

Unit 10: Video 2 Transcript

Q3: How was old age defined in the past?

A: In the past, old age, I think it was conceived rather differently than it is today. For men, old age was really defined by when they were unable to work for wages anymore. Now, I think old age is defined by when you get your old age pension, at age 65. For women, work was different in the past. They were less securely anchored in a waged labour force. Though many women, of course, in the past had to work, and had to work when they became older. But their sense of age was a different kind of functionality in terms of not necessarily their ability to work for wages, but I would guess their ability to just perform the kinds of waged and unwaged labour that they had done in terms of housekeeping, and running a house, and food provisioning, and caregiving. But in the past, as today for women, part of what changes the moment they become “old” is when they shift from being a caregiver to a person who receives care. I suppose there’s a continuity in terms of men’s identity. As in the past, today men’s identity is more linked to wage labour. So I suppose for men today, as in the past, moving out of the wage labour force signals an aging—a marker, is a marker for them.