Dependence and autonomy in old age: an ethical framework for long term care


Perhaps the change of title says it all. This is the revised edition of Agich’s Autonomy and Long Term Care, which was itself a seminal work. The new title gives us the main drift: if autonomy is important in old age, so too is dependence. Indeed, in the actual world in which Agich is keen to locate his study, autonomy and dependence intermingle as inescapable features of old age for real people. As he says: “Maintaining a sense of autonomy in old age: an ethical framework for long term care” (p 121).

The present book retains and renews its standing as a first rate work in the field of philosophical medical ethics. It aims “to sketch a framework for respecting autonomy in practice” (p 179), rather than to work out practical guidelines (p 179). Nevertheless, its strength lies in Agich’s ability to move from the real world of often dependent older people to the philosophical underpinnings of our thinking about how we care for them. In so doing, Agich mounts a powerful attack on what he sees as a prevailing tendency in long term care, rather than to work out the practical guidelines (p 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73). I would not accept, however, the linkage made between the institutional (page 73)