

Applied Ethics (HPPH7016)

Assignment 1

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Essay

Should a Person Have the Right to Insist That They are Euthanized?

I. Relevance of the Topic: On Two Trends That Must Not Be Overlooked

Today

Modern interpretations of euthanasia are deeply rooted in our positive understanding that people suffering from different incurable illnesses ought to have the right to escape so-called '*living for suffering*' in favour of terminating their lives. Before unveiling my viewpoint regarding this matter, I aspire to highlight some recent data points which beautifully elucidate not only why this subject remains relevant, but 2 very ambiguous tendencies accompanying the recognition of euthanasia in certain countries.

First of all, in those states where assisted suicide practices are legal, they account for 0.26% to 3.03% of nonviolent deaths, while more than 60% of those deaths, based on 2024 data, were related to cancer. The other 40% are diseases related to dementia, followed by mental and behavioural disorders,

polypathologies, ALS, and indefinite cases named as ‘*others*’¹. Before discussing the moral side of this issue, we should face up to the fact that euthanasia or assisted suicide is sometimes applied to medical cases where the further fate of a patient can be recognised as ‘*indeterminate*’ rather than ‘*fatal*’. If we consider this, the topic starts gaining interest as *there is a vast difference between terminating the life of a person who hypothetically could be saved, compared to those cases where the individual is doomed to death in connection with the diagnosis he cannot oppose any longer*. This is a simple fact, but so crucial. For instance, even stage IV cancer isn't hopeless thanks to advances in contemporary medical treatment if appropriate and timely treatment is provided. With regard to some other diseases listed in the article, we can apply the same logic.

Other enlightening figures on euthanasia show us that as soon as assisted suicide is legalized, it commences to increase its popularity and approval within society. In 2023, the number of enquiries regarding euthanasia in Spain increased by 25% compared to the previous year². As of 2023, the number of notified euthanasia cases in Belgium was 3,423, an increase of 15% in relation to 2022.

Finally, as of 2024, around 5% of all deaths in the Netherlands are the result of

¹ Colombo., Asher. 25.01.2024. Population and Development Review. Data and Trends in Assisted Suicide and Euthanasia, and Some Related Demographic Issues. URL: <https://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/full/10.1111/padr.12605>

² SER. 12.12.2024. Las solicitudes de eutanasia crecieron un 25% en 2023: 766 personas pidieron ayuda para morir y menos de la mitad la recibieron. URL: <https://www.rtve.es/noticias/20241212/solicitudes-eutanasia-crecen-espana-sanidad/16369484.shtml#:~:text=El%20a%C3%B1o%20pasado%20766%20personas.que%20se%20resolviera%20su%20demanda.>

euthanasia³. Why do I keep insisting on taking into consideration these figures?

Trivially, because the second noteworthy fact is that euthanasia is rapidly gaining popularity where it has been legalized.

I decided to focus on this data for several main reasons where the vitally important one is to cover the axiological and ideological risks that humanity will endure as a result of the normalization and de-stigmatization of the right to die in the modern world, in the case of further recognition of an individual's inherent right to euthanasia. Hence in order to answer the question '*Should a person have the right to insist that they are euthanized?*', we must clarify what set of rights a citizen of the liberal-democratic project possesses, who as Jean-Paul Sartre would remark '*...is condemned to be free...*'⁴, and also whether/when it is appropriate to discuss the limits of such freedom.

II. Revision of Epistemology Through a New Problematic. Critique of the Modern

'Libertarian' Approach & Arguments Against Euthanasia

The substantial question underlying any discussion on the topic of euthanasia can be articulated as follows: '*Is a person the property of themselves,*

³ Waterfield., Bruno; Ensor., Josie; Lagan., Bernard; Imam., James; Bremner., Charles; Moody., Oliver 29.11.2024. The Times. Where is assisted dying legal? How the rules worldwide compare. URL: <https://www.thetimes.com/world/us-world/article/assisted-dying-law-countries-hv6cjergz>

⁴ 'I am condemned to exist forever beyond my essence, beyond the causes and motives of my act. I am condemned to be free. This means that no limits to my freedom' can be found except freedom itself or, if you prefer, that we are not free to cease being free.' Sartre., Jean-Paul. Being and Nothingness. Translated by Hazel E. Barnes. University of Colorado. URL: <https://dhspriority.org/kenny/PhilTexts/Sartre/BeingAndNothingness.pdf> (p. 439)

and are there limits to their freedom of choice?’. The way we address it ultimately determines our approach to solving the main problem of this work. At the same time, when I postulate that an individual does or does not have the right to self-terminate their life, I am primarily referring to whether they have the right to demand control over their right to death in one sense or another. Whereas in Antiquity, a positive attitude toward this act was justified through the concept of ‘*dignitas*’, in the Middle Ages, scholastics began to review the very idea of life as a duty to God — ‘*The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away...*’⁵. Nevertheless, already at this point, the two opposing visions are being outlined, which would later only entrench their inevitable course in opposite directions. Nowadays, in my opinion, they have finally taken shape in the form of the ‘*liberal*’ and ‘*libertarian*’ models, which are often viewed from the perspectives of the *conservative* and *progressive worldviews*, respectively. So, aiming to clarify my position, I will be forced to touch upon each of them.

The concept that I, from today's perspective, refer to as ‘*liberal*’ has its epistemological roots in the positions of John Stuart Mill and Immanuel Kant. Mill not only sketched out the boundaries of natural human rights, but he also directly addressed the question of the limits of freedom of choice. In his view, the primary

⁵ “Naked came I out of my mother’s womb, and naked shall I return thither. The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord.” Old Testament. Job 1:21. URL: <https://www.biblegateway.com/verse/en/Job%201%3A21> (KJ21)

human value, which must not be restricted by anything, is the ability and freedom to choose. Therefore, Mill argues, any actions that could ultimately lead to the loss of this freedom must be resisted⁶. Later, Kant would only need to confirm the validity of this idea through his categorical imperative. Hardly anyone would argue that any form of suicide, including euthanasia, contradicts Kant's very notion of the categorical imperative, since if nature accepted suicide in any form as a universal law, it would inevitably turn against itself. That would already be *anti-nature*⁷.

A completely different '*libertarian*' viewpoint was proposed by Thomas More, Francis Bacon, and Michel de Montaigne. Their general perspective was that a person is nobly free to dispose of their life in the same way they would their private property. In '*Utopia*', More advocated for the idea that the terminally ill should be euthanized if they so wish⁸. This idea was later developed by Francis

⁶ 'The only freedom which deserves the name, is that of pursuing our own good in our own way, so long as we do not attempt to deprive others of theirs, or impede their efforts to obtain it. Each is the proper guardian of his own health, whether bodily, or mental and spiritual.' Stuart Mill., John. On Liberty. The Project Gutenberg EBook. URL: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/34901/34901-h/34901-h.htm> (p. 23)

⁷ 'Someone feels sick of life because of a series of troubles that has grown to the point of despair, but is still so far in possession of his reason that he can ask himself whether it would not be contrary to his duty to himself to take his own life. Now he inquires whether the maxim of his action could indeed become a universal law of nature. His maxim, however, is: from self-love I make it my principle to shorten my life when its longer duration threatens more troubles than it promises agreeableness. The only further question is whether this principle of self-love could become a universal law of nature. It is then seen at once that a nature whose law it would be to destroy life itself by means of the same feeling whose destination^ is to impel toward the furtherance of life would contradict itself and would therefore not subsist* as nature; thus that maxim could not possibly be a law of nature and, accordingly, altogether opposes the supreme principle of all duty.' Kant., Immanuel. *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*. Cambridge University Press. Translated and edited by Mary Gregor. URL: <https://cpb-us-w2.wpmucdn.com/blog.nus.edu.sg/dist/c/1868/files/2012/12/Kant-Groundwork-ng0pby.pdf> (p. 31-32)

⁸ '...when any is taken with a torturing and lingering pain, so that there is no hope either of recovery or ease, the priests and magistrates come and exhort them, that, since they are now unable to go on with the business of life, are become a burden to themselves and to all about them, and they have really out-lived themselves, they should no longer nourish such a rooted distemper, but choose rather to die since they cannot live but in much misery.' More., Thomas. *Utopia*. The Project Gutenberg eBook. URL: <https://www.gutenberg.org/cache/epub/2130/pg2130-images.html>

Bacon, who, armed with the Cartesian idea of the dualism of soul and body, saw physical suffering as entirely meaningless, since it results from primitive physiological circumstances. In one of his works, he essentially reinterpreted the physician's role, stating that their true purpose lies not only in treating patients but also in relieving their pain, even to the point of administering death⁹.

While the liberal type of argumentation has remained largely unchanged to this day, the so-called libertarian perspective, by contrast, has significantly accelerated not just in popularity but in its scientific and technological justification. As early as the 19th century, proponents of this approach adopted Darwin's positivist idea, which, rooted in faith in human rationality, promised the inevitability of scientific and technological progress as such. They did so almost imperceptibly by replacing the central idea of irreversible progress and adaptation promoted by social Darwinists with the idea that — through this process of evolution and progress — humanity should ultimately attain all-encompassing happiness by eliminating all forms of suffering. It's not hard to guess that later, the leaders of the two bloodiest totalitarian projects of the 20th century skillfully embraced this worldview. These ideas appealed, on the one hand, to the Nazis, who perceived in them a convenient tool for the purification and perfection of

⁹ 'Nay further, I esteem it the office of a physician not only to restore health, but to mitigate pain and dolors; and not only when such mitigation may conduce to recovery, but when it may serve to make a fair and easy passage.' Bacon., Francis. The Advancement of Learning. The Project Gutenberg eBook. URL: <https://www.gutenberg.org/files/5500/5500-h/5500-h.htm>

humanity; and on the other hand, to the Soviets, who carried out internal and external policies known more broadly by the slogan ‘*There are no invalids in the USSR!*’ excluding from society anyone who could undermine the image of the strong, able-bodied, model Soviet proletarian-citizen. Moreover, even humanists, captivated by the idea of the innate goodness of human nature, saw in euthanasia a means for the full realization of natural rights. Since then and up to the present day, euthanasia has become a panacea for all those who seek to bring about an ideal order of things, allowing for the regulation of suffering through social constructivist methods and, as a consequence, the multiplication of happiness. Ultimately, the euthanasia movement has become not merely a socio-political component in the evolution of the new order, but also a kind of symbolic rejection of traditional Christian morality in the Nietzschean interpretation. It is not complicated to notice that this is a classic example of replacing Christian ideology with the ideology of *scientism*, which in the 21st century is experiencing its undisputed peak. No, this is not just a fantasy about an illusory bright future where all of humanity discovers happiness — it is a strong belief in the possibility of artificially regulating happiness through the positive selection of the jubilant over the unhappy.

The libertarian worldview has so thoroughly permeated all interpretations of humanism that it essentially leaves modern individuals with no real alternative

when confronting to answer the question of the possibility of being euthanized. To be an opponent of euthanasia means, in one way or another, to deny the right of ownership of the self in favor of the Lacanian ‘*Other*’¹⁰. And this is where I see the real hidden problem in responding to any issue related to euthanasia. The question itself is a kind of ideological trap, and as soon as we begin to answer it, we immediately lose to this symbolic libertarian order. The pitfall lies in the fact that under the right to euthanasia, one is seen as having the right to voluntarily end one's life, whereas, in reality, the recognition or legalization of euthanasia transcends this and inevitably leads to the installation of an ideology of death or, let's call it, a *necro-ideology*. As of now, the capitalist economic environment, aimed at the productive nature of labor, subtly replaces the biased and unacceptable totalitarian dichotomy of ‘*necessary/unnecessary*’ with its more visually appealing alternative. For libertarians, euthanasia is an inherent part of the ideological machine whose goal is, on its way, to eliminate suffering. When it comes to reality, by following this new logic, we simply turn death into another commodity for

¹⁰ According to Lacan, a person is incapable of being the owner of their own being since they are a priori and a posteriori dependent on the Other — by which he comprehends everything that influences our motivation (culture, laws, politics, perceptions, stereotypes, society, ideals, etc.). Thus, a person's potential choice in favor of terminating their own life would be viewed by Lacan as an escape from the Other, which again contradicts the very nature of being, offering instead a rupture with the Real. Lacan also demonstratively argues why any theological appeals to God as the source of truth are a pure form of atheism, since the idea of the Divine — just like in our case the idea of our desire to end our own life — is whether we like it or not, formed through the Other, and not derived from some isolated and hyper-rational will of our own. ‘That is why, in the end, only theologians can be truly atheistic, namely, those who speak of God. Nevertheless, it is impossible to say anything without immediately making Him subsist in the form of the Other.’ Lacan., Jacques. *The Seminar of Jaques Lacan*. Edited by Jacques-Alain Miller. Book XX. Encore 1972-1973. Translated with notes by Bruce Fink. NORTON & COMPANY New York London. URL: <https://dn790004.ca.archive.org/0/items/pdfy-bJ5LV1tb2PUIELsx/235786655-Lacan-Encore.pdf> (p. 45)

purchasing and selling, presenting it as the realization of the right to choose while saying something like: *‘Now everyone will have the right to choose between life and death!’* But the issue is not in the choice itself, but in the fantasy they are peddling to us, as if this choice truly exists. *‘Look,’* libertarians tell us, *‘this way we will be free to choose to live or die!’*, as if it were a choice in some car dealership between a brand-new red *Mercedes-Benz* and an old-fashioned, outdated blue *BMW*. But death is not a car brand as well as life is not an option we consciously bought or chose among others to now be able to consciously renounce it. Death is precisely what the entire psychoanalytic school, starting with Lacan, associates with the Real. In simpler terms, death is a concept that cannot be symbolized or metaphorized simply because the Real is not chosen by the subject as it lies outside of them. So, I would say we do not choose death — death chooses us. The attempt by libertarians to move death from the category of the Real into the category of consumer choice is precisely the ideological trap they have prepared for us. In this context, the interpretation of Lacan by Slavoj Žižek is invaluable to me, as he comes to a fascinating conclusion by saying that the merciful attempt to sell the suffering person *‘death’* is an attempt to satisfy the consumer's demand for the eternal life without suffering which is non-existent in reality (in the Real)¹¹.

¹¹ ‘In the fifties, Lacan endeavored to read "death drive" against the background of Heidegger's "being-toward-death" (Sein-zum-Tode), conceiving death as the inherent and ultimate limit of symbolization that provides for its irreducible temporal character. With the shift of accent toward the Real from the sixties onward, however, it is rather the "undead" lamella, the indestructible-immortal life that dwells in the domain "between the two deaths," that emerges as the ultimate object of horror.’ Žižek., Slavoy. *A Hair of the Dog That Bit You*. Lacanian Theory of Discourse. Edited by Mark Bracher, Marshall W. Alcorn, Jr., Ronald J. Corthell, and Françoise

In other words, there is no shared ground between what euthanasia offers and true freedom of choice. So what remains? Only the constructivist logic of libertarians and their epigones that allows them to construct their '*libertarian paradise*' while simultaneously getting rid of everything that resists their positivist order. In this sense, euthanasia is a unique example of so-called '*controlled freedom*', where society permits us to end our lives in a way that is convenient for others, according to rules that this very society has already established. Thus, the individual's desire to end a life filled with unbearable suffering is met by a series of societal demands that must be fulfilled in order to die '*properly*'. If, for example, a citizen of such a society wants to end his life outside of these rules, then it can no longer be considered '*acceptable euthanasia*' but rapidly turns into '*unacceptable suicide*'.

The question of the right to euthanasia has never been solely a question about the right to death. It is, at its core, a matter of what meta-ideology we will build in the aftermath of choosing death. The growing popularity and demand for euthanasia in countries where it has been legalized only further emphasizes its ideological nature, which extends far beyond the issue of individual autonomy or the voluntary ending of life. The very attempt to rationalize death by making it an organic part of life — when in fact death is, by definition, non-life and non-being

— amounts to replacing the true meaning of death with a simulacrum. I should note that, in this case, it matters less whether we're talking about libertarians or, say, utilitarians. When Utilitarians such as Peter Singer call on us to find happiness by minimizing suffering, I see a noble theoretical ambition that loses its meaning the moment it meets practical implementation. Utilitarians make the same mistake as libertarians: they forget that death is a category of objective reality which a living being is fundamentally unable to comprehend, since we are ideologically limited in our reasoning of what death truly is. Thus, making a rational choice in circumstances where the subject literally is not aware of what they are exactly selecting is best described as an illusion of choice. Moreover, with the advancement of scientific and technological progress — and this can already be stated with a certain degree of probability — it will become increasingly challenging to define what death actually is. History shows us that medicine has considered various indicators to determine the moment of human death. The claims that the cessation of breathing or heartbeat signify death were disproved quite some time ago. Instead, since around the mid-20th century, it has been widely accepted that death occurs with the cessation of brain activity. However, by the late 2010s, this idea also began to be reconsidered, when a team of American scientists succeeded in restoring the brain function of a dead pig using a cutting-edge

specialized apparatus¹². This entire biological dogmatism seems not only to fail to provide a clear answer but to distance us further from one. In contrast, some proponents of euthanasia now turn to communicative models to define the boundary between life and death. Their argument suggests that a person remains truly human only insofar as they retain their individuality, expressed through the demonstration of subjectivity within society, such as the abilities to think, communicate, and feel. In this view, a person may be biologically alive but essentially dead, and thus should have the right to choose death. However, even if we take this idea seriously, we inevitably reach the point where we must admit that communication without physiology is impossible as well. Even if we meet all the requirements of this communicative approach and imagine a person whose brain is preserved while their body is entirely dysfunctional, we still — according to this worldview — cannot consider such a person a *full subject*. Thus, the very fact that euthanasia supporters push us towards the question of who still can be counted as a person and who no longer quite does — is already a sign that their ideological trap is working. And yet, there are countless counterexamples in which physiological dysfunction did not prevent human subjectivity. Perhaps the most striking case is that of Stephen Hawking, who could neither move nor speak, and yet led an extraordinarily active social and intellectual life. Moreover, no one even tries to

¹² Hathaway., Bill. Scientists restore some functions in a pig's brain hours after death. URL: <https://news.yale.edu/2019/04/17/scientists-restore-some-functions-pigs-brain-hours-after-death>

conceal the fact that it is absolutely impossible to determine the exact point at which we can claim that a person still remains a subject. Hypothetically, let's compare the subjectivity of a person who has completely lost control over their body, but still retains the ability to speak with the subjectivity of a perfectly healthy citizen of North Korea, who is forced to live under total control in all areas of private and public life. Few would agree that one could argue the healthy person's subjectivity here is in any way superior. Another issue with subjectivity worth mentioning is that it remains unclear which category of people actually possesses it and which does not. And if everyone possesses it, then at what exact point do we lose it? The phantasmagoric nature of the idea of subjectivity is obvious in the way defenders of euthanasia try to assign the presence or absence of abstract *rational will* to a person. But in that case, let me ask once again then: can, for instance, a gravely ill father of three with an outstanding bank loan and a sense of trust in the competence of the doctors treating him, truly make a rational decision when choosing between life and death? I believe the answer to this question is would be absolutely rhetorical...

The ideological framework within which a living being exists provides us with no key to understanding either death or the definition of subjectivity. I must say that Singer leads us into a similar dead end. As soon as we accept euthanasia, we begin to assess and calculate the feasibility, productivity, necessity, and/or

efficiency of human life, as if a person were merely a *resource* rather than a form of *social capital*¹³. In turn, this utilitarian ethics — which relies on categories such as usefulness (in all its various meanings) — starts to link the very fact of our existence to some generally accepted notions or ideals about what that existence should be. This is why, in my view, both utilitarians and libertarians, through the legalization of euthanasia, are advancing a much more ideological and statist political project. Even if we look at how Singer instrumentalizes death, turning it into a tool to reduce the suffering of others, while neither he, nor other utilitarians, nor libertarians raise the central question of what creates the necessity for choosing euthanasia in the first place. The ideological structure behind it remains taboo for proponents of euthanasia since they are completely satisfied with the argument that anything which minimizes suffering is good. But is that really a good enough motive? What new values does society gain by following this new formula of existence? And eventually — this is the most important for me — what kind of societal structure do we find ourselves in once we have accepted this formula? The moment we stop treating euthanasia as merely an ethical category, it opens the ideological door to new forms of political control, where a specific category of

¹³ ‘Social capital is the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition—or in other words, to membership in a group — which provides each of its members with the backing of the collectively-owned capital, a “credential” which entitles them to credit, in the various senses of the word’ Bourdieu., Pierre. The Forms of Capital. Chapter 1. Pp. 241-258 in Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education, edited by J. G. Richardson. New York: Greenwood Press. URL: [bourdieu_forms_of_capital.pdf](#) (p. 21)

people — defined by traits that society considers indicative of intellectual or physical imperfection — are seen as having a more conditional right to life than others. This somewhat reminds me of Machiavelli's concept of the absence of morality — a state of affairs in which ethics are completely absorbed by politics at the ideological level and this *symbiosis* ultimately proposes a new system of governance based on the aforementioned utilitarian and pragmatic ideals of optimization, expedience, organicity, efficiency, and consolidation. To accept such a vision means to buy into the definition that life is nothing more than a set of organic functions and sufferings akin to a mathematical calculation.

I think it's high time to discuss another ideological construct — does the right to euthanasia truly contribute to the full realization of freedom, as proponents of this movement often claim? Rene Descartes, it seems, gave a great gift to modern libertarians when he proposed that the subject possesses all rights over themselves and, as long as they remain a subject, they have the right to fight for those rights. Nevertheless, I argue that death as a phenomenon of objective reality is the great equalizer that places everyone on the same level. The moment we dare to disrupt this equality we substitute the liberal idea of natural *equality* with the libertarian idea of personal *autonomy*. Certainly, euthanasia, by definition, denies the very idea of equality, since it is recognized exclusively as a right of a particular segment of people who, by meeting a specific set of criteria and possessing

particular personal qualities and an adequate economic status, are capable of making such a decision. Therefore, when it is said that its recognition will fully realize the concept of human rights, this is a blatant substitution of terms. It also logically follows that the assumption that the legitimization of the right to die establishes a universal individual's ownership over themselves is pure fiction — which, again, contradicts the very notion of equality itself. So, we must not mask the fact that in doing so, we abandon any idea of equality in favor of autonomy which, frankly speaking, increasingly resembles a compulsion to choose being exceptionally well-depicted back in the time by Friedrich Engels postulating an order of things in which the subject cannot be forced to participate in a choice that may lead to the loss of their own reality¹⁴. In essence, the choice between life and death is like holding democratic elections in authoritarian states — where, regardless of your vote, you are already subordinated to an ideology that, at any moment, can deem your reality as one poorly optimized in relation to others' interpretations of reality. Let me offer another example: imagine a situation where a terminally ill person is informed by a professional doctor that they meet all the legal criteria for euthanasia and *may*, IF THEY WISH, make use of that right. In our liberal, politically correct reality, such a formulation already sounds like a *quiet*

¹⁴ ‘...the uncertainty, founded on ignorance, which seems to make an arbitrary choice among many different and conflicting possible decisions, shows precisely by this that it is not free, that it is controlled by the very object it should itself control. Freedom therefore consists in the control over ourselves and over external nature, a control founded on knowledge of natural necessity.’ Engels., Frederick. Anti-Dühring. Herr Eugen Dühring's. Revolution in Science, Progress Publishers, 1947. URL: <https://rowlandpasaribu.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2013/09/frederick-engels-anti-duhring.pdf> (p. 141)

command or a veiled way of saying: “*Thank you for your service — the exit is over there. You are no longer efficient.*” The coexistence of the libertarian idea of autonomy and the right to die within a single framework implies that a person must constantly reaffirm through their activity that their way of life is worth continuing and still deserving of never hearing that quiet command.

As it can be perceived, the idea of the right to die logically has no place either along with the liberal idea of equality or the libertarian concept of autonomy. Nevertheless, it is precisely these ideas alongside the representatives of utilitarianism that, under the guise of the propositions ‘*to alleviate suffering*’ and ‘*restore dignity*’, in reality offer us the idea of unfreedom, which, in its maximum, can also have a purely political-economic justification. Why is society willing to recognize an individual's right to die? To end the person’s suffering, or to cease wasting resources on the life of a person whose life prospects the state does not foresee? This hidden intent becomes clear when Singer asserts that ‘*to allow nature to take its course by withholding treatment but refusing to kill would obviously be wrong*’¹⁵; on the other hand, James Rachel presents an identical argument saying that ‘*The idea is that it is permissible, at least in some cases, to withhold treatment and allow a patient to die, but it is never permissible to take any direct action*

¹⁵ Singer., Peter. Taking Life: Humans. Practical Ethics. URL: <https://sites.nd.edu/ten-images-of-hell-fall-2019/files/2019/10/Singer-Taking-Life-Humans.pdf> (p. 15)

*designed to kill the patient.*¹⁶ In light of this dilemma, the possibility of providing a person with a death with dignity looks like a unique proposition from a typical commercial enterprise with the cynical slogan: *‘Those who cannot live with dignity can be dignifiedly utilized.’* For some reason, the significance of the question of heroism and the importance of society's struggle to the last penny for the life of each individual and the preservation of their subjectivity is never raised.

Last but not least, the final argument of euthanasia supporters appeals to the necessity of showing mercy, humanity, and compassion in order to give a person the opportunity to die with dignity. Just like in the case of subjectivity a subsequent question arises: What does it mean to die with dignity? Or what are the circumstances under which we consider death undignified? If an undignified life is one spent battling a severe illness resulting in man's death then we are essentially denying death and illness their right to be considered a natural and normal part of our lives. This logic is so fragile that it cannot withstand any criticism, as no one can point out the exact boundary between a honorable death and an undignified one. As an illustration, can the body of a passenger killed in a plane crash, which is unrecognizable, be considered a dignified death? Or does death resulting from torture meet the criterion of dignity? Attempting to stigmatize death with the criterion of dignity puts us on a slippery ideological slope akin to the medieval

¹⁶ Rachel, James. Active and Passive Euthanasia. Reprinted by permission of The New England Journal of Medicine, Vol. 292, January 9, 1975, pp. 78-80. URL: https://sites.ualberta.ca/~bleier/Rachels_Euthanasia.pdf (p. 1)

type, where concepts such as ‘*the dignified death of a true viking*’ or ‘*the worthy death of a white man*’ existed. It can be easily noticed that any conversation on such matters leads us from a discussion about reducing suffering to an intention to preserve the remnants of decency before losing one's life. Nevertheless, the idea of a worthy death is appealed to by both utilitarians and libertarians, for whom happiness and joy are the main indicators that human life proceeds with regards to some abstract ‘*norm*’. Accordingly, the life of a seriously ill person definitely cannot meet this ‘*norm*’, and therefore cannot be considered an equivalent life compared to the lives of others. Though in reality we can mention enough examples that make us think about the opposite: from already mentioned Hawking, to the lesser-known David Goodall, Ramon Sampedro, or Nazarii Husakov, etc.

III. In Response to the Central Question of the Paper

Predictably, my answer is negative. As it has already been demonstrated in the main part of the work — this, firstly, would lead to the complete destigmatization of death and reduce its accessibility to the format of a classical commercial product, and secondly, would allow for the incorporation of the modern liberal-capitalist ideological space into the environment of a new necro-ideology based on a libertarian anti-humanistic notion of societal optimization. Legitimizing the right to die would be a mistake also because the concept of death is that of the Lacanian Real, which means that it is a part of the

supersensitive that defines human being, yet they cannot have any influence on it under any circumstances. Moreover, adopting the right to die would undermine people's natural right to equality in their rights with respect to others, which contradicts the very concept of natural rights. Equally concerning is the uncertainty of the relationship between a person and a physiological state that would allow their existence to be considered subjectively valid, as well as worthy or dignified. On one hand, such ambiguity creates convenient ground for euthanasia advocates to appeal to humanity and compassion; on the other hand, it makes things much more dangerous, laying the ideological foundation for a potential movement advocating for the right to suicide in the broadest sense of the word, as no one can clearly define the practical boundaries of the application of this right.

Overall, each time we approach the issue of euthanasia, we should first ask ‘*What kind of society requires euthanasia to feel ethical?*’ before pounding over the question of the ethics of such an act.

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