

Old Age Worth Living - Illusionary?

Franco De Masi

Psychotherapy in old age. The object and the purpose.

Abstract

Transformative life stages are three: the first takes us from childhood to adolescence, the second from adolescence to maturity, and the third from maturity to old age. The last of these has been explored less by psychoanalytic investigation, hence my attempt to examine it in depth here.

Old age imposes increasingly difficult conditions on the individual: it can no longer be ignored that life has a limit, nor can the fact that the body becomes increasingly fragile, or that affects are challenged by continual losses and mournings.

In this paper I have sought to open up several perspectives for therapeutic work with people who go through a particularly complex period of their life in old age. The need to give meaning to one's life and to understand what could not be understood previously, which in my opinion are central problems in any analysis, come to the fore with greater urgency as the time of life gets shorter.

Christiane Schrader

Psychic Growth and Development in Old Age – an Illusion?

Abstract

Since Freud's lifetime and the emergence of psychoanalysis, the average lifetime in Europe has roughly doubled, as has the duration of marriages. The age phase in the course of life has lengthened, enriched and differentiated and also psychoanalysts have learned more about old age and the treatment of elderly patients who increasingly seek our help.

Thus the view has widened beyond the inevitable losses and limitations of old age to the possibilities of psychic development in this late period of life. Psychic growth and development result not only from mourning and coping with losses and the fear of death, but also from lifelong inner and outer conflicts, traumas and object relations. On this basis,

perspectives for psychoanalysis and psychotherapy with elderly patients are developed and illustrated by examples. Special attention is thereby paid to the dynamics of transference and countertransference between older patients and younger analysts.