the home, although their contributions amounted to less than one fifth of the final cost of 700,000 francs; the conseil général of the Maine-et-Loire and social security covered the rest. These four communities share the facilities. The home has accommodations for sixty people, who have the choice between a single room or a double one, if they feel they cannot live alone. Together they share a common room, complete with television and cardtables, and a dining room where they are served specially prepared meals. Social-security funds help to finance the building, and most of the old people living in the home will pay the bulk of their expenses with old-age pensions.

Closer to Chanzœux is a projected old-age home in the neighboring commune of Saint-Lambert. It is being planned by the Association de Bienfaisance, made up of a dozen men who were worried by the number of old people being forced to leave their families. Plans were proposed in 1956 to build a home for twenty retired people; eight years later they had to be revised on a larger scale, for forty people. Because the plans have to be approved not only by building coordinators at the department level but also by the national committee on old-age homes, much time has gone by, and only recently has the association received permission to start construction. In the meantime, the cost of building has gone up and, because the association is forced by an old anticlerical law to be philanthropic, it lacks funds even to start demolition of the buildings on its property. Several years ago the association offered the municipal council of Saint-Lambert the opportunity to underwrite the operation, but the proposal, presented by the elderly and wealthy mayor who did not understand the need for the home, was turned down. Present plans call for a loan from an association underwritten by the government; thus although the state does not directly support the project of a private association, it does underwrite the necessary expenses.

Like the mayor of Saint-Lambert, few of the old people in Chanzœux will admit the need for an old-age home. When they are asked about existing homes, the answer is always vague — they think there must be something in Angers and something in Gonnord, but “Chan-
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zeans never enter such a home unless they live alone and cannot care for themselves.” They themselves have never considered going into such a home, for they will live with their children. M. Vinconneau of Beaulieu, who serves as doctor in Chanzeaux, attributes this reluctance to the reputation of old-age homes as places where the sick and dying are thrown in with the healthy, often in one dormitory-like room. Dr. Vinconneau himself avoids visiting the homes whenever possible, never having been to the old-age home in Gonnord and going to the one in La Jumelière only because he is the private doctor of one of the patients.

The growing independence made possible by the social-security system is another factor in the breakdown of traditional family bonds. A system of sorts has existed since 1930 for most salaried workers, but agricultural lobbies in the government have kept the agricultural workers and farmers separate from the general social-security system. Present compromise legislation has been in effect only since 1952. Social-security taxes are now obligatory for agricultural workers and farmers, but they are allowed to organize their own semiprivate insurance association (the Mutualité Sociale Agricole) with over half its funds coming from the government.

The case of Jean Bourgeaud readily illustrates the procedure and potential effect of the present social-security provisions. Unable to do a normal amount of work because of ill health, Bourgeaud applied for his pension in December 1963 although he had not yet reached his sixty-fifth birthday, when he would normally receive the pension. At the townhall he was given an application form on which he had M. Delaunay put down the necessary legal information to establish the validity of his claim. He himself outlined the dates and places he had worked as a nonsalaried agricultural worker and informed the Mutualité of his current financial situation. M. Bourgeaud was eligible for a full pension because he had been a farmer for at least fifteen years and had paid all his social-security taxes since 1952—a per capita tax of 25 francs and a percentage (26 percent in January 1964) of the cadastral value of the land under cultivation. His completed application then had to be checked by the departmental office of the Mutualité against their record of his tax payments and their special social-security land census. By August 1964 the Mutualité had calculated Bourgeaud’s pension. The basic pension is 450 francs a year ($90) and is awarded to all farmers who have paid social-
security taxes. But the Mutualité takes other factors into account when calculating the total benefits. Because Bourgeaud farmed a large property, his social-security taxes had been higher than many of his neighbors', and his benefits were increased in proportion to these taxes. Even counting these benefits, however, Bourgeaud’s income still was not higher than the minimum income for an elderly couple of 4,700 francs a year (around $940), and he therefore receives a supplementary allowance from the government and a complementary allowance from the Mutualité. The total benefits are then increased by 10 percent because his wife lives with him and has no outside income. Bourgeaud’s total pension amounts to a total of 1,800 francs a year ($360) paid to him by postal check every three months. At sixty-five his pension will be revised and increased if necessary.

M. Bourgeaud’s pension is only slightly above average for the benefits of the eighty retired farmers now living in Chanzeaux. Very few people are wealthy enough to receive no pension at all. Yet even with a pension the old person must have some outside income, for social-security benefits will not support even a person who limits his wants within reason. Social-security benefits, however, have steadily become a larger part of the old person’s income and have benefited more people.

To be eligible for a pension, according to the law, one had to have paid one’s taxes for at least five years since 1952, and many of the farmers over seventy had retired before 1957. To include these people in the social-security system a recent law, which came into effect in 1963, allowed retired farmers to pay now for the years they worked without paying social-security dues. Not all of the old people have taken advantage of this legislation. M. Tessier readily saw its advantages and immediately paid 110 francs for his back years; if he had waited a year, he would have had to pay 140. But others through ignorance or prejudice refused to make back payments: Jean-Pierre Gardais cites the case of a farmer who, with less than six months to make up, refused to listen to reason.

To combat such attitudes and to judge cases where people fail to make their payments, all agricultural workers, salaried and nonsalaried, elect representatives from each commune. The authorities of the Mutualité in Angers then keep these representatives up to date on social legislation and current rates of taxes and benefits. Besides these four, Chanzeaux’s representative is Gardais, who is a prominent
member in the bureaucracy of the Mutualité and very willing to speak with local farmers about problems they have with social security. At first these representatives were often called on by the central agency in Angers to make sure that people were making their payments, but today the local representatives have little to do, as people become accustomed to social security.

An important function of these local representatives is to determine incomes of those applying for supplementary benefits, for, although the Mutualité has established sixty-five as the retirement age, many farmers continue to work and earn an income. A recent survey of the whole department of the Maine-et-Loire shows that a more reasonable estimate of the average retirement age is seventy-four. In Chanzeaux retirement is so nebulous that no such estimate has been made. M. Guérin retired recently as postman at the age of sixty-five; yet now he not only works in his potato patch and fishes in the Hyrôme, but he also works as the custodian of the camping ground. Retirement is a gradual and individual process. The height of professional activity comes between thirty and sixty, but two thirds of the people in their sixties and one third of those in their seventies still consider themselves professionally active.

Support naturally has to come from the family or from whatever other ties replace the family but, to help out, the old person will do all he can to curtail his expenses. A faded black or grey dress is almost a uniform for older women; while always neat, it is worn until useless. Nor do the old travel often. When M. Forget handed over his tailor shop to his son, he stopped traveling to Chemillé and Angers for material and customers. For longer trips the old are sometimes organized into groups, which lowers the expense. The war veterans, the firemen, and the farmer’s association (CGA) sponsor a longer trip each year, and some of the older people make the trip with their families. Even M. Sage, who could not hear a word of the tour, went on the veterans’ trip to Normandy in 1964. Because the old do not expect entertainment, they rarely spend money for it. At the annual kermesse to raise funds for the Catholic school, few of the older members of the community were present. Some explained that they thought the price — 5 francs — exorbitant and some protested that it went on too late at night, but most said they just were not interested.

To cut expenses further for their families, many of the aged have gardens or other small enterprises. M. Guérin catches enough fish to
individual and the community
supplement the food supply and in addition tends his potato patch. Mme. Amelin, when she can tear herself away from watching passersby in the bourg, can often be seen carrying a basket of greens up the road to Chanoiseau in order to feed her rabbits. On the farms some of the old men have their own small vegetable gardens, while during the summer many of the old women supplement the family income by working in either the family’s or someone else’s patch of camomile.

Just as professional work is curtailed in old age, so the social life of most of the old is slowed down. In the main social concerns of the citizen of Chanzeaux — politics and religion — the activity of the old is not different from that of younger people, but it has decreased. Politics is the traditional prerogative of men, and the mayor and most of the leaders of the town council have, until the past election, been the elders of the town. Aside from these leaders, few of the old men become actively involved in local political haggling, but almost all have an opinion on politics. Although the older men are more conservative than the younger men, both groups supported de Gaulle in recent elections. The voting behavior of the old people reflects the slowdown in their social activity. Of the population as a whole, three out of five people have voted in all eight elections since 1958. Chanzeans in their sixties, however, gradually become less consistent voters, and only one out of ten people in their eighties voted in the last eight elections. Men continue to vote regularly until late in their sixties, whereas women discontinue voting earlier.

While politics remains the sphere of men, religion is the domain of the women. The decline in religious activity is gradual as a person becomes older, but women still keep more active than men. In the population as a whole, more than eight out of ten inhabitants, including those in their seventies and eighties, attend church every Sunday, and only one out of ten never attends Mass. This is true for men and women alike. The elderly women are the most faithful at communion. Elderly men, on the other hand, receive communion less often even than the younger men. The proportion of women to men who receive communion on common holy days is two to one. Men, on the other hand, greatly outnumber the women in the group of those who take communion only three or four times a year.

Distance from the bourg and increasingly poor health are the largest
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factors in the decreasing social activity of Chanzeans over sixty. The large number of old women, especially widows, in the bourg helps to explain both the religious and the political activity there, as well as the difference between men and women in the consistency of voting. Thus while M. and Mme. Forget can vote steadily because they are in the bourg itself, M. Tessier now finds it impossible to come to the bourg either to vote or to go to church.

Health also becomes an increasing problem with age. Mme. Ditière, who can no longer walk, moves about with the help of a wheelchair. Yet she says she is very religious, and the curé comes to hear confession and give communion as often as six times a year. Those who boast about the hardiness of the Chanzean in his eighties and nineties tend to forget about the large number who die young. There is a popular myth that the old men are able to consume a bottle of eau de vie a day; but people forget the many who died young of bad livers or weak hearts brought on by excessive drinking.

For the most part the old people simply wear out, and heart failure appears to be the major cause of death. Many also have trouble with varicose veins. Moreover, resistance to colds and grippe decreases with age, and a common cold sometimes turns into pneumonia. Tooth decay makes life miserable and sometimes painful. M. Tessier, for example, who walks with a stick because of varicose veins, must also limit himself to a liquid diet, because his teeth— or rather his tooth— hangs by a thread. For his legs M. Tessier made a trip to the clinic in Chemillé and to the hospital in Angers. These consultations were time-consuming and inconclusive, but Tessier paid only a nominal fee. Under the present system a patient normally pays the whole of a doctor's fee and is reimbursed 80 percent by the government. The Agricultural Mutualité has introduced a new insurance policy that covers the insuree 100 percent for a fee of 50 francs a person. Although some of the older farmers distrust the new laws, most are sensible about calling the doctor. The old people have never had more or better medical attention than under the present social system.

There is no doubt in the minds of most old people that they are materially better off today. But few are aware how material benefits for the aged, such as old-age homes, social security, and medical care, are breaking down the traditional pattern of family interdependence.
Increasing material welfare may also break down the demographic balance in the commune, for the percentage of old people is growing as the younger people leave for work elsewhere. Such an exodus affects the balance of the active and inactive members of society, which in turn depends on the economic growth of the commune and ultimately of the country as a whole. The present generation of old people may be the last in a system of strong family ties.

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Learning how to live in the community of Chanzeaux takes a lifetime of training. The concepts and habits characteristic of Chanzeaux's family relations, religious practice, and social organization have to be reemphasized at each stage of an individual's life.

The family maintains its traditional role as the organizing institution of the community by making itself indispensable at every stage of a Chanzean's life. It surrounds children as they grow up; it determines the occupational and marriage choices of adolescents; it strengthens the position and security of adults in the community; and it takes care of old people. Religious behavior also develops throughout a lifetime. The devoutness expected of young girls continues through adolescence into adulthood and old age. While women of all ages fill the church, the men from age fifteen to eighty stand at the back of the church or sit in the café.

Finally, in each stage of life Chanzeans are aware of their place in the social structure of the community. Small children from the extreme social groups — the deviants and the Catholic militants — may learn their position from the way they are treated by other children. Adolescents from these groups may sense their separation from others of their age because they went to the public school or to secondary school. And young people from the middle of the social structure identify their place by distinguishing themselves from the deviants they are not supposed to be and from the militants they are not prepared to be. Yet it seems likely that the distinctions based on education, devoutness, residence, and occupation, by which these groups identify themselves and each other, may begin to break down. There is no longer a public school to set apart children of deviant families. The bourg is dying as a center of commercial activity, and young people who were born there are drawn to other communes.
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or to the city, where it hardly matters who their fathers were in Chanzeaux. Nor does it matter in what part of the Chanzeaux commune farm adolescents were born when they move away.

The training for participation in a traditional community is effective because the continuity of behavior is unbroken from childhood to old age. Chanzeans of all ages depend on their families, associate with their own sex, and tend to accept without complaint what is given, whether it is a scolding in primary school, a career in adolescence, or a place in their children’s homes in old age. This quality of acceptance may maintain the conservative character of the community, but it also permits the acceptance of change, if change is what is given from outside or above. Chanzeans may not be able to prevent modernization, but they are not unable to adapt to it.

Many of the changes that affect Chanzeans of all ages have come from the outside. The new education laws, not the wishes of Chanzeaux’s parents, will keep children in school till the age of sixteen. The aspirations of adolescents for marriages and careers that are scarcely possible in Chanzeaux derive from contact with the outside world. Social security and old-age homes have been introduced not in response to the desires of Chanzeans but by government or private agencies. So far Chanzeaux’s adolescents have allowed their aspirations to remain unlinked to their planning for the future. And old people have resisted what they consider the least desirable of the welfare services, old-age homes. But there are also pressures for change indigenous to the community. There are now even fewer job opportunities for young people in Chanzeaux. Better medical care has increased the life expectancy of old people, and there is no room for them either. Because of demographic pressure, both young and old are being forced to take advantage of the opportunities for supporting themselves, growing up or growing old outside their families and the commune.

What happens to the life cycle in the process of change? Most significantly, it becomes less and less a continuous process of training for the life patterns of the previous generation. For one thing, the community itself is changing; for another, young and old are increasingly drawn outside the commune and the family. There are more sharp breaks, such as leaving the community, during the process of growing up than there were before. The three-generation family,
which encased the life cycle of an individual, is becoming a thing of the past. It is not that each generation today lives much differently from the previous one; but the close relationships among the generations, which allowed traditional values to be passed on from parents to children, are slowly lessening and opening the way for acceptance of change.
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