

# Euthanasia essay



In relation to euthanasia the general consensus is split into two main groups: those in favour and those opposed. But the issue that makes euthanasia such a constant topic of debate is that both sides have the potential to present extremely clear and persuasive arguments in their favour.

Those who support the practice of active euthanasia might argue that helping the terminally ill to bring about their own deaths, allowing them to determine the how and when, is not only humane, but also allows the person, who is simply "living to die," to maintain dignity by orchestrating their own end, thus letting them die at peace, rather than suffer to the end, perceiving themselves to be a burden and/or disgrace, to those they love.

Those who are against active euthanasia would argue that by participating in the practice of active euthanasia, one is "playing God," or perhaps, even worse, that they are not acting out of mercy, but rather out of selfishness, attempting to lessen their own burden. Some would argue that the practice of euthanasia is used as a last resort, when the individual can no longer manage the pain of their illness. However, that argument can be rebutted by an observation made by a proponent of a movement similar to Right to Die.

One can argue that pain is never justification for euthanasia considering the advanced medical techniques currently available to manage pain in almost every circumstance. Thus the pain does not justify death, but rather it justifies the need for more money to educate health care professionals on better pain management techniques. From this topic several problems of knowledge emerge with regards to perceptual issues, inductive logic,

deductive logic, language, and bias. However, despite all these it is the ethical justification that lies at the core of this argument.

Because the meaning of good has been manipulated to mean such a broad variety of thing and can fit into many different contexts it is becoming increasingly difficult to define good, or to prove that an action is good. So the first question that arises from this statement is " what is a good moral choice? " how can we determine what good is when there are many different opinions? Is an action good if the nature of the intentions of the action are considered good? Or is it the consequences of the action? Or perhaps it is a combination of both the intentions and the consequences and its effect on society.

The problem in making a decision, which can be called ethically justified in relation to euthanasia, is that the issue is so complex with such a varied selection of tangents that almost any argument can be justified. If we assume that it's the consequence of the action that determines its relative goodness. There is a justifiable argument to suggest both that euthanasia is a legitimate course of action and that it should be abolished. It is the unpredictability of the consequence that prevent a definitive decision being made in this forum.

The immediate example that springs to mind is if euthanasia is not performed and a human keeps on living a life with suffering and into a compromising situation. Because the loved ones are unable to give the individual any lift on his or her suffering, a situation that is both hard on the patient but also emotionally difficult on the loved ones because they have to

witness the person they know go through a life that is not worth living any more. If an individual experiences nothing but misery and unhappiness for the rest of its life can it be argued that euthanasia is bad.

This argument about the quality of life is often related to euthanasia in that human rights dictate that every person has the right to a life of decent quality. However if doctors can predict that the situation of the individual will not improve under any other circumstance than a miracle, and is likely to be unresponsive or live a life in pain. That handicap cannot be termed a consequence which will make the action good so how has the abolition of euthanasia be ethically justified? But on the other hand how can we know what potential is being erased, or how many opportunities have been lost before they had even realised.

The individual may recover by some miracle as said before, and this may give new insight to the medical institution to prevent such cases of happening again. Both sides of the argument are equally represented by the unpredictable ambiguity of consequences make it almost impossible to conclude which of the options can be classed as morally acceptable. But making a decision that is morally sound is rarely if ever completely detached. Because of the life we've lived and the experiences that have moulded our thoughts and perceptions of matters will be influenced and this is certainly true in the case of euthanasia.

Several things can influence the way euthanasia is perceived. This includes gender, religion, age epoch and tradition. For example: the concept of euthanasia is considered more acceptable to those who have been in any

contact with it, this through a relative receiving euthanasia. Thus the people who have personally experienced the emotional devastation of a relative being incurably sick will be more likely to be open to euthanasia, whereas the people who have never been in any close contact with it, will differ in opinion. Of course this all depends on the individual with the ideas they have.

Religion is a highly emotive topic with regards to euthanasia. In Christianity there are different opinions, the Roman Catholic Church and the people devoted to this church will see the suggestion of euthanasia like almost committing an act of heresy. It is absolutely forbidden. Under the Catholic religion it is taught that life or anything that is bestowed upon us by God is sacred and should be worshipped and not destroyed. Therefore people who experience an upbringing that is influenced by the Catholic Church are predisposed to oppose euthanasia.

This is different to a person with an Islamic upbringing, the Muslims agree that a person is artificially kept alive and have no hope of recovering have right to euthanasia. However they believe that it is God's will to keep the individual in the state that they are in but God could at any time intervene and cure the individual. Thus from a religious point of view the Muslim will trust God and will not intervene with his work. The Jews are more open to the topic of euthanasia, however the Jewish community has concluded that euthanasia cannot be an option because according to their God life cannot be shortened.

But if the doctors agree that doing anything will not help the individual, euthanasia is allowed. The eastern religions such as Buddhism and Hinduism say that euthanasia disturbs the balance in society. Buddhism believes that respect is the priority in the society, and thus also respect for the individual is important to them. They believe that if the individual is in a state where there is no improvement visible in the future euthanasia is allowed to respect the individual. Hinduism agrees with Buddhism that euthanasia disrupts the karma of some individuals and therefore it is better not to allow euthanasia.

From this one can conclude that the idea of euthanasia is highly influenced by religion. With atheists the individual has to make up their own mind on the topic because they have no holy book prescribing them what their point of view is on euthanasia. The epoch one lives in also is an influence on the perception of euthanasia. Younger generations are growing up in more liberal society where euthanasia is an open option for parents, certainly there are still different views, but society definitely does not so unanimously frown upon the issue like they would a few generations back.

The problem of inductive logic is very applicable to analysing the ethics surrounding euthanasia. Because of the impossibility of extrapolation from the present into the future it is impossible to accurately conclude that one day it will be unanimously morally good to undergo euthanasia. It is also highly unlikely that a general consensus will agree on one side of the argument and that by itself leads to more problems. Nothing can be true unless it is: 1. Believed to be true 2. Has good grounds to be true 3. And there are good grounds for believing it true.

Abiding by the statements it is true to call euthanasia morally just but likewise we cannot say it is true to call the abolition of euthanasia ethically justifiable. Implying that one counter example would make either claim unjustifiable, this is the problem of weight of evidence. Already we can see that the opinion on euthanasia has changed as time progressed and society developed. So on this count it is impossible to call either argument true. There are excellent arguments for both sides however the fact that there are two sides at all nullifies whatever logical explanation one side produces.

In the case of euthanasia the language is often more expressive as opposed to informative. Everybody already has a standard understanding and those who are trying to insist on moral justification can realise that an emotional petition is likely to be far more effective than stressing facts which can often be unconvincing despite how true they may be. We can conclude from this that the principle function of language in practise is the expression of opinions and the attempt to educe others to entertain the same beliefs.

Euthanasia can be a highly emotional topic and this aspect is certainly emphasised in all debates on the topic. Language is where we can most clearly see the bias and persuasive motives and where statements of personal taste or preference are communicated. While ostensibly the function of language is to communicate the facts frequently the speaker has ulterior motives where they would wish for the audience to gradually accept and adopt the opinion for their own. In this case both sides of the ethical argument have deductive logic at their disposal. Euthanasia touches some of the deepest feelings in human beings.

It is the power over life and death, and responsibilities no one wishes to take, have to be taken. This, of course, leads to the ultimatum, that it is the patient's own choice. But can we allow someone to take their lives? From the patient's point of view, a lot of arguments talk in favour of euthanasia. It can be mentioned that the life quality of a terminally ill patient, gets reduced a lot. The whole situation only gets worse, if the patient himself can see that his condition is worsening, and only time keeps his thoughts clear thus how are they able to decide if they are ill enough to undergo euthanasia?

If they are no longer able to make this decision it is up to the relatives to decide on the matter, but how can they make a well-informed decision, their opinion will be biased based on different perceptions on the situation. The Doctor will help in the decision but he himself will have a hidden agenda behind the advice he gives to the people involved. There can still be no conclusion to a question, whether Euthanasia should be accepted or not. Psychologists, philosophers, doctors and everybody else, will consider this question for all time.

One could argue that anyone who is terminally ill should have the choice, but to all rules there are exceptions, and to something as serious as this, there shouldn't be. In the end it all comes down to the individual making up his or her mind about this heated topic. It is thanks to free will that people are able to do so and that the individuals are able to choose to follow the opinion of their surrounding or if they will oppose to it. The arguments are there to persuade one, but personally one has to choose which side of the argument is more valid to the individual.