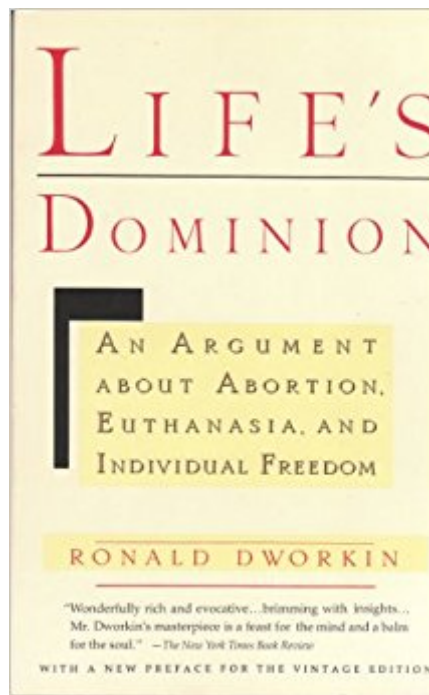




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# **Life's Dominion: An Argument About Abortion, Euthanasia, And Individual Freedom**



## Synopsis

One of the country's most distinguished scholars presents a brilliantly original approach to the twin dilemmas of abortion and euthanasia, showing why they arouse such volcanic controversy and how we as a society can reconcile our values of life and individual liberty. From the Trade Paperback edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Dworkin's landmark philosophical essay brings a new dimension to future debate about abortion and euthanasia. The conventional view of the abortion controversy hinges on whether a fetus is a helpless, unborn child with rights and interests of its own. Yet many people who oppose abortion, claims Dworkin ( *Taking Rights Seriously* ), actually do so for a very different underlying reason--their view that human life, in any form, has intrinsic, sacred value. To this New York University law professor, the critical question in *Roe v. Wade* is whether state legislatures have the constitutional power to decide which intrinsic values all citizens must respect. He defends a woman's right to free choice as a necessary implication of the religious freedom guaranteed by the First Amendment. As for euthanasia, the key issue, he argues, is whether a free society will seek to impose its collective judgment on individuals, or instead allow them to make the most profound spiritual judgments about their own lives for themselves. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Today's debate over the proper place of abortion in an ethically committed society has proven every

bit as divisive as was slavery in 19th-century America. Dworkin, an eminent lawyer and legal philosopher, believes that a new way of examining the central issue is now required. He argues that the key question to be resolved is how far society can go to impose a single official view upon personally held convictions of the inherent value of all life. Dworkin's analysis requires that the abstract moral principles set out in the U.S. Constitution be interpreted to insure equal concern for the dignity of all human life, and he analyzes other issues, such as euthanasia, in the same framework. Continuing the examination of moral issues raised earlier in Dworkin's *A Matter of Principle* (Harvard Univ. Pr., 1985), his new book can be favorably compared with other recent works about abortion such as Lawrence Tribe's *Abortion : A Clash of Absolutes* ( LJ 2/1/91) or Roger Rosenblatt's *Life Itself* ( LJ 3/15/92). While a difficult book, it is also an important one that should be read by as many concerned readers as possible. Highly recommended.- Jerry E. Stephens, U.S. Court of Appeals Lib., Oklahoma CityCopyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc.

This book tackles really important questions about the sanctity of life, the questions that I feel are purposely glossed over when it comes to abortion and euthanasia debates because the answers, though true, are morbid and against many ideals that society has created regarding life. This book is definitely a keeper.

Good book for my class. Much less expensive than college bookstore prices.

Nicely packaged and a good price for a bulk purchase. I bought it to use as a mordant in dying and the price makes it easy to use the quantities I need to dye large batches.

Amazingly, Dworkin offers a new take on the abortion dispute--and I think a correct one. I don't agree with everything he says, but this book sheds more light on these issues than any other that I have read. I would say that it is the best philosophical book I have read in a long while. Among the many things that I appreciate about this book is that Dworkin along the way also has interesting and insightful things to say about the philosophy of mind, the meaning of life, and the nature of human dignity. If you are at all interested in bio-ethics, the philosophy of the abortion dispute, euthanasia, or the meaning of life--read this book. I plan to re-read it soon.

I'm reading this book as part of and Ethics and Health Care course and find Dworkin's argument to

be a concise moral overview of the current debate on abortion and euthanasia. He does equal justice to views from the Catholic Church to the Women's movement on aspects of abortion and gives those with a less extensive legal background an easily understandable assessment of important precedents and pending legislation. I found his coverage on other other systems outside of the US to be lacking, but realize this is not the primary focus of his work. For a better analysis of the current acceptability and status of PAS and euthanasia in the Netherlands look for articles by Van der Maas and Angell in JAMA or the NEJM. Overall, Dworkin does justice to a highly controversial issue with adequate research and moral reasoning. An excellent beginner to understanding abortion and euthanasia.

This book is one of the most amazing and critical inquiries into a socially relevant topic of the 20th century. The arguments are almost flawless, beautifully interwoven with examples, anecdotes and personally relevant stories spanning the whole spectrum of human emotion. This book will not bore you. It will be quite interesting from a humanistic, legal and historical point of view. However, Ronald Dworkin is indeed a liberal philosopher who believes that liberal social policy (in regards to abortion and euthanasia) can coexist with one's belief that life is ever precious. Naturally, conflicting and strict moral belief systems divide conservatives and liberals in regards to such hot-button issues. If you are truly willing to read this book with an open mind, you will not be disappointed and perhaps will become a better and more informed advocate. On the other hand, if you read this book while conceptualizing some circular reasoning debasing Dworkin's every word - in favor of a verse from the bible - this book is certainly not for you!

I was actually looking forward to reading this book. I came with an open mind and yet the poor writing and lack of credible arguments astounded me. How is this author a scholar and still able to write weakly biased material that is published by a major house? I would recommend not reading this book no matter what your stance is on these topics. If you agree with the author, you may be blinded by your beliefs to embrace his skewed logic, and if you disagree, you will get a bad impression of the actual arguments his side could give.

Dworkin has the right idea in given reason to believe that some things have intrinsic value because our intuitions about certain values cannot be explained with only subjective and instrumental values. However, his idea that creative process is what gives something intrinsic value seems wrong to me. The value of some of the things that Dworkin says have intrinsic value seems to be value that can

be explained otherwise. Dworkin claims that the flag has intrinsic value, but its value can be explained by instrumental alone--the U.S. flag serves the purpose of representing a country. However, Dworkin's argument is interesting--the idea he has as to how to arrive at intrinsic value through unexplained intuitions is a good one.

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