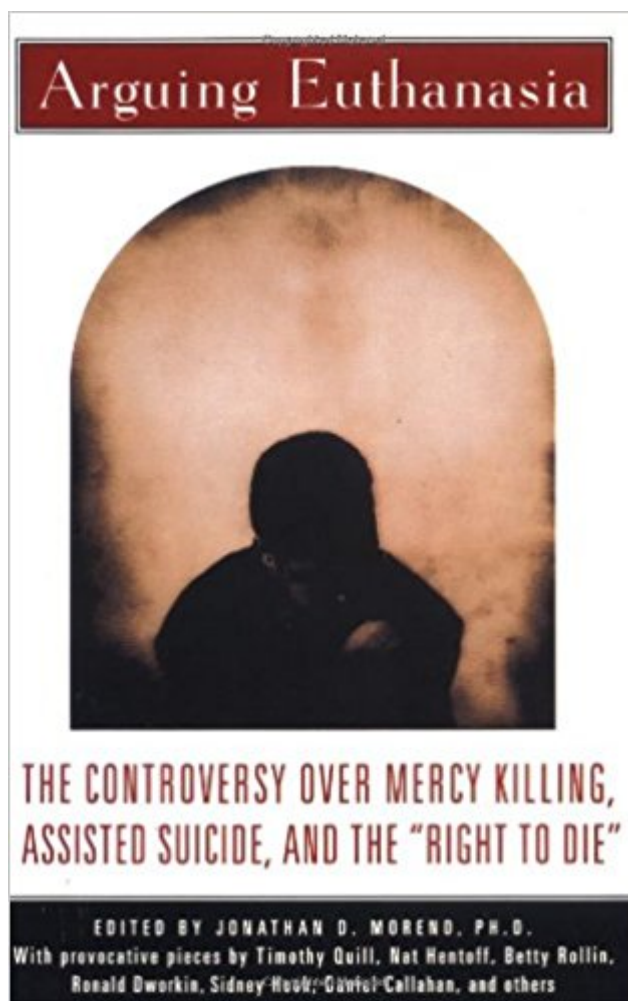


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# Arguing Euthanasia: The Controversy Over Mercy Killing, Assisted Suicide, And The "Right To Die"



## Synopsis

The proliferation of life-prolonging technology in recent years has made the controversy over the "right to die" and physician-assisted suicide one of the most explosive medical and ethical issues of our day. Dr. Jack Kevorkian's "suicide machine" has commanded front-page coverage for several years, while in 1994 Oregon passed a measure allowing the terminally ill to obtain lethal prescriptions for suicide, and other states have placed similar proposals on their ballots. *Arguing Euthanasia* brings together for the first time an impressive array of viewpoints from both sides of this emotionally charged question as well as voices from the gravely ill and their loved ones. Beginning with a selection of pieces from the *New England Journal of Medicine*, where the debate was ignited in 1988, *Arguing Euthanasia* features essays by such outspoken advocates of active euthanasia as Timothy Quill and Sidney Hook, and important social critics and commentators such as Nat Hentoff, Leon R. Kass, and Ronald Dworkin. As they probe the legal and ethical issues at the heart of physician-assisted suicide, these essays offer invaluable insights not only for those caring for the terminally ill but for anyone concerned with the deeper philosophical conflict between enduring life-oriented values and personal dignity that lies at the heart of this controversy.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The right of terminally ill patients to put an end to their suffering has been treated as homicide in every country except the Netherlands—at least until November 8, 1994. On that date, Oregon voters became the first in our nation to approve assisted suicide, although the measure did not survive a court challenge. This collection of 19 provocative essays, by medical professionals and social

commentators, examines the question. Hippocrates could not have imagined 2000 years ago the consequences of today's aggressive end-of-life hospital care. Most of us will die in institutions, rather than at home, surrounded by staff, rather than a personal physician. And all of us must ask: Given the resources for medical intervention, will I be allowed to die with dignity? This collection documents the popular movement that culminated in Oregon's referendum, beginning in 1988 with the anonymous Journal of the American Medical Association article, "It's Over, Debbie." It also includes Dr. Timothy E. Quill's 1991 landmark piece, "Death and Dignity," as well as personal accounts of assisted suicide by Richard Selzer and Betty Rollin. As they probe the legal and ethical issues at the heart of the postmodern dilemma ("What is a dignified death?"), these arguments offer valuable insights for humane treatment. They promise to become even more timely as life-prolonging technology advances. Copyright 1995 Reed Business Information, Inc.

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This book gave lots and lots of arguments that were very nice and well thoughtout, but it often seemed that the point-counterpoint "arguing" was a little redundant. The whole book consisted of an article or an event that had to do with the ethics of euthanasia and two people with conflicting views would write why. I wish that the book had some documented dialog between the two opinions. It was a little boring reading the same opinions over and over again. "euthanasia as long as it is consensual and necessary should be permitted yada yada yada" "killing another innocent being should not be permitted at all because it is murder yada yada yada" Each and every writer was very elegant and well spoken, but I simply wish there was more dialog between the two people, not simply between book editors.

Jonathan D. Moreno, PhD, editor Arguing Euthanasia: The Controversy over Mercy Killing, Assisted

Suicide, and the "Right to Die" (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1995) 251 pages A collection of 19 articles by well-known authors such as Timothy Quill, Nat Hentoff, Betty Rollin, Ronald Dworkin, Sidney Hook, Daniel Callahan, H. Tristram Engelhardt, Jr., Margaret Pabst Battin, Dan Brock, & Leon Kass. Both sides of the debate are well represented. And this format--presenting complete articles--gives more space to each thinker than other 'both-sides' collections, which usually give each author only 2 or 3 pages. This book could be a good introduction to the issues, but it does not break any new ground. If you would like to read other books on these themes, search the Internet for the following precise expression: "Books on the Right-to-Die" James Leonard Park, advocate of the right-to-die with careful safeguards.

It goes without saying that this is an immensely difficult subject--one about which I have many conflicting thoughts--so it was very gratifying to have someone present the relevant issues in such a clear and balanced way. Thanks to Jonathan Moreno for this book.

Very thorough. Covers the Dutch model, the history of events in Oregon, and, best of all, includes the viewpoints from the gravely ill and their loved ones. This is probably the most comprehensive and balanced book on this subject that is available.

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