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Nota di contenuto	Intro -- Geronticide: Killing the Elderly -- Contents -- Acknowledgements -- 1. Living too Long? -- Introduction -- The social context of ageing and geronticide -- Is longer life possible? -- Science and increasing the lifespan -- Ageing and decline: Consequences of extending the lifespan -- Outline of the book -- Geronticide and the elderly: Definitions -- 2. Death by Demography and Longevity -- The Problem of Longevity -- Population ageing in Western society -- Non-industrial societies and the demographic time bomb -- The dependency ratio and the social crisis -- Gender and the demography of ageing -- Social class and demography -- Ethnicity and the ageing population -- Demography and a finite food supply -- The social costs of the increasing elderly dependent population -- The cost of care -- Death-hastening by rationing -- Depression and self-killing amongst the elderly -- Limitations to the demographic time bomb thesis -- Responding to the critics -- Continuity in geronticide -- 3. Death by Social Obligation: The Political Economy Thesis -- Political economy: The elderly as non-producers -- Insights from patriarchy and from

Marxist studies -- Nostalgia over primitive society -- The hunter-gatherer thesis -- The young-old versus the old-old -- Death-hastening in primitive society -- Ritual demarcation allowing geronticide: Concluding liminal status -- The liminal status passage -- Infanticide and geronticide -- Criticisms of political economy -- 4. Death by Attrition: Modernisation and the Workhouse -- Introduction -- The modernisation process -- Modernisation and social differentiation -- Modernisation and convergence -- Ageist ideology's contribution to death-hastening -- Inequality and uneven exposure to geronticide -- 5. Death by Degrees: Bureaucratisation in Care Institutions -- Introduction: The bureaucratisation of death. Dying in 'care' -- Making ready for death: the community-institution divide -- Abuse in institutional settings -- Making death 'ordinary' -- Ethnography of elderly death-hastening -- Direct death-hastening: 'Do not resuscitate' -- Regulation and inspection -- Elderly care as a business enterprise: 'Culling sheep or cattle' 46 -- Overview -- 6. Death in Literary Discourse -- Killing the elderly in literature -- Elderly defence against geronticide: Ashliman's collection -- Past to future: Science fiction and geronticide -- Death-hastening in the care and nursing home -- Ageism and the liminal status of the elderly -- Voluntary euthanasia -- Overview -- 7. Death by Choice?: Physician-assisted Suicide and Voluntary Euthanasia -- Introduction -- A brief history of suicide and voluntary euthanasia -- The situation today -- Voluntarism: Ageism, material and cultural pressures -- From physician-assisted suicide to voluntary euthanasia -- Aspects of the debate -- Vagueness of professional controls -- Pain relief ? Or alleviation of psychosocial problems? -- The long-term care alternative -- Patient autonomy versus medical autonomy -- Overview -- 8. Dr Shipman, Social Rights, and Preventing Geronticide -- Who kills the elderly? -- Professionalism and the case of Dr Harold Shipman -- Checking Geronticide -- References -- Subject Index -- Author Index.

Sommario/riassunto

Drawing on a variety of historical, contemporary, anthropological and literary sources, this book considers the present day debates about the sanctity of elderly lives and the question of euthanasia. The book shows that killing the elderly, voluntarily or involuntarily, has been a feature of many societies, from the primitive to the present day.