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## Old Age and Other Essays

*Norberto Bobbio*

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**Norberto Bobbio : Old Age and Other Essays** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Old Age and Other Essays:

This book by one of Italy's oldest and wisest intellectuals is a philosophical and personal meditation on ageing. The question of old age has preoccupied writers from Cicero to Amery, but in this volume Norberto Bobbio produces an account that is specific to our times. Born in 1909, Bobbio has lived through the major events of the past century, and his experiences of Fascism, Communism and the Cold War lend his reflections a melancholy that distinguishes them

from earlier eulogies on old age and death. Bobbio's conclusions are often sobering, yet his investigation into memory and mortality is written with both humour and emotion. In the opening chapter, Bobbio reassesses the notion of progress from the perspective of an old man. Arguing for an understanding of historical change as the transfer between generations, Bobbio explains how the elderly are increasingly marginalized in contemporary society. Referring to the traditional idea of old age as the 'age of wisdom', Bobbio argues that our ever-accelerating technological progress has dramatically shifted the power of knowledge from old to young. This discussion of old age as a social problem is accompanied by a reflection on old age as a personal predicament. In his elegant and lucid prose, Bobbio confronts the facts of decrepitude and death. In taking stock of his life, he argues once again for the importance of democracy and human rights. This is a beautifully written book that will be of great interest to the academic and general reader alike. Its intellectual content renders it of particular value to students in the fields of philosophy, politics and the social sciences.